

***Strengthening safety
& security resources
for visual storytellers
and journalists***
A scoping study

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Peter Noorlander (lead author)

*Agnieszka Raczynska, Camila Mariño and Juliana Lopes
(country and region research and authors)*

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Peter Noorlander (peter.noorlander@globalrightshub.com)

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Summary of findings and recommendations

This study looks into the safety and security needs, resources and environment of visual storytellers and journalists, with a focus on independent documentary filmmakers. The study was commissioned by the International Resource for Impact and Study (IRIS) and the Ford Foundation out of a concern that while there are significant threats to the safety of visual storytellers and journalists, few safety and protection resources are available to them particularly in emergency situations.

The study has been global in scope, but in-depth research has been carried out in Central America, the Andes region and Brazil. The findings and trends, in the countries surveyed as well as globally, are remarkably similar and can be summarized as follows:¹

1. There is a strong and growing international trend of attacks to the safety and security of visual storytellers and journalists. This ties in with a similar trend of attacks and violence to human rights and environmental defenders and activists, and general backsliding in respect for human rights.
2. There is a global crisis of violence against women, as well as identity-based violence against indigenous groups, (sexual) minorities, and others who are often at a position of disadvantage in society. Women filmmakers and visual storytellers and journalists from these communities are at particular risk.
3. A worryingly large number of documentary filmmakers as well as funders have low awareness of safety issues.
4. Visual storytellers and journalists who are aware of safety issues often cannot afford to invest in sufficient resources required for their protection.
5. Existing organizations for the protection of human rights and environmental defenders and journalists, who could in theory offer protection resources to visual storytellers, are woefully under-resourced and by and large fail to reach them.

Recommendations

This study has surfaced significant and growing threats to the safety of visual storytellers and journalists, a lack of resources for their protection, and a worrying lack of safety awareness. Based on findings from interviews with experienced stakeholders as well as literature research, the following recommendations are made. No single one of these recommendations is a silver bullet; they should be seen as a package of inter-connected and related measures.²

The recommendations are to all funders, not just Ford Foundation: the issues described should be of concern to all social justice and human rights funders.

¹ These are overall trends, painted in broad brush strokes; of course, there are individual artists, journalists or funders who buck these trends.

² The recommendations are based in the research evidence, including the many stakeholder interviews, as well as the authors' considerable professional experience. They have been 'tested' with a few interviewees but the lead author takes full responsibility for them.

Guiding Principles

Four guiding principles should underpin any initiatives that seek to address safety and security (these principles are for funders, and do not replicate or seek to go over the same ground as those made in various excellent existing safety guides).

1. Raising awareness of risk and safety issues is crucial to seed the importance of the issue more widely in creative communities and connect them with protection organizations. A culture of safety should be nurtured among visual storytellers and journalists and their funders, employers and other stakeholders, centered around feminist and holistic principles of protection, equity, fairness and respect; forging connections, solidarity and support for networks and safe spaces; an encouragement of collective efforts to define and create protection practices; strengthening the skills of visual storytellers and journalists; expanding the social recognition of their work; and self-care, mutual respect and support, and well-being.
2. Building on the awareness-raising, training and education should be made available to visual storytellers and filmmakers as well as to funders and other stakeholders. This should include funding to organizations that specialize in providing risk training and for dedicated workshops, with specific attention to psychosocial trauma, an often-overlooked aspect.
3. There is a crisis of gender-based violence in countries around the world, and female visual storytellers and filmmakers face risks and threats that are different and more severe than those faced by their male colleagues. Their security needs differ from men's, but there are few resources and organizations that specialize in providing protection. Visual storytellers and journalists from indigenous groups, (sexual) minorities, and others who are at a position of disadvantage or at heightened risk in society also have specific protection needs. Funders should finance protection organizations to develop an understanding of these overlapping threats and respond appropriately and holistically.
4. The agency of visual storytellers and journalists should be respected. In the first instance they should be empowered to invest in their own safety, and that of their crews and any protagonists or communities potentially at risk. The safety net around them should be made of local, national and international organizations and networks that specialize in safety and protection, with the role of each understood and agreed with visual storytellers and journalists. In principle, safety resources need to be built as close to the ground as possible.

Overarching Recommendations

5. Fund key organizations at the international, regional and national level to engage in a strategy to raise awareness of safety and protection issues through events (high profile as well as side events) at established gatherings such as film, journalism, arts, or human rights festivals and conferences, and, as funders, take active part in that strategy;

6. Empower visual storytellers and filmmakers to have control over and invest in their own protection by:
 - a. Starting conversations about safety and funding safety assessments and protection/mitigation strategies for all stages of a project (including during production and after launch), separate to any other funding that is provided so grantees are clear that safety funding does not come out of a grant they would have received anyway. This should cover risks to physical, digital, legal and reputational safety as well as psychosocial well-being;
 - b. Promoting the use of good security protocols;
 - c. Making safety training tailored to the needs of visual storytellers and journalists available to all grantees at low or no cost;
 - d. Ensuring the availability of expertise and resources to counter legal, physical, reputational, psychosocial and digital threats, for example, through retaining specialist lawyers or purchasing group insurance and making this available to grantees and funded projects (this could be pooled among several donors);
 - e. Supporting initiatives that boost the financial sustainability of the moving image arts sector, such as a basic income.

7. Invest in resources for visual storytellers and journalists in need of urgent assistance, by:
 - a. Ensuring the availability of contingency finance to grantees in need (whether through a funder's own means, by purchasing collective insurance for grantees, or otherwise);
 - b. Providing long-term, unrestricted funding for existing and emerging protection mechanisms that can provide emergency assistance to visual storytellers and journalists under threat. Funding should be targeted on initiatives that are as close to communities of artists and filmmakers as possible (either geographically, or because they are part of a community that is geographically dispersed but close-knit in other ways) as these are most likely to reach individuals in need;
 - c. Funding protection mechanisms to invest in their own resources, including appropriate skills for staff fielding requests;
 - d. Funding constant outreach by protection organizations to visual storytellers and journalists and bridging to communities outside of urban centers and in languages other than the main national language, to ensure that those at risk and needing emergency assistance are aware of the existence of protection mechanisms and can trust them;
 - e. Funding currently under-funded safety resources:
 - (i) resources for psychosocial care
 - (ii) defense against digital threats, negative PR and trolling
 - (iii) specialist legal resources, especially in-country
 - (iv) safe havens close to the countries or regions where the threat is the greatest, and specifically for visual storytellers and journalists at risk (but de-politicized and styled as arts residencies, not at-risk residencies).

8. Support hub organizations and solidarity and protection networks of and “bridges” between communities of artists, filmmakers and human rights and environmental defenders at the local, national, regional and global level, encouraging the establishment of formal and informal solidarity networks (and recognizing that keeping these networks going requires an ongoing effort).

Summary and Recommendations

9. Given the focus of this study on documentary filmmakers and the dearth of support specifically for them, strong consideration should be given to supporting the few fledgling efforts to provide storytellers with protection (specifically, at the international level, the International Coalition for Filmmakers at Risk and the Sisterhood Foundation, as well as appropriate national initiatives).
10. To the Ford Foundation, as the instigator of this study: use the Foundation's convening power, status and experience of funding in the arts, journalism and human rights to:
 - a. Convene other funders to bring along on this journey toward a greater culture of safety, beginning with like-minded funders such as Luminate, IDA, IDFA, Sundance, IMS, Doc Society, Bertha Foundation, Skoll Foundation, Field of Vision, Oak Foundation and Open Society Foundations;
 - b. Bring together key organizations from among its human rights, social justice, arts and free expression programs (including organizations that specialize in protection) to build bridges and foster connections.

I. Introduction and methodology

This study looks into the safety and security needs, resources and environment of visual storytellers and visual journalists, with a focus on independent documentary filmmakers (referred to, for short, as “visual storytellers and journalists”). In particular, this study looks at the resources available to visual storytellers and journalists when they or those featured in their works come under threat, whether these resources are sufficient, and how access to them may be improved. The study has a global scope, but in-depth research has been carried out in Central America, the Andes region and Brazil.

The purpose of this study is to make concrete recommendations to donors and other stakeholders to help strengthen safety and security resources for visual storytellers and journalists at risk. To this end, the study is divided into three main parts:

- A discussion of the safety and security needs of visual storytellers and journalists;
- A discussion of existing resources for safety and security of visual storytellers and journalists under threat, including a mapping of connections between the various stakeholders;
- Suggestions for how protection and access to resources for visual storytellers and journalists under threat can be improved.

From this, and in particular from the last section, recommendations for action and potential funding by donors and other stakeholders are drawn.

The study has been led by Peter Noorlander, an independent consultant and expert in the field of journalists’ safety,³ with a team of researchers in Brazil, Colombia and Mexico: Juliana Lopes, Camila Mariño, and Agnieszka Raczynska.⁴ The study has been conducted through a combination of desk research and stakeholder interviews, and additionally informed by the authors’ own considerable knowledge and experience in the fields of human rights protection and media freedom. The study is global in its overview, but with a focus on Central and South America, where in-depth research and interviews were conducted in Brazil, the Andean region and Central America. The findings of these regional studies (which very much chimed with the global findings) are incorporated throughout the main text of this study; reports for each of these countries and regions are included as Annexes. A total of 120 interviews was conducted with stakeholders ranging from visual storytellers and journalists to funders, human rights activists, academics and representatives of protection mechanisms for journalists and human rights defenders.

³ Peter Noorlander’s LinkedIn page: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/peternoorlander/>

⁴ Agnieszka Raczynska, a human rights specialist and consultant to nonprofits and funders on issues related to Central America and Mexico (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/agnieszka-raczynska-24557a172/>); Camila Mariño, international law and human rights consultant (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/camilamarinov/en-us/>) and Juliana Lopes, Founder of Pulsar, a knowledge hub on engagement and mobilization tools for system change (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/juliana-lopes-64a1191a/>).

II. “Visual storytellers and journalists”—what is “the field”?

As stated in the introduction, this study sets out to determine the safety and security needs and resources available to “visual storytellers and journalists, with a focus on independent documentary filmmakers.” As the research evolved and interviews were being conducted, it became increasingly clear that this is a diverse field with subtle but important differences in terms of threats, challenges, needs and resources in relation to security.

The overall descriptor of “visual storytellers and journalists” encapsulates different categories and ranges across various professions, including filmmakers (a category that itself falls into fiction and nonfiction, and several categories within those); photo and video journalists and visual artists. Each of these groups move in their own professional circles and don’t necessarily feel that they have a lot in common with others, apart from the fact that they exercise their right to freedom of speech to report and comment on issues using visual means.⁵

Since safety and security resources are often accessed through professional networks and associations, this has important implications. For example, a number of the documentary filmmakers that we interviewed did not generally view or want to be viewed as “journalists,” and a number of journalists felt that documentary filmmakers work to a different code of ethics and do not form part of the journalistic profession (for example, issues of objectivity are approached very differently). This means that documentary filmmakers in need of assistance would often not think of reaching out to an organization established to protect journalists, and journalists’ unions or associations may not proactively reach out and offer assistance to documentary filmmakers in need.

While this is not a hard and fast rule—international organizations, such as the Committee to Protect Journalists, have advocated for many filmmakers—it is still an issue that needs to be recognized, particularly at the national level where journalists’ unions are often organized along fairly strict lines. Similarly, while a filmmaker could be seen as a visual artist, some artists disagree that filmmakers, and especially documentary filmmakers, are part of “their” group. We also spoke with others who strongly thought that photojournalists were artists.ⁱ These distinctions, even if seen by some but not by others, have implications in terms of protection: a filmmaker might not seek assistance from an organization set up for the protection of artists. Some interviewees advocated that theater artists fall within the scope of “visual storytellers,” since they increasingly use and produce video.ⁱⁱ Others disagreed.

Within the category of journalists, a further distinction can be made between freelancers and journalists in employment. Each draw on different resources to protect themselves against risk, and some NGOs are set up to cater specifically and exclusively for freelance journalists.⁶

⁵ An unspoken assumption has been only to focus on those visual storytellers and storytellers who report on issues that are of strong public interest, such as human rights violations or corruption, and who generally “speak truth to power.”

⁶ This distinction can be criticized: while generally speaking it is true that a journalist working for a large organization such as the BBC can draw on more support than a freelance journalist, a well-funded independent

II. What is the field

A further complicating factor is that when filmmakers, artists or journalists report on or criticize human rights or environmental violations, civil society—especially international civil society—can sometimes be quick to label them as “human rights defenders” or “environmental defenders.” In some countries and contexts, the term “activism” has been coined to describe the use of art for social activism. But in many countries, artists, filmmakers or journalists themselves do not necessarily identify as such, or might not even want to be seen as such. Being labelled a “human rights defender” can have negative political connotations and expose individuals to greater risk. This reticence, unwillingness or sometimes just lack of awareness can prevent filmmakers, artists or journalists at risk from seeking assistance from civil society mechanisms set up for the protection of human rights or environmental defenders (again, this is not a hard and fast rule and some civil society protection mechanisms do offer protection to these groups—but there is certainly a trend). Further complexity is introduced by the term “cultural rights defender,” as a distinct constituency within the broader group of human rights defenders.ⁱⁱⁱ

These distinctions have real-world implications in terms of protection. Whether someone counts, sees themselves or can be labelled as one (or several) of the above categories impacts their ability to access safety and security resources, either from within their own organization or community or internationally.

While this study aims to be pragmatic and not unnecessarily get hung up on distinctions, they will be touched on when relevant. In the chapters that follow, this study will use the phrase “visual storytellers and journalists” as a catch-all for all those who use visual means to report on issues they see in the world around them. There has been a de facto focus on documentary filmmakers, since this is a category of visual storytellers that is both particularly at risk and often ill-equipped to deal with those risks; and a number of the recommendations to donors are focused on them.

The main implications of these distinctions sit at the level of suggestions to improve protection and recommendations for donor action. Much of this turns on reaching the right groups and (encouraging) the building of bridges between groups. It is at this level that donors need to have a keen awareness of the circles within which different groups move and how they can be best connected.

journalist from the global north is almost invariably better resourced than a photo journalist employed by a small media outlet in a country in the global south.

III. Safety and security: threats and needs

A. Agents and drivers of risk

Safety and security of visual storytellers and journalists is closely linked to overall respect for rights and the extent to which the countries in which they work tolerate independent voices. As respect for rights declines, the overall safety and security situation of visual storytellers and journalists deteriorates.

It is well-documented that over the last decade, populism and authoritarianism have been on the rise everywhere.^{iv} Countries thought to be “safe” and respectful of human rights and freedom of expression have slid back and many countries where authoritarian regimes were in the ascendancy ten years ago are firmly authoritarian now. The Economist’s “Democracy Index” lists only 23 countries as full democracies in 2020 and its global average score has fallen to an all-time low since the first production of the Index in 2006.^v Other democracy scores and indices and annual reports published by freedom of expression and artists’ freedom organizations show a similar decline.^{vi} Over the last year, in many countries repression has accelerated under cover of the Covid-19 pandemic, leading UN Secretary General António Guterres to warn that “the virus has been used as a pretext in many countries to crush dissent, criminalize freedoms and silence reporting” and that the world awaits “a pandemic of human rights abuses in the wake of Covid-19.” He explained:

“Using the pandemic as a pretext, authorities in some countries have deployed heavy-handed security responses and emergency measures to crush dissent, criminalize basic freedoms, silence independent reporting and restrict the activities of nongovernmental organizations ... Human rights defenders, journalists, lawyers, political activists—even medical professionals—have been detained, prosecuted and subjected to intimidation and surveillance for criticizing government responses to the pandemic.”^{vii}

The combination of backsliding of respect for democratic values in countries previously regarded as “established” democracies, coupled with the strengthening of authoritarianism in many other countries has serious implications when it comes to journalism and the production of documentary film and other forms of art that comment on social issues. Politicians have long understood that control over the public narrative equals control over the electorate (and even most authoritarian regimes hold “elections” to remain in power);^{viii} meaning a harsh clampdown on dissenting and oppositional voices, by any means necessary.

The annual reports of leading groups for the protection of visual storytellers and journalists, such as the Committee to Protect Journalists and Freemuse, report an ever-rising number of artists, journalists and filmmakers imprisoned, attacked, harassed or otherwise threatened in their work.^{7ix} Freemuse’s

⁷ It should be noted that the statistics on imprisoned and murdered artists and journalists produced by organizations such as CPJ and Freemuse represent only those incidents that come to its attention. The actual numbers of journalists and artists killed or imprisoned is likely to be far higher.

III. Safety and Security: threats and needs

2021 report on “The State of Artistic Freedom” is grim reading (a remark that can be made for each of its previous annual reports as well: every year marks an unprecedented high, only for the number of violations to be even higher the next year). Reporting an increased number of attacks and echoing Antonio Guterres’s warning about the impact of Covid-19, Freemuse reports:^x

“This year ... 17 artists were killed, 82 were imprisoned and 133 detained. Oppressing artists’ voices has not stopped with the restrictions on cultural events imposed worldwide following the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. On the contrary, it intensified ... A record high of prosecution and imprisonment of artists happened in the year when artists and the culture sector have already suffered the loss of their livelihood ... This year’s report illustrates increasing misuses of blasphemy, anti-terrorism legislation, and Covid-19 measures as pretexts, to silence dissident voices of artists and artworks.”

The Committee to Protect Journalists’ annual reports make for equally grim reading. The number of journalists reported missing every year has been at a constant high since 2017; the number of journalists imprisoned is reported as being at an all-time high in 2020, despite the number having fallen in 2018 and 2019; and while there has been a drop in the number of journalists killed since 2018, the main reason for this is that fewer journalists have been killed in war zones—outside of war zones, there has been a rise in the number of reporters deliberately murdered for their work.^{xi}

Threats emanate not only from populist politicians or authoritarian governments: corporations that seek to develop large projects, particularly ones that go against the rights and interests of local populations, often retaliate against visual storytellers and journalists who expose their practices. Reprisals come in various ways, sometimes in the form of lawsuits, other times with the “assistance” of corrupt local governments or even in collusion, directly or indirectly, with thugs or with organized crime groups.⁸ Pre-emptive retaliation and scare tactics are also common.^{xii}

Interviewees in a number of countries—in particular, in Central and South America—mentioned organized crime as another important driver of risk, particularly for visual storytellers and journalists who report on, or who document, issues related to organized crime. Nearly every year visual storytellers and journalists are murdered by gangs either in retaliation for or to stop reporting on them.^{xiii} Interviewees in El Salvador mentioned the murder of Christian Poveda, maker of the documentary *La Vida Loca*, a film that chronicled El Salvador’s gangs. Poveda was murdered because, despite his promises to the contrary, the film was showcased in El Salvador.^{xiv}

This is a very serious risk and visual storytellers and journalists whose projects touch on these issues should make sure they have the resources, including specialist advice, for a full risk assessment and to take measures to minimize and mitigate risks during filming and production as well as following the release of a film or project. As noted above, visual storytellers and journalists should also be aware

⁸ This concern permeated throughout the interviews conducted for this Study in South America, and has also been documented by others—for example, throughout the work of organizations such as Earthrights International (<https://earthrights.org/>) and Global Witness (<https://www.globalwitness.org/en/>). Threats emanate in particular from extractive industries and other industries that exploit natural resources, including for ‘green’ energy projects such as windfarms that have displaced local populations, for example in Oaxaca, Mexico (as documented by, amongst others, Peace Brigades International, Wind Farms and Concerns about Human Rights Violations in Oaxaca: <https://pbi-mexico.org/our-publications/pbi-mexicos-briefings>).

III. Safety and Security: threats and needs

that in regions with high levels of corruption local officials or businesses may hire or collude with organized crime gangs in order to intimidate and scare off visual storytellers and journalists.

The issues reported on or documented are another important driver of risk. While the issues and sensitivities differ from country to country, several constants arose from the interviews conducted for this study:

- environmental violations
- human rights violations
- land rights
- rights of indigenous communities
- corruption
- organized crime
- issues around gender equality and rights, particularly feminist issues and LGBTQI rights
- far right politics
- demonstrations and public unrest

Reporting on or documenting these issues attracts enhanced risk. In a number of countries, reporting from an “independent” or non-aligned point of view is a risk on its own, with independent visual storytellers and journalists attracting scorn and negative rhetoric from politicians. The same goes for investigative reporters.

Impunity—the phenomenon whereby human rights violations are not or insufficiently investigated and perpetrators are not brought to justice—is a growing problem in many countries. Visual storytellers and journalists whose human rights have been violated increasingly struggle to obtain justice at the national level, forcing them to appeal to international human rights bodies. Even if they obtain vindication at that level, often following a struggle of many years, international court decisions are often implemented minimally if at all and an increasing number of governments ignore them.⁹ As a result, those who want to suppress dissenting, oppositional or independent voices feel increasingly able to do so in various ways and those who dare speak truth to power are in the firing line—sometimes literally so.

In addition to the risk drivers outlined above—intentional threats aimed at silencing visual storytellers and journalists—many interviewees named a high level of crime and a lack of public security as an important driver of risk. Several of the focus countries for this research are among those with the highest murder rates in the world and crime of all sorts is endemic. In such environments reporting and filmmaking comes with obvious risks.^{xv} This was mentioned in particular by filmmakers, who often travel with very visible and expensive equipment and who were acutely aware of the risk of

⁹ As noted by the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders in his 2019 Annual Report, 15 July 2019: <https://undocs.org/en/A/74/159>. The diminishing authority of the international human rights regime has multiple causes and goes back some time, described as early as 2014: <https://sur.conectas.org/en/challenges-to-the-global-human-rights-regime/>. It is not just authoritarian regimes that ignore human rights bodies: the United Kingdom has refused to accept the ruling by the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention that Julian Assange’s incarceration was unlawful under international law, and the United States does not accept the binding power of any international human rights courts. For an overview of the poor state of implementation of European Court of Human Rights judgments as of January 2021, see <https://www.einnetwork.org/countries-overview>.

III. Safety and Security: threats and needs

robbery. Several mentioned the need for insurance, while also putting in place work routines to minimize risks (for example, not travelling on public transport, using older cars rather than brand new ones not to attract attention and seeking the protection of local authorities or communities).

B. Heightened risk / additional challenges

As outlined above, any visual storyteller or journalist who engages in a project that speaks truth to power, reporting on issues such as corruption, human rights and environmental abuses, organized crime, or documenting the activities of politicians or businessmen, should expect some form of “pushback.” However, several factors can pose increased challenges and place journalists, filmmakers and artists at heightened risk.

Gender

In 2020, 28% of human rights defenders who were murdered because of their advocacy worked for women’s human rights—the third highest group after land and environmental defenders and LGBTQI activists.^{xvi} Women’s rights as an issue is extremely divisive and the threats faced by those who advocate for women’s rights are extreme. This situation is reflected when it comes to visual storytellers and journalists.

Female visual storytellers and journalists face challenges that their male counterparts do not and are at increased risk of threats. Several female interviewees highlighted the serious challenges that they experienced. Reports by intergovernmental human rights bodies such as the UN Human Rights Council and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe’s Representative on Freedom of the Media have also highlighted the issues.^{xvii} Gender-based violence and threats of violence, including rape and sexual violence, are rife everywhere. Because of their public profile, female visual storytellers and journalists are exposed to this even more than other women.

This is a global problem, in conservative societies—where female journalists have been killed in honor killings by male members of their family^{xviii}—but also in societies that think of themselves as more progressive, where female journalists have also been forced to go into exile and suffer threats of sexual violence with very worrying frequency.^{xix}

In July 2020, the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women issued a report specifically on combating violence against women journalists.^{xx} Noting that gender-based violence is a global plague, the Rapporteur emphasizes the gravity of the threat, including in journalists’ workplaces and professional environments:

“Women journalists are expected to fit into stereotyped roles and sexualized images of women and to operate within unequal power relationships between men and women in the media world. They are often targeted for being highly visible and outspoken and for their work, especially when they are breaking the rules of gender inequity and stereotypes ... Gender-based violence against women ... creates a culture of normalization and tolerance of such violence in society, which means that women journalists and media workers are operating in an environment whereby systematic and structural gender-based violence forms part of their daily routine. They are subjected to different forms of gender-based violence,

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including rape and sexual harassment in the newsroom and in the field, and other forms of intimidation, including threats to their family. Women journalists reporting on protests and riots are at ever-increasing risk of sexual attacks, with many having experienced groping and sexual harassment, yet only a few have come forward to report their ordeal. Those reporting on feminist issues are also threatened for the type of stories they cover, which are often stories that have contributed to a change in attitude leading to public rejection of gender-based violence as a human rights violation.”

An April 2021 UNESCO/ICFJ global study on trends in online violence against women journalists found that reporting on disinformation and linked issues, such as digital conspiracy networks and far-right extremism, was found to often trigger heightened attacks, and that political figures often instigate and fuel online violence as well. Reporting on incidents, through mainstream as well as social media, often triggers “pile-ons” that exacerbate the situation.^{xxi}

The root causes of gender violence are deep-seated and not easily resolved; they require a cross-society response. Female visual storytellers and journalists interviewed for this study reported that they were very aware of the heightened risk to their safety and took steps to mitigate these risks as best as they could, such as not traveling alone or having males in their crew accompany them in situations that might become confrontational. At the same time, the lack of resources, recognition of this as a problem and support, primarily from employers but also from social media companies whose platforms are a vector for much online abuse, is deeply frustrating.

Identity: minority or indigenous groups, sexual orientation, disadvantaged status, or other identity

Identity (other than gender) can be an important factor in terms of the threats and risks faced by visual storytellers and journalists—either because of their own identity, or because of that of the protagonists in the project they are working on. The specific characteristics that give rise to additional risks differ from country to country, but patterns are clearly distinguishable—from published research as well as from the interviews carried out for this study. The following characteristics were highlighted by interviewees, or have been identified in previous research as placing visual storytellers and journalists at risk (including from discrimination within their own professional communities):^{xxii}

- sexual orientation: reporting on and documenting LGBTQI issues, or by LGBTQI journalists, filmmakers or artists, attracts backlash in many countries and regions across the world
- membership of a minority ethnic group
- member of an indigenous community
- disadvantaged or lower status in society

This should not be taken as an exhaustive list; from country to country, region to region, society to society, there may be additional factors (or some of the above factors may not apply). Furthermore, just looking at each of these characteristics in isolation is likely to give a false picture; an intersectional approach to risk assessment is needed, taking in all the above characteristics as well as gender. For example, indigenous women journalists, or lesbian women journalists, are significantly more likely to suffer online attacks than white heterosexual female journalists.^{xxiii}

As with the risks and challenges facing female journalists, the underlying causes of violence against individuals on the basis of their identity and the challenges they face are deeply rooted and not easily

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addressed.¹⁰ Within the context of this study, on safety and resources available to visual storytellers, those interviewed acknowledged the risks, included them in their risk assessments and took mitigating factors. Avoiding risks altogether is impossible, particularly if the core message of the project is about the social justice and human rights issues facing, for example, LGBTI people in a conservative society and features specific individuals: in these cases, filmmakers need to plan ahead and put in place contingencies to protect their protagonists post-publication.¹¹

Lacking the support of large media company or production house

Financial and economic issues were highlighted in many of the interviews conducted for this research, with interviewees pointing out that visual storytellers and journalists who work independently are often at far greater risk than those who work for a large media outlet or production company. Freelancers lack the resources of a company to draw on in terms of risk assessments, prevention and mitigation, or to fall back on in case of threats; and they are usually¹² in a more precarious financial position generally and less likely to be able to invest in safety resources. Covid-19 has made the situation of freelancers even more precarious, with recent research indicating that the pandemic has been especially difficult for independent reporters in countries such as Brazil, India, Nigeria or Vietnam, compounding their already difficult situation.^{xxiv} The implications for safety are not just financial: freelance visual storytellers and journalists also lack a supportive structure to fall back on. A journalist employed in a large media house is likely to be required to follow various safety protocols; a freelancer, by comparison, needs to make a concerted effort to seek out guidance and resources. As became clear from the interviews conducted for this study, they often learned by trial and error; not an optimal way of dealing with potentially life-threatening security issues. Organizations such as the Rory Peck Trust understand this and exist specifically to offer assistance for the safety of freelance journalists.

C. Threats

The threats that visual storytellers and journalists are exposed to fall into several distinct categories:

- Physical threats, to their life and security
- Threats of legal action and imprisonment
- Digital threats, threatening the security of communications as well as the safety and integrity of recorded materials
- Reputational threats, through smear campaigns that undermine the integrity of journalists and artists (for example by portraying them as “terrorists” or “terrorist sympathizers”)
- Trolling and other attacks
- Threats to psychosocial well-being, as a result of the direct threats suffered but also in the form of secondary trauma, as a result of witnessing and documenting human rights violations

¹⁰ Some interviewees for this study talked about deep seated racism built into the structure of society and lingering colonial attitudes as underlying factors that exacerbate risks to certain groups.

¹¹ Peter Murimi, director of *I Am Samuel*, a documentary that portrays a gay man living in Kenya, has spoken about how he had to put in place “drastic measures ... for their security”: Talking to “I am Samuel” Director Peter Murimi: <https://alt-africa.com/2021/04/08/talking-to-i-am-samuel-director-peter-murimi/> (Murimi was also interviewed for this study).

¹² There are of course exceptions, and regional variations are significant: a freelance journalist from the UK or US may well be better resourced than a journalist employed by a media house in, say, Uganda or Tanzania.

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- Financial or economic threats

In addition to these threats, which were relevant even before the pandemic, many interviewees experienced Covid-19 as a threat to their health, their livelihood, and an exacerbating factor of other threats.

Each of these threats has specific consequences, and countering them requires a specific understanding of its nature. The following salient features need to be understood and taken into account.

Physical violence

Physical threats range from verbal to actual harm, endangering personal safety as well as equipment such as cameras, film, hard disks and other tools. In extreme cases, visual storytellers and journalists have been murdered or suffered severe physical injury; more commonly, they are threatened with violence or their equipment is damaged or destroyed. While the problem is very urgent in Central and South America, as evidenced in the country studies in Annex 1 to this report, risks are rising even in established democracies and countries previously regarded as “safe.” In the Netherlands—often thought of as a bulwark of democracy—the national broadcaster recently decided to remove its logo from company vehicles because of persistent violence and threats of violence, and photojournalists have been violently attacked while on assignment.^{xxv} In Denmark and Sweden—ranked third and fourth in Reporters Without Borders’ World Press Freedom Index—journalists have recently been murdered for their work.^{xxvi} Safety should never be taken for granted.

A range of safety needs arises from the threat of violence, including: personal protective equipment, safety plans and routines that minimize the risk of violence, protection plans for equipment, and medical assistance and evacuation plans. The complexity of responding to physical threats is not to be underestimated. Local knowledge is crucial and training is essential—as is conducting a threat and risk assessment that includes the entire team. Several filmmakers and safety professionals interviewed gave examples of instances where filmmakers had done projects without sufficient risk planning, and how they had ended up in trouble as a result (there were also examples of good practice, but the number of poor practices reported by interviewees was disturbing).¹³

Legal

Legal threats vary enormously, and visual storytellers and journalists should understand the potential of a threatening lawsuit and have a plan to deal with it, working with lawyers who can provide advice. Specific threats differ from country to country and between different legal systems (and sometimes, in federated countries such as the United States, the law can change from state to state). Broadly speaking, the following threats can be identified:

- Laws that prohibit or restrict newsgathering, filming or recording activities. This can include national laws but also local orders and bye-laws that may restrict filming in places (for example, in or nearby courts, police stations, military locations, power plants, nature reserves, or otherwise sensitive installations);
- Laws that prohibit or place restrictions on what can be published, such as statutes on defamation, privacy, state secrets and obscenity;

¹³ Interviewees did not name anyone engaged in poor practices by name, but the issue was a consistent theme across a number of interviews.

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- Administrative laws and procedures that regulate filmmaking and journalism, for example by requiring permits or licenses (in many countries there are specific requirements for foreign journalists and filmmakers), and limit or regulate the showing of films;
- Employment laws that govern hiring of staff and crew;
- Tax laws.

Each of these laws can be used against visual storytellers and journalists in different ways. In a straightforward and obvious application, visual storytellers and journalists may be detained for filming in a sensitive location without a permit, or they may be sued for defamation or infringement of privacy when a particular report places someone in a bad light or discloses private matters. But these laws may also be used in a more unexpected and politically motivated way: tax and employment laws, for example, may be used to clamp down on visual storytellers and journalists who are aligned with the opposition. It should be noted that legal proceedings can take years to conclude, and even when a visual storyteller or journalist eventually wins a case that victory is bittersweet. Being dragged through legal proceedings for years on end, often with little support, can be a punishment and a significant deterrent.¹⁴ Increasingly, in many countries legal cases become a form of harassment to deter reporting on sensitive issues. Such cases, known as SLAPP lawsuits (Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation) can halt reporting on certain issues for the duration of proceedings. Deep-pocketed claimants for whom a few tens of thousands of dollars spent on lawyers' fees is simply a cost of doing business can easily frustrate the work of a visual storyteller or journalist just by forcing them through legal proceedings, incurring legal costs they can't afford.^{xxvii}

Interviewees in some countries also mentioned copyright law as a threat: this was the case especially in countries where copyright law allows very limited exceptions and journalists, artists and filmmakers may be sued for using logos or other copyrighted materials in their work.¹⁵ Finally, in a number of countries, film censorship boards exist and their certification mechanisms are a gatekeeper for public screenings as well as sales—including through mechanisms such as 18+ certificates on films deemed controversial. Navigating these film censorship laws (and potentially challenging their constitutionality) is a particular skill that not many lawyers have.

Conversely, there are scenarios where visual storytellers and journalists need the protection of the law as well. Copyright law is an obvious example (to protect and be able to generate an income from their work). Laws that govern issues such as access to information can enable journalists to access government documents that shine a light on issues they are reporting on.

Visual storytellers and journalists—and those who provide resources for legal protection—need to be aware that each of the above areas is a niche area of specialization within the law. No single lawyer can be an expert in all of them (beware a lawyer who claims otherwise!), and it can be necessary to hire lawyers in different countries for different aspects of a project. As a result, it is not unusual for several different lawyers to be involved in a film, journalism or art project, at various stages and in

¹⁴ The notion that 'the process is the punishment' is well known among defense lawyers in numerous countries (the phrase was originally coined in relation to criminal proceedings in lower courts in the United States by Professor Malcolm Feeley).

¹⁵ See, for example, Danish artist Nadia Plesner's three year battle with Luis Vuitton over her use of the LV logo in artwork: Art Newspaper, Artist chronicles fight with Louis Vuitton, 8 June 2015: <https://www.theartnewspaper.com/news/artist-chronicles-fight-with-louis-vuitton>

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multiple countries—perhaps under the supervision of a single law firm that has the lead and is the main point of contact for the journalist, artist or filmmaker.¹⁶

Not many filmmakers mentioned legal threats as a particular area of risk—but those who did noted how serious the legal threats can be, and urged their colleagues to be more mindful of them. Lawyers interviewed for this study indicated that they often were consulted when it was “already too late”—they wished their advice had been sought earlier when problems were preventable (and seeking their advice earlier would also have been cheaper for the filmmaker or journalists concerned).¹⁷ This indicates a lower-than-ideal level of awareness of this particular risk category.

Digital

Many interviewees mentioned digital threats as a concern. The threats ranged from threats to the security of communications, through the interception of email and phone calls, to the digital security of materials, in particular film. Many visual storytellers and journalists interviewed for this study had attended digital security trainings and praised their usefulness, but for one reason or other were not always implementing the skills they learned in practice. Reasons for this varied from a lack of understanding, the perceived complexity of secure technologies, partners or others not understanding the risks, underestimating the extent of the risk, to lacking the resources. As a result, digital security is a vulnerability for many visual storytellers and journalists, their crew as well as their protagonists and others with whom they work.

The resources required to minimize and mitigate digital risks are a combination of free communication tools, such as Signal for secure messaging, Proton for encrypted email, and Jitsi or Wire for online messaging and videoconferencing,¹⁸ and more expensive hardware—for example, phones or laptops that are completely wiped before and after trips to areas where such equipment may be at risk of being compromised. The primary requirement, however, is sustained training, not just as a one-off but combined with actual work: the tools may be free or, for the most part, relatively inexpensive, but the real requirement is knowledge and experience in how to use secure digital tools appropriately (even secure communications may be compromised when one person in the chain of communication fails to adhere to security protocols and has a weak password, for example) and embed their usage among the entire team or crew. Interviewees mentioned that while the training courses were useful, to implement learnings in practice they needed refreshers—and, ideally, someone to advise them at the start of a project on digital safety specifically in the context of that project.

Reputational threats and smear campaigns

It is not uncommon for high profile projects, visual storytellers and journalists to be subject to reputational attacks in an effort to undermine their credibility. Not all interviewees mentioned this as a risk but, as with legal threats, those who did and who had personal experience of reputational threats and smear campaigns emphasized the seriousness. Some attacks rise to an extraordinary level,

¹⁶ Moreover, a filmmaker, artist or journalist needs the protection of a lawyer who understands journalism, art or the filmmaking process. Doc Society’s Safe and Secure handbook as an elaborate chapter on legal risks and safety and the considerations to be taken into account in arranging legal support: October 2019, <https://safeandsecure.film/legal-safety>.

¹⁷ The lead author of this study has extensive personal experience of this in his capacity as Legal Director and CEO of the Media Defence, an NGO that provides legal support to independent media.

¹⁸ These are but a few of the many tools available.

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involving well-funded PR agencies as well as certain media (owned by or aligned with whatever corporate or political interest is behind the attack) over a sustained period of time. Examples mentioned by interviewees included propaganda campaigns against movies like *The White Helmets*, which tied in with a broader pro-Russia campaign discrediting volunteer rescuers in Syria by linking them with Al-Qaida.^{xxviii} Previous studies have identified numerous other instances of propaganda campaigns discrediting filmmakers led by the fossil fuel industry and pharmaceutical companies;^{xxix} similar tactics are also used against human rights defenders (some of whom have, in turn, used art projects to counter disinformation narratives).^{xxx} The consequences of reputational attacks can be serious: films or journalism projects can fail to get distribution or syndication deals, and donors or funders can get nervous, particularly when they are targeted as well (ideally, funders should stand by the work they invested in but regrettably this isn't always the case as one interview indicated). Smear campaigns can also contribute to serious psychosocial trauma.^{xxxi}

Significant resources are required to respond to reputational attacks. Ideally, visual storytellers and journalists should have communications and impact strategies ready when a film launches (or at other opportune times) but the funding isn't always available. Sometimes, a reputational attack can be on such a large scale that responding to it simply outstrips the resources that the visual storytellers or journalist had planned for, and a crisis response needs to be formulated—either by the visual storyteller or journalist her or himself, or with the help of a crisis communications expert (which would typically require additional budget). In practice it is often up to the visual storyteller to respond, learning as they go along, through trial and error. Depending on how sustained the reputational attack is, this can become a long and ongoing effort—even leading to follow-up film or journalistic projects—and often involving NGOs as well (who can be strong allies because of the expert knowledge they have as well as their links with affected communities).^{xxxii} Equally, sometimes corporates misjudge their response and their PR strategy ends up garnering more sympathy for the activists or filmmakers.¹⁹

Trolling

Online trolling—posting abusive comments on social media—is a specific type of reputational attack that is increasingly used to attack visual storytellers and journalists and others who speak out on controversial issues. Some of the trolling is carried out by lone individuals, but a disturbing number of attacks is organized through so-called “troll farms,” “troll armies” of hired individuals, or by using bots.^{xxxiii} The Chinese government has long been employing a troll army—nicknamed the 50 Cent Army, after the fifty cents they reportedly get paid per post—to post pro-regime content and discredit anti-regime information.^{xxxiv} Other governments do the same.^{xxxv} The President of the Philippines Rodrigo Duterte is linked to a group known as Duterte Diehard Supporters (the acronym mimicking the Davao Death Squad, a vigilante group responsible for summary executions in the city of Davao during Duterte's tenure as mayor), who engage in ruthless online trolling of activists and anyone seen as opponents.

¹⁹ A well-known example of this in the UK is the so-called McLibel case, when McDonalds went after its critics in an overly aggressive way, smearing them and dragging them through a defamation case that was resulted in far more criticism of McDonalds than the activists could otherwise have achieved.

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Journalists' organizations have reported that those who report on politics or topics such as the extreme right, race relations, and issues around feminism and women's rights are particularly likely to be targeted by trolls.^{xxxvi} Tactics employed by trolls include spreading lies, smears and disinformation, threatening violence (including, for women, disturbing sexual violence and threats against family and children), and so-called "doxxing": publishing personal information about a journalist, such as their home address or phone number. Typically, a visual storyteller or journalist who is targeted will see their social media timeline or inbox flooded with persistent threats of harm, to themselves or to their families, creating an extremely hostile environment. In a 2018 report, Reporters without Borders noted that "harassing journalists has never been as easy as it is now. Freedom of expression and bots are being used to curtail the freedom to inform ... this phenomenon is spreading throughout the world."^{xxxvii}

Female journalists are particularly targeted, often with threats of rape and sexual violence as well as threats to their children and family. Female journalists have seen their holiday pictures published online, accompanied by degrading comments, all in an effort to smear, humiliate and denigrate them and their work. The late Maltese journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia, who was murdered for her journalism, told how she had not been to the beach in four years following an incident where a group had followed her and uploaded pictures of her to Facebook.^{xxxviii} A British journalist reported receiving a message on her personal Facebook account that said, "Don't go near your granny's house in Maghera, or you'll watch your newborn get raped." The message was signed off by a notorious neo-Nazi group linked to paramilitaries and left the journalist deeply traumatized.^{xxxix}

Online trolling impacts real life: it does serious psychological harm and leads to real-world violence. Kiran Nazish, founding director of the Coalition for Women in Journalism has warned that "online trolling remains one of the most critical tools that has been weaponized against women in the media ... Threats have often leaked from the virtual into the physical world. This has resulted in physical attacks against women reporters. This is a threat to their lives. And it poses a threat to journalism itself."^{xl} An April 2021 UNESCO study says "there is nothing virtual about online violence. It has become the new frontline in journalism safety—and women journalists sit at the center of risk."^{xli}

A large percentage of trolling is on social media, and companies such as Facebook and Twitter are criticized for not doing enough to stop it.^{xlii} Media companies—who have a duty of care to ensure that their employees, including visual storytellers and journalists, have a safe working environment—are also not doing enough and often blame their journalists or advise them to stay off social media, thus depriving them of audience interaction which could be beneficial.^{xliii}

Financial threats

Many interviewees—in particular, those not employed by a large media or production company—highlighted that they experienced the financially precarious nature of their profession as an inherent threat, and one that exacerbates other threats. Living from project to project, each of them financed part by part from various sources, does not allow them to invest in long-term safety, whether in the form of equipment or through training. Some interviews show that some visual storytellers and journalists, especially in the global south, are so challenged by the financial and other hardships that worrying about security becomes almost a luxury—until an incident happens at which point security becomes an issue of the highest urgency. In this sense, financial insecurity exacerbates other threats;

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but financial insecurity is a threat to reporting and filmmaking in itself when filmmakers and journalists are forced to abort projects.²⁰ A number of interviewees told us that financial security was a prerequisite to physical security and pushed for support for initiatives such as a living wage for freelance journalists and a basic income for artists or filmmakers.²¹

Covid-19

The impact of Covid-19 has been serious across all of society, in terms of public health as well as its financial implications. No sector in society has been spared, and visual storytellers and journalists have been hard-hit along with everyone else. Thousands of journalists have been made redundant as media have been forced into drastic budget cuts.^{xliiv} Many freelancers or those employed by small production companies have not been able to work because of lock-down restrictions, for health reasons or otherwise, and have seen their income dry up as a result. Many already lived a precarious financial existence, and Covid-19 pushed many off the financial edge. Several interviewees described how they had been forced to stop filmmaking and sought paid employment of whatever sort in order to provide for their families. Some civil society groups have been able to make Covid-19 related emergency funds available, a welcome move that has not made up for the shortfall in income that many have experienced—and the very civil society groups providing the assistance have also had to deal with shortfalls in their budgets.^{xliv}

Along with the financial impact, the pandemic has had a huge impact on the professional practice of visual storytellers and journalists. As described above, authoritarian repression of independent journalists has increased,^{xlvi} governments instituted reporting and movement restrictions, and visual storytellers and journalists who go out to document and report do so with very real dangers to themselves and their crews' health.

This raises practical, legal as well as ethical questions: even when it is possible to go out and film or report, is it ethical to do so? What kind of threats can filmmakers and journalists expect, and what are their subjects or protagonists exposed to? How should filmmakers and journalists incorporate Covid-19 related considerations into their risk assessment? Several journalist and filmmaker organizations have produced field guides addressing these and related questions.^{xlvii}

Psychosocial pressure and threats

Several visual storytellers and journalists interviewed for this study mentioned suffering damage to their mental health as a result of their work, in two different ways:

- trauma and stress as a result of the threats and attacks described in this chapter (the legal attacks, the physical violence and threats, the reputational smears, the trolling, the financial pressure, the worry of Covid)
- secondary trauma suffered by journalists and filmmakers as a result of the situations they document and report on (ranging from violence and human rights violations to hospitals overflowing with Covid-19 patients)

²⁰ We heard from some interviewees who had to abandon projects and find other work to support themselves and their families.

²¹ Referred to by some interviewees as FBI: Filmmakers Basic Income.

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Secondary trauma affects not just war correspondents or journalists and filmmakers who report on stressful and traumatic events such as human rights violations; it also affects journalists who report on “mundane” events such as car accidents or sexual harassment—what one academic refers to as “the daily grind of trauma.”^{xlviii} Research conducted by Columbia University’s Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma indicated that the vast majority (92%) of journalists have had repeated exposure to traumatic events. While most are remarkably resilient, a significant minority are at risk of long-term psychological problems, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The Dart research reported a high incidence of PTSD for photojournalists and those reporting on war, ethnic violence, and the drug trade. Other studies highlighted high levels of PTSD for those covering natural disasters and those exposed to violent imagery through user-generated content.^{xlix}

Several interviewees reported suffering from direct trauma as a result of their work. This could be due to the impact of threats that had been made against them, the stress of defending lawsuits and the resulting financial consequences or threat of prison, worrying about the safety of protagonists and contributors, or others in the crew who were under threat, or related reasons. Working with vulnerable protagonists and contributors is a particular cause of stress. In a 2019 report on documentary and factual television broadcasting, all those interviewed mentioned significant strains associated with this. Nearly all identified a lack of training or preparation in how to build appropriately bounded relationships with contributors, minimize harm during interviews, and understand contributors’ reactions.¹

All those who had suffered mental health problems reported struggling for resources to help. While there is increasing attention to providing psychological support to journalists in larger media organizations, smaller outlets lack the resources to provide comprehensive counselling and may only be able to offer limited access to counsellors. It often becomes a kind of box-ticking exercise, and without recognizing that management often can do more to provide support and that the onus should not be on the individual journalist to seek help. Freelancers and the vast majority of documentary filmmakers lack any kind of support; those interviewed for this study reported finding for themselves best they could (one had accessed a course, others reported just “getting on with it”). Academic research suggests that many journalists don’t receive support, and a significant proportion self-medicate, including through alcohol and substance abuse.^{li} The one sector in which there appears to be some recognition of the issue of trauma is television broadcasting.

The importance of a holistic approach

It is important to understand that the risks and threats outlined above are rarely faced in isolation from each other. One cannot be classed as more harmful than the other. For example, it is very common for a lawsuit to be brought alongside a PR or smear campaign, and countering on both fronts can be a heavy burden. A Nigerian anti-corruption activist fighting lawsuits and an orchestrated smear campaign against him spoke of needing to hire PR consultants as well as lawyers to defend him.^{lii} There are many examples of visual storytellers and journalists forced to defend threats on multiple fronts, not always successfully. A particularly serious example of that is the situation of the late Maltese journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia, who reported on corruption in politics. A popular journalist known as a “one-woman Wikileaks,” she was the subject of a government smear campaign, dozens of lawsuits lodged against her in Malta and abroad and death threats. When she resisted these attempts to silence her, she was brutally assassinated by a car bomb.^{liii} The case of Saudi journalist

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Jamal Khashoggi is another example: he received death threats, suffered an online smear campaign and trolling and was under surveillance prior to his assassination. It is suspected that spyware on his phone may have helped his murderers.^{liv}

Visual storytellers and journalists who seek assistance from civil society organizations or others to help counter threats usually ask for assistance in several respects. For example, they might seek help with defending a legal case, psychosocial support and financial support for medical bills incurred as a result of a physical attack. Civil society organizations and others who respond to these requests need to be attuned to all of this. Organizations that specialize in one or other form of assistance, such as Media Defence who provide legal assistance or Troll Busters who help counter online trolling, need to be well-networked with organizations that can help with other forms of assistance.^{lv}

D. Threats against protagonists, families and communities

It is not just visual storytellers and journalists who face risks. Our interviewees indicated that all those involved in the production process are at risk, including film crews—permanent as well as those hired for specific aspects of a project, including local crew and drivers.

In the case of documentary film projects, protagonists and communities featured in films (or where filming takes place, or who are otherwise affected) can be at a high risk as well—often they are at a far greater risk than filmmakers because of the issues that they are usually already involved in and because of the visibility that they will have when the film is published. Field guides remind filmmakers that they have a moral duty of care toward protagonists and local communities as well as a legal duty to represent them fairly and appropriately.^{lvi} Some documentary filmmakers interviewed for this study went to extraordinary lengths to assist protagonists under threat, sometimes spending sizeable sums of money of their own to help a protagonist leave the country.

This is another important point of difference between filmmakers and journalists; journalists rarely get this close to their sources. At the same time, we also heard many examples where filmmakers did not practice such care, parachuting into communities to film and then leaving without much care or attention to safety issues that their film might have caused or contributed to.

Practice among protection organizations varies, and as a result it can be very difficult for protagonists to access support. Some protection organizations are restricted by their mandate or their donors from assisting protagonists; others have made a conscious choice. The International Coalition for the Protection of Filmmakers at Risk told us that they decided to focus only on the protection of filmmakers, not protagonists, to be able to use their limited resources as effectively as possible.^{lvii} Various interviewees indicated that protagonists at risk were more likely to be able to get assistance from human rights defenders organizations. One filmmaker who tried to access relocation resources for a protagonist who had come under threat described her amazement when she discovered that there is a sizeable group of organizations that can be called upon to help human rights defenders (not something that is taught at film school).

Interviewees also described how threats were made to their family or the family of protagonists. This tactic has been well-documented by human rights groups^{lviii} and most protection organizations

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understand that assistance is required even if no direct threats have been made against the family. In the case of at-risk journalists, artists or filmmakers with young families, protection measures are often needed for the entire family. One interviewee representing a protection organization spoke, in the context of a discussion of safe havens and temporary refuge, of how it's not feasible to expect a young mother to leave her family, no matter how grave the risk to her individually, and so any protection measures have to cover the entire family.

E. Needs

The safety needs of visual storytellers and journalists correspond with the threats outlined above and depend on the gravity of the situation. In a nutshell, they include the following:

- Legal assistance, including with:
 - o risk assessment
 - o legal issues concerning newsgathering or filming
 - o pre-publication legal assessment (colloquially known as “libel reading” but the assessment should include all legal risks)
 - o post-publication issues, including handling any lawsuits or threats of lawsuits
 - o rights clearance and protecting the creative rights of the artist
 - o administrative, employment, tax and assorted other (but all of them important!) legal issues
- Digital security resources, including:
 - o secure communications
 - o secure storage
 - o secure hardware, or single use equipment such as phones/laptops
- Public relations assistance
- Medical assistance
- Psycho-social assistance
- Relocation or safe havens, whether temporary or permanent
- Financial assistance, either for living expenses for the duration of an emergency or to help pay for assistance in any of the above categories

Many of these resources are required during risk assessment and planning as well as to react to any threats. For example, lawyers or digital security specialists should be involved early on in a project to assess and mitigate risks; public relations experts could be engaged around the planning of an impact campaign as well as to hedge against any adverse PR campaigns (or, more bluntly put, smear campaigns); and psychosocial and trauma counsellors could be involved during the planning stages of a project with aspects that are traumatizing as well as to provide counselling afterwards. However, it became clear from the interviews conducted for this study that expert assistance was often only sought reactively following a threat. Legal and security experts who were interviewed told us that in many cases, it would have been better if they had been consulted earlier on: instead of “picking up the pieces,” they could have helped prevent or mitigate risks, the threat would have had less impact, and the overall financial cost would have likely been cheaper as well. Fighting a defamation case, for example, is usually far more expensive than advising on how to avoid the risk of being sued for defamation.

III. Safety and Security: threats and needs

These needs are very similar to the needs of human rights and environmental defenders: they, too, face legal threats, threats to their physical safety and security, digital threats, smear campaigns and so forth. In practice, the security experts, lawyers and other professionals who provide assistance to filmmakers and journalists also work with human rights organizations. There are some differences: for example, specific legal expertise is required on issues such as rights clearance, not something that human rights defenders would expect to have to deal with, and security experts working with filmmakers and journalists need to have technical knowhow in relation to film equipment.

Across different regions, interviewees from protection organizations saw a marked increase in requests for support. One protection organization in the Middle East noted “a real surge in applications” since 2019. Another, representing a safe haven assistance organization in the US, said that they had received a lot more requests in 2021, particularly from filmmakers. There may be different explanations for this, including the launch of the Artists at Risk Connection (ARC) guide in early 2021 which will have helped artists find organizations who can help them, but the increase in numbers indicates an undeniable need.

IV. Risk assessment, mitigation, and protection strategies

A. Current safety practices

The safety practices of visual storytellers and journalists interviewed for this study ranged enormously. Practices varied depending on many factors, including location, the issue being reported on or documented, whether or not a project was deemed urgent, the experience of the team or individuals involved and resources available. No hard and fast rules emerged. We heard of really poor safety practices by relatively well-resourced western visual storytellers and journalists; and comparatively excellent security practices by visual storytellers and journalists in poor communities who hardly had any resources. Even among experienced visual storytellers and journalists there was no consistency: some had excellent safety practices, others didn't.

Field guides such as Doc Society's *Safe and Secure* (for documentary filmmakers),^{lix} and the guides available from organizations such as the Committee to Protect Journalists and the Rory Peck Trust (for journalists)^{lx} represent the gold standard in risk assessment, mitigation and protection. We heard from some visual storytellers and journalists who followed these—or adapted version tailored to their circumstances—to the letter: following the checklists provided in these guides they carried out thorough risk assessments, with their entire team or crew, they involved external help when necessary during the preparatory stage in formulating security responses, they arranged for external help on standby in cases needed (for example, lawyers, should there be legal challenges), they addressed potential security risks for protagonists and communities. Safety-aware thinking permeates all aspects of their project, including impact strategies.

Specific good practices are listed in the field guides referred to above and need not be repeated here. A few stood out, however, particularly for visual storytellers and journalists in remote locations or who work with communities:

- Several interviewees emphasized the strength that can be found in networks. Those who work solo are far more vulnerable and will find it hard to access resources in case of emergency; visual storytellers and journalists who work in or are part of networks (even as rudimentary as WhatsApp groups) find strength in these solidarity networks.
- In cases of immediate risks or threats to safety, working in groups is far safer than working solo.
- When filming or working in communities, respect them and their agency, treat them as partners and adopt their safety and security practices.
- Transparency is crucial: crew, protagonists and communities should be made fully aware of the risks involved in a project, otherwise they won't be able to give their informed consent.
- When there are safety threats to members of the community where filming takes place, be community-centered in the response.
- If a project is likely to have aspects of significant risk and threats (for example, reporting on far-right activists, or environmental activists whose protests are likely to provoke a response that may turn violent), integrate self-care and well-being opportunities throughout the project for the entire crew and protagonists.

IV. Risk assessment, mitigation, and protection strategies

- Protagonists' and community wishes should always be respected, even if they decide to pull out and if that means that (extensive) footage cannot be used.
- Budgets should leave flexibility and cashflow to allow for a quick response to emergencies. If a filmmaker has to wait for an answer from a funder for additional resources, this delay can be very harmful.

Many of these are drawn from feminist principles toward safety and are highly recommended as good practice for all (feminism isn't just for women).

However, a disturbing number of interviewees did not prioritize safety and security, or (more frequently) said that they knew of others who didn't. Wildlife documentaries were named as a particular genre with poor safety practices particularly as concerns communities: film crews often parachute in, with private armed security, have no idea of the impact that they and their work have on local communities, and then leave again.

Some interviewees were well aware of the measures they should be putting in place but could access them, mainly for financial reasons. For example:

- Numerous interviewees mentioned that they could not afford to access legal advice or digital security advice or equipment
- Several interviewees expressed that they could not afford to obtain insurance, even though they were aware of its importance
- Some interviewees could not afford personal protection equipment

Finance was an obvious hurdle for many. Equally, interviewees indicated that not all safety strategies are dependent on resources. Examples that were given included:

- Involving local communities, who are usually the experts when it comes to safety, and informing yourself fully of the safety situation and risks in a particular location before filming
- Not traveling alone
- Not drawing attention to yourself, for example using small vehicles and less obtrusive or less obviously expensive equipment
- For female visual storytellers and journalists, traveling with trusted male colleagues

B. Drivers for safety practices and the role of funders

The reasons and drivers for poor safety and security practices identified in the course of interviews and research conducted for this study are quite complex, and included complacency, a lack of awareness, a lack of training and a lack of finance and resources (and often a combination of these).

Complacency occurred among filmmakers who are routinely exposed to risks and become desensitized as a result, who might live in dangerous areas, and overlapped with a lack of awareness—some simply underestimate the severity of risk or just how the security situation in some countries has deteriorated very rapidly (especially during, and under the cover of, the Covid-19 pandemic).^{lxi} Complacency extended to some film funders as well (although others were very well aware and proactive about safety of projects they funded).

Many visual storytellers and journalists interviewed for this study indicated that they had very little training on security issues. Those who had attended journalism or film school complained that while

IV. Risk assessment, mitigation, and protection strategies

there had been some attention to media law, there had been very little attention to other practical safety issues. This was the case regardless of whether they had attended a well-resourced (usually western) institution or a less well-resourced film or journalism school. There was simply insufficient attention. This meant that most interviewees, and certainly those who lacked the backing of a large employer, were self-taught and had very little to fall back on other than their own experience.

The safety professionals interviewed for this study indicated that poor or insufficient risk assessment forms are another driver of risk. Many forms lack detail or skip over entire areas and completing them gives the filmmaker a false sense of security. For example, some assessment forms have only one or two questions dealing with legal risks, inviting a box to be ticked without really probing potential risks. Other forms don't ask about safety issues related to protagonists or communities.²² A related poor practice is that risk assessments are often done by one or at most two persons, when they should be done with the entire crew—crucial to identifying risks as well as to seeding a culture of safety among everyone.

A number of those who were more safety-aware often told us that they simply lacked the financial resources, as indicated above. In relation to this, it was suggested by a number of interviewees that funders could play a much stronger role in securing safety by being more proactive with filmmakers, and that media companies should place a far greater emphasis on safety for their employees as well as freelancers whom they hire for assignments.

Some funders told us that they placed a lot of faith in the filmmakers they funded, including that the filmmakers would put in place—and request budget for—whatever security measures are needed. Many of the interviews that we conducted for this study suggested that this confidence is misplaced: many filmmakers are likely to underestimate risks, and those who are aware of the risks may downplay them to the funder for fear of losing funding altogether (the fear being that if the funder becomes aware of risk associated with the project, they may pull out or decline). Other filmmakers were worried that safety and security costs would inflate the budget and take away from financial resources needed for what they perceive to be more important production budget lines. We even heard that some filmmakers were reticent to talk about risks they have faced for fear of being seen as “amateurish.”

One funder, keen to improve—and provide funding for—safety practices of filmmakers, told of how he had sat down with filmmakers and took them through an assessment of the legal risks for a particular project that was being planned. As a result of that exercise, the filmmakers identified a whole host of legal risks that they had not thought of previously, all of them potentially serious and with a real likelihood of occurring (not remote risks, in other words), and the funder provided resources for mitigation of these risks and legal advice (this funding was additional to other production costs). The project is stronger for it. This was not a one-off; the same funder said that in his experience, worryingly,

“Filmmakers almost always underestimate the risk.”^{xii}

²² One filmmaker suggested that a good question to ask in a risk assessment would be: “Will you be able to sleep at night when something happens to your contributors?”

IV. Risk assessment, mitigation, and protection strategies

V. Current emergency resources for safety and security of visual storytellers and journalists under threat

A. Budgeted resources

As has been mentioned previously, interviewees told us that there is a marked discrepancy between visual storytellers and journalists who are able to muster resources for their protection, and those who don't. This may seem like an obvious point and, as has been mentioned above, there are clear differences between a filmmaker who has the backing of a sizeable production company or broadcaster in the US or Europe, a freelancer in a country such as Uganda who will have far fewer resources, and a popular communicator in a country such as Brazil who, as the research showed, typically has no resources whatsoever. Even in the same country there can be marked differences: interviewees in Mexico spoke of how the security resources available to journalists from media houses or filmmakers with the backing of a production company were far superior to those of freelancers. But, as indicated in the previous section,²³ even those with resources may not be following best practices, carry out inadequate risk assessments, underestimate risks and threats, or safety resources may not be available in the country or region where they work. There simply isn't a uniform picture.

For the purposes of this report, to inform donor strategy, the salient point is that it should not be taken for granted that visual storytellers have either budgeted for sufficient resources or (as we heard repeatedly) that they have conducted a sufficient risk assessment.

The following paragraphs go through the resources that are available to visual storytellers and journalists when they come under threat and don't have resources of their own to fall back on. Since visual storytellers and journalists in this situation will typically lack the resources to access assistance from commercial providers, this section is focused on resources that are available for free or at a small fee (in other words, donor-supported in some form or other).

B. Guides and training

A number of NGOs have provided safety guides that are freely available online. The guide mentioned most by the English speaking filmmakers who were interviewed is *Safe and Secure*, produced by Doc Society, which interviewees described as extremely useful and practical and praised for its range (it has chapters on dealing with physical security, as well as on digital, legal threats and PR threats, and threats to subjects).^{lxiii} *Safe and Secure* aims to be as pragmatic as possible and includes a hostile filming protocol, which provides a ready-made template for filmmakers and teams that aims to “remove unnecessary risk, minimize possible risk, and have a contingency plan for the rest.”^{lxiv} *Safe*

²³ The point is repeated here because it is an important one, and some readers may have skipped over the previous section.

V. Current resources for safety and security of visual storytellers and journalists

and *Secure*'s 2019 update revised the guide, adding legal chapters on Indian and Brazilian law and translations into Spanish and Portuguese.

Several other interviewees mentioned the resources provided by the A Culture of Safety (ACOS) Alliance as being particularly useful; this includes guides on safety in the context of Covid-19, covering civil unrest, trauma and journalism, various forms of insurance available to freelancers, and industry standards for safety training.^{lxv} Artists At Risk Connection, a project of PEN America, launched a safety guide early in 2021 specifically aimed at the safety risks of artists. Available in English, Spanish and French, it includes sections on identifying risks, carrying out risk assessments, digital safety, documenting threats, accessing emergency assistance, self-care and recovery, and was praised by some interviewees as being extremely pragmatic and useful.^{lxvi}

Other guides and training manuals include:

- Umbrella, an all-in-one app for digital and physical security designed for journalists, aid workers, human rights activists, and people travelling in high-risk areas, developed by Security First, an organization that provides security to activists (<https://secfirst.org/umbrella/>);
- Various courses through the Totem learning platform, a digital security and privacy resource for journalists, activists and human rights defenders developed by Greenhost and Free Press Unlimited (and to which various organizations have contributed content, available in English, French, Arabic, Spanish and Farsi) (<https://totem-project.org/>);
- Trollbusters' digital defense course for journalists (<http://www.troll-busters.com/>);
- Various training and security guides produced by Reporters without Borders Helpdesk (<https://helpdesk.rsf.org/>);
- Various training and security guides developed and collated by the Committee to Protect Journalists (<https://cpj.org/emergency-response/pre-assignment-preparations/>);
- Various resources for freelance journalists and filmmakers developed by the Rory Peck Trust, available in English, French, Spanish, Russian, Ukrainian, Arabic, Kiswahili and Farsi (<https://rorypecktrust.org/freelance-resources/>);
- Various guides and training manuals for documentary filmmakers assembled by the Center for Media and Social Impact (<https://cmsimpact.org/resource/dangerous-documentaries-resources-for-filmmakers-2/>);
- Various webinars developed by UNESCO (<https://en.unesco.org/themes/fostering-freedom-expression/online-courses>);
- PEN America's online harassment field manual (<https://onlineharassmentfieldmanual.pen.org/>);
- Online SOS, a listing of various guides and resources available to journalists (<https://onlinesos.org/resources-list-journalists-online-harassment>);
- Internews' *SaferJourno* guide, aimed at teaching journalists about digital safety and online security, available in English and Spanish (<http://saferjourno.internews.org/>);
- Electronic Frontier Foundation's guides and tools on surveillance self-defense, available in Amharic, Arabic, English, Russian, French, Turkish, Vietnamese, Portuguese, Thai, Urdu and Spanish (<https://ssd.eff.org/>);
- *The Digital First Aid Kit*, a comprehensive digital security guide from the Computer Incident Response Center for Civil Society, available in Arabic, French, English, Russian, Portuguese, Albanian and Spanish (<https://digitalfirstaid.org>);

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- IREX's *SAFE Basic Training Curriculum for Media Practitioners and Social Communicators*, available in Arabic, English, Russian, Somali and Spanish (<https://www.irex.org/resource/safe-basic-training-curriculum-media-practitioners-and-social-communicators/>);
- Digital Rights Foundation Pakistan's guides on digital security, digital detox and self-care, and mental health (<https://digitalrightsfoundation.pk/services/>)

In addition to these guides, most of which are aimed at a global (and mainly, English, French or Spanish-speaking) audience, there are also many country-specific guides. This is particularly relevant when it comes to legal guides, since, while digital threats may be similar from country to country, the law is different.^{lxvii} All these guides are primarily aimed at journalists and human rights activists, but because of the overlapping threats they will also be useful to filmmakers and artists, as well as to others who have need of safety advice in different scenarios. The list is by no means comprehensive; there are many others.

Despite these many materials on offer, it was striking that a number of interviewees, when asked what guides, training manuals or other resources they relied on, said that they were not aware of any. This lack of awareness of the various guides is perhaps explained by a focus on the production of materials, and a lack of resources among the NGOs that produce them to engage in sustained outreach and training on the basis of the guides. Others critiqued online guides as employing too much of a one size fits all, cookie-cutter approach and said that the safety trainings that they would like to access were too expensive.

A number of the NGOs interviewed indicated that they would like to be able to provide more training, but that they simply did not have the resources to do so. Some are in fact able to provide a considerable amount of training, others less so—there was no consistent pattern. The following were highlighted as some that were particularly useful:

- IREX's *SAFE Basic Training Curriculum for Media Practitioners and Social Communicators*, which provides trainings in Central America, Eurasia, East Africa, and the Middle East & North Africa;^{lxviii}
- Trainings and retreats provided by the Dart Center on Journalism and Trauma;^{lxix}
- Trainings provided by RISC (Reporters Instructed in Saving Colleagues).^{lxx}

Some of the trainings also got critical assessments. Interviewees in Central America frequently said that trainings conducted in their countries by European and US NGOs were insufficiently tailored to their reality—presumably, despite the best efforts of the trainers.

In addition to these, which are available for free or at cost price, there are a number of commercial providers of safety training. These tend to be expensive; many interviewees thought they were beyond their budget (particularly hostile environment trainings). A few organizations make grants available for safety training—the Rory Peck Trust, for example—but their capacity is limited.^{lxxi}

C. Emergency support

V. Current resources for safety and security of visual storytellers and journalists

A large number of organizations *could* provide emergency support to visual storytellers and journalists. The word “could” is italicized to emphasize that in order to access support, visual storytellers and journalists, and in particular filmmakers, will need to look beyond organizations that advertise themselves as serving them specifically and also approach organizations that support journalists, artists, and human rights or environmental defenders—categories that visual storytellers and journalists could fall under, depending on the nature of their projects and how they portray their work.

The following paragraphs will list the main organizations that can provide support. Most organizations provide financial grants to assist in various different kinds of emergencies—legal, medical, digital, etc. These are listed under one section, below. Other organizations focus on specific issues or types of support: for example, legal support, digital support, or providing safe havens. Each of the organizations listed provide assistance for free or at a very small charge; groups or individual providing services on a commercial basis are not listed. For each group of organizations, an indication is provided of the main target beneficiaries (journalists, artists, human rights or environmental defenders) but, to emphasize the point, visual storytellers could potentially fall under any of these categories.

(1) Emergency grants for various purposes

A large number of international organizations provide financial grants for emergency assistance. Grants are typically made for physical security, digital security, communications, secure transportation, legal support, medical support (including psycho-social support and rehabilitation), humanitarian assistance (including family support), urgent relocation or some form of advocacy support.

Filmmakers

The International Coalition for Filmmakers at Risk (ICFR) is the only international organization that focuses specifically on providing assistance to and standing in solidarity with filmmakers at risk. It was formed in 2020 to respond to cases of persecution or threats to the personal safety or liberty of filmmakers at risk as a result of their work, by a coalition of three organizations: the International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam (IDFA), International Film Festival Rotterdam and the European Film Academy (EFA).^{lxvii} Among the main driving forces behind ICFR are Orwa Nyrabia, Artistic Director of IDFA who drew on his own experience of being arrested in Syria to inform ICFR’s strategies, and Mike Downey, chair of EFA, who had previously campaigned for the Ukrainian filmmaker Oleg Sentsov, who was eventually released in 2019 having spent five years in prison in Russia. ICFR wants to remain rooted in the film community and its strategic partners include the Federation of European Screen Directors, the Federation of Screenwriters in Europe, and the MOOOV and Movies that Matter film festivals.

ICFR provides assistance in four different ways:

- (1) Advocacy: campaigning for filmmakers at risk by mobilizing the international film community or by seeking public support through means of diplomacy;
- (2) Emergency funding: providing grants of maximum €1,500 for immediate emergency response actions to filmmakers in critical situations;
- (3) Accessing the support system: connecting filmmakers in peril to international support networks active in the fields of human rights, culture and legal assistance; and

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- (4) Monitoring and observatory: serving as an observatory for the situation of filmmakers at risk (this activity is foreseen at some point in the future).

ICFR interprets “filmmakers” as “those who are directly involved in the creative process of a film: directors, producers, scriptwriters, actors and heads of department only.” Its mandate does not extend to assisting protagonists; staff interviewed for this study explained that while they do not deny the risk that protagonists face, including them would dilute and therefore weaken ICFR’s work.^{lxxiii} For the same reason of focus, ICFR seeks to work only on “the most acute and critical cases in which there is an immediate threat to the personal safety of the filmmaker.”

Journalists

A number of NGOs have as part of their mission the provision of emergency support to journalists in need. Most of them interpret their mandate broadly as including filmmakers, and, depending on the situation, sometimes even artists (when there is a journalistic aspect to their work). The main international organizations that provide assistance are united in the Journalists in Distress (JID) Network.^{lxxiv} Each of the organizations in this Network has its own funds; they coordinate through the network to ensure efficiency in how they respond to emergency request and to make sure that multiple organizations do not fulfil the same request for assistance (a journalist might seek assistance through multiple channels). The participating organizations are:

- ARTICLE 19: a London-headquartered organization with offices and partner organizations in various countries that provides emergency support and assistance through its global office in London (<http://www.article19.org/>) as well its regional offices in Mexico (<https://articulo19.org/>) and Brazil (<https://artigo19.org/>);
- Canadian Journalists for Free Expression, which has an emergency support program through which grants ranging from \$500 to \$1500 CAD are made to journalists in distress for a variety of purposes (https://www.cjfe.org/journalists_in_distress_fund/);
- Committee to Protect Journalists: a New York-headquartered organization with representatives around the world that makes grants to journalists and independent media in need (<https://cpj.org/emergency-response/>);
- Free Press Unlimited: an Amsterdam-based organization with partners around the world (<https://www.freepressunlimited.org/en/safety-for-journalists/emergency-support/>);
- Freedom House: based in the United States, this group runs several emergency response programs in countries around the world through which emergency grants are made to activists and journalists in emergency situations. Its 2019 emergency assistance budget was US\$4.9m: the largest surveyed for this study (<https://freedomhouse.org/program/emergency-assistance-programs/>);
- Front Line Defenders (FLD): based in Ireland with representatives in various countries, FLD provides assistance to journalists and activists in emergency situations up to a maximum of €7,500 (<https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/programme/protection-grants/>);
- Human Rights Watch (HRW): a New York-headquartered organization with offices in various countries around the world, HRW has an emergency support program through which it makes emergency support grants to activists (a mandate which it interprets broadly and which includes journalists) (<https://www.hrw.org/>);
- the International Federation of Journalists has an emergency support program through which it provides grants to journalists for financial assistance in a range of emergency situations (<https://www.ifj.org/safety-fund.html>);

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- International Media Support, headquartered in Copenhagen and working with partners around the world, makes grants for emergency support (<https://www.mediasupport.org/what-we-do/safety-for-journalists/>);
- International Women's Media Foundation (IWMF): headquartered in the US and with partner organizations around the world, the IWMF has an emergency support program (<https://www.iwmf.org/programs/emergency-fund/>);
- The International Research & Exchanges Board (IREX) runs a journalists safety program that focuses primarily on safety training, but which can also make grants for emergency assistance (<https://www.irex.org/project/safe-securing-access-free-expression>);
- Journalisten helfen Journalisten (Journalists Helping Journalists), based in Germany, supports journalists and their families (<https://www.journalistenhelfen.org/galerie>);
- Media Defense, which provides legal defense through a global network of lawyers specialized in media law (<https://www.mediadefence.org/>);
- PEN International and PEN Netherlands run an emergency defense fund which can cover medical, relocation, or subsistence costs (<https://penemergencyfund.com/en>);
- Reporters Without Borders is a Paris-headquartered organization with offices and affiliates in various countries that operates an emergency assistance fund, including for the families of journalists under threat (<https://rsf.org/en/individual-support>);
- Named after a cameraman who was murdered, the Rory Peck Trust provides practical assistance and financial support to freelance newsgatherers and their families worldwide (<https://rorypecktrust.org/freelance-assistance/Assistance-Grants/>).

Artists

As with journalists, there is a sizeable community of organizations that provide assistance to artists who come under threat because of their work; most include filmmakers among their mandate. The Artists at Risk Guide lists some 800 such organizations in total, in countries around the world.^{lxxxv} Many of these, at least at the international level, run safe haven programs and are listed separately, below. Those that offer emergency support other than through safe havens include Freemuse, a Norway-based organization that supports artists at risk through advocacy initiatives, individual and joint awareness campaigns, and by providing emergency financial assistance.^{lxxxvi} Beirut-based Al-Mawred Al-Thaqafy, listed below as one of the organizations that offers support for safe havens, also provides emergency grants for legal support, medical or psychiatrist fees, or enrolment fees for a skills development program. Some of the organizations listed in the previous section that provide emergency assistance to journalists also support artists: for example, Freedom House, Front Line Defenders, and the International Cities of Refuge Network.

The sheer number of organizations, some national, some international, that could potentially assist an artist at risk can be quite overwhelming, particularly for someone facing an emergency. Artists at Risk Connection (ARC), headquartered in New York and with representatives in Africa, Asia and Latin America, seeks to function as a connector and as a guide in this, helping artists (including filmmakers) at risk access emergency assistance from the right organization for them. Since its inception in 2017, ARC has helped nearly 300 artists access emergency assistance; with a publicity push and the launch of its safety guide early in 2021, it is seeking to increase its work further.^{lxxxvii}

On the African continent, a number of organizations that provide assistance to artists in various forms, including financial assistance for emergency support as well as safe havens came together in 2020 and

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launched “AMANI - Africa Creative Defence Network.” The network brings together African as well as international artists protection organizations and networks, including the Africa Human Rights Network (<https://www.ahrnfoundation.org/>), Alert-Art-Afrik (<https://www.alert-art-afrik.org/>), Arterial Network (<https://www.arterialnetwork.org.za/about-us>), Artists at Risk Connection (<https://artistsatriskconnection.org/>), Freemuse (<http://www.freemuse.org/>), Hammerl Arts Rights Transfer (<https://www.facebook.com/hart.southern.africa>), the Museum of Movements (<https://whoareweproject.com/art-hubs/malmo-2>), PEN Uganda (<https://pen-international.org/centers/ugandan-center>), Safe Havens—the Malmö Meetings, and the Southern Africa Human Rights Defenders Network (<https://africandefenders.org/members/southern-africa/>). The network does not have a website yet and assistance is coordinated through Artists at Risk Connection (emphasizing ARC’s important role as a hub and a connector).

Human rights and environmental defenders

A number of international organizations and networks provide emergency support to human rights defenders and environmental defenders at risk. Many of them have supported visual storytellers and journalists, and any visual storyteller or journalist at risk whose work touches on human rights issues would most likely qualify for support.

A large number of human rights defender organizations coordinate through ProtectDefenders.EU,^{lxxviii} an EU-funded consortium that consists of Front Line Defenders (<https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/>), Reporters without Borders (<http://https://rsf.org/>), the World Organization against Torture (OMCT, <http://omct.org/>), the International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH—itself a coalition: <https://www.fidh.org/en>), the International Network for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCR-Net, also a coalition: <https://www.escr-net.org/>), the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA, also a coalition: <https://ilga.org/>), the Urgent Action Fund for Women’s Human Rights (UAF, <https://urgentactionfund.org/>), Protection International (<https://www.protectioninternational.org/>), Peace Brigades International (<https://www.peacebrigades.org/>), the Euro-Mediterranean Foundation of Support to Human Rights Defenders (EMHRF (<http://emhrf.org/>), Forum Asia (<https://www.forum-asia.org/>), and the East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project (also known as Defend Defenders: <https://defenddefenders.org/>). Most of these organizations run their own emergency defense programs, and ProtectDefenders.EU has a secretariat and coordinating function. In 2020, it—and the organizations in the consortium—had granted direct emergency support to 1,300 human rights defenders under threat (many of them journalists, but artists or filmmakers are not mentioned as a separate category), and other forms of support to another 5,000.

Other organizations that provide protection outside of ProtectDefenders.EU include:

- Freedom House, which runs several programs to support human rights defenders under threat including the Lifeline Embattled CSO Assistance Fund, for CSOs under threat, and the Dignity for All: LGBTI Assistance Program, providing emergency funds to human rights defenders and civil society organizations under threat (<https://freedomhouse.org/programs/emergency-assistance-and-thematic-programs>);
- Civil Rights Defenders, whose Emergency Fund provides support to human rights defenders in emergency situations, including for legal defense. In 2020, it provided support to 730 human rights defenders and their families (<https://crd.org/emergency-fund/>);

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- Agir Ensemble pour les Droits de l'Homme, a France-based organization that provides emergency support to human rights defenders, primarily in Africa (<https://agir-ensemble-droits-humains.org/fr/notre-fonds-durgence/>);
- ARTICLE 19 and Human Rights Watch, mentioned above as part of the JID coalition, also make grants for emergency support to human rights defenders;
- the Pan-African Human Rights Defenders Network (<https://africandefenders.org>), which brings together five sub-regional organizations who together cover the African continent: the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies, Defend Defenders, the West African Human Rights Defenders Network, the Central Africa Human Rights Defenders Network and the Southern African Human Rights Defenders Network;
- Madre, which funds emergency relocation and legal aid to community women's organizations and women activists under threat and requiring urgent assistance (<https://www.madre.org/grantmaking>);

The assistance provided by most of these organizations is financial, for various different types of support, as well as providing advocacy. Many of them have assisted visual storytellers and journalists.

As with human rights defenders, there is a small but active support network for environmental defenders, consisting of national as well as international organizations. Many of them are united in the Defending Land and Environmental Defenders Coalition (DDCoalition), which comprises 48 international and 23 national organizations from across Africa, the Americas and Asia. The coalition aims to build protection skills among defenders, strengthen government and business safeguards for defenders, and protect civil society actors who are addressing root causes of threats and attacks on defenders.^{lxxix} At the time this report was written, the work remained in progress but pilot projects had been conducted in Colombia,^{lxxx} Kenya, the Philippines and Mexico. In parallel with this, in September 2019 a number of donors established a pooled fund, the Environmental Defenders Collaborative.^{lxxxii} Housed at the Global Greengrants Fund, this aims to help keep environmental defenders safe by supporting urgent regranting for defenders under threat and by providing funding for trainings on security. Insofar as visual storytellers and journalists engage in projects that concern land rights and environmental issues and come under threat as a result, they may qualify as “environmental defenders” and thus be eligible for support from these groups. Protagonists in these projects who are in need of assistance would almost certainly qualify for support.

Some criticisms of international protection organizations

A few notes of criticism of all international assistance organizations were sounded by several interviewees. First, the higher levels of funding for international organizations compared with national organizations strengthens the north-south divide. This is patently unhelpful and it also denies several realities: (1) activists or visual storytellers and journalists at risk are far more likely to trust and seek assistance from an organization in their own country that operates in their own language; (2) national organizations know the reality on the ground far better than international organizations; (3) national organizations are likely to be able to deliver assistance far more effectively and efficiently than international organizations.

Second, several interviewees criticized the amount of form filling and emails back and forth that international protection organizations ask of applicants. The international organizations concerned may well feel under pressure from their own donors to do this so as to prevent fraudulent applications,

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but it puts an already traumatized applicant under even more strain. It can be experienced as a bureaucratic, impersonal and even somewhat hostile approach. Many felt that it would be far preferable if, after an initial request for assistance, more was done via (secure, web-based) phone or video calls, bearing in mind data restrictions, even if this is more labor intensive on the part of the assistance organization and may require them to have interpreters on hand (which can be done via web-conferencing). Even better would be for donors to fund more national organizations who can work face to face and know the local situation better, eliminating the need for much of the form-filling and emails.

Another note of criticism was language and accessibility: most international assistance organizations operate only in a few main international languages, and their websites assume modern software and phones on the part of recipients and hardly any are built with accessibility issues in mind. All of these are barriers to those in need; and again, national organizations are likely to be able to do better at this than international ones.

National level

In a number of countries, and particularly in the Americas, there are government-funded public mechanisms that arrange for assistance to journalists and human rights defenders at risk. The research conducted for this study in Central America, the Andes region and Brazil painted a mixed effort of these initiatives.²⁴ While some opined that they filled a need (evidence by the fact that they have served hundreds of defenders across the region), there was also deep distrust, because these mechanisms are funded by the government in a country where public authorities are often behind or appear to condone attacks on human rights defenders and journalists. One interviewee, in Colombia, said that the public human rights defender mechanism was “the last institution” that he would ever refer a journalist to. In Mexico, and elsewhere in Central America, there was criticism that the government on the one hand is very aggressive toward defenders—the Mexican president Andrés Manuel López Obrador, for example, attacked independent journalists and the freedom of expression NGO, ARTICLE 19, at a March 2021 press conference—while still providing (some) funding to the public human rights defender mechanism.^{lxxxiii} Another weakness of the public mechanisms is that they do not provide support for legal defense. While many of the mechanisms have support for journalists as part of their mandate, none of the state mechanisms surveyed had offered support to visual storytellers, although they could theoretically fall within the mandate (either as a journalist, as a human rights defender, or as a social communicator).

As a result, even in those countries where publicly funded mechanisms exist for the defense of human rights defenders, there tend to be civil society organizations that provide protection in parallel with publicly funded (aka, government) mechanisms. Most of the organizations surveyed for this study link in with the international and regional mechanisms referred to above, whether at the global level through organizations and networks such as Frontline Defenders, or at the regional level, through organizations such as Defend Defenders, the East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project. Those interviewed for this study (all in the Americas) indicated that visual storytellers would theoretically be within their mandate, but in practice they rarely, if ever, received requests for support from this group. Many of the filmmakers who were interviewed told us that they would struggle to

²⁴ They are also discussed in the country chapters in Annex XX.

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know where to look for help should they come under threat, although there may be regional and country variations in this, also depending on the individual filmmaker. For example, Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights—Africa told us that they increasingly received requests for support from visual storytellers, and filmmakers in Colombia reported that they were mostly familiar with human rights defender mechanisms (but they didn't see themselves as human rights defenders and so would not consider asking for assistance). Funding levels for many of these organizations are haphazard and few were able to invest in their own capacity to provide protection.

Many national journalists' unions and organizations also have resources to provide emergency support to journalists at risk. Those that operate in western Europe and north America tend to be relatively well resourced; while those in others parts of the world often struggle for resources. Most of these are journalists' unions and associations, and they usually only offer assistance to their members. Some groups have a broader mandate, serving all journalists in need regardless of union membership. This included several organizations interviewed as part of the Americas research, such as the Foundation for Freedom of the Press in Colombia (FLIP, under its Spanish acronym), which offers assistance to any journalist in Colombia in need of urgent assistance; UDEFEGUA in Guatemala; and Periodistas de a Pie in Mexico.^{lxxxiii}

(2) Women human rights defenders, artists and journalists

Several international groups are attuned to the heightened risks faced by women activists and those advocating for women's rights. The main international group to provide emergency assistance is the Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights (UAF), a feminist fund that protects, strengthens and sustains women and transgender human rights defenders at risk and under threat. It aims to respond within 72 hours and to have the necessary funds on the ground 1-7 days. There are separate UAF organizations for Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Asia-Pacific, and each has emergency funds available.^{lxxxiv} The UAF-Africa staff member interviewed for this study mentioned that they go further than simply providing financial support and work closely with the human rights defender concerned to assess their and their family's security situation and work out a security plan together with them. They have seen a growing number of filmmakers seeking their support.^{lxxxv}

Various other international women's rights organizations and funders also provide emergency protection, but sometimes only to those who are already their grantees. FRIDA, a feminist participatory grantmaking organization that provides some funding to filmmakers and artists' collectives, provides support for its grantees in emergency situations,^{lxxxvi} and feminist funder, Mama Cash is developing an urgent action fund—the Revolution Fund, launched in 2021.^{lxxxvii} The research conducted for this study in the Americas also lists women's human rights defenders groups with urgent action funds, such as the National Network of Women Human Rights Defenders (Red Nacional de Defensoras de Derechos Humanos) in Mexico, and the Iniciativa Mesoamericana de Mujeres Defensoras de Derechos Humanos, a regional organization of women's human rights defenders.^{lxxxviii}

Two international organizations provide support to women journalists under threat. The International Women's Media Foundation (IWMF) runs three emergency funds: the United States Journalism Emergency Fund (which is open to applicants regardless of gender), the Black Journalists Therapy Relief Fund, and the IWMF Emergency Fund,^{lxxxix} and the Coalition for Women in Journalism runs the Jsafe app, specifically for women journalists who suffer online harassment.^{xc}

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There is as yet no organization that focuses exclusively and specifically on support women visual storytellers. This is why a small group of women artists and defenders is in the process of establishing the Sisterhood Foundation, a new organization to defend the freedoms and promote the rights of professional female artists, female journalists and female human rights' defenders.^{xcii} Its arts focus sets it aside from UAF; and its focus on women sets it apart from organizations such as CPJ, Freemuse, ARC and PEN. Sisterhood Foundation aims to be collaborative and work alongside existing organizations and complement their work, but with a unique gender focus and approach. It hopes to begin its work in 2022.^{xciii}

(3) Safe havens / temporary relocation

A number of artists' organizations specialize in arranging, funding or otherwise supporting safe haven residencies for artists at risk. These safe havens build on a long and rich tradition of residencies in the arts world, giving artists (in various disciplines) the opportunity to spend time living and working in another city or country, outside of their usual environment. From an artistic perspective this immersion in a new environment provides exposure to different influences and also gives artists time to reflect, research, experiment, produce new work, and generally develop as an artist. In situations of risk, when temporary relocation is required, such residencies can also serve a safety function. However, planning these artistic residencies usually takes several months or even longer, and so this isn't always a quick solution. Some residencies are offered specifically for artists at risk and these can offer a quicker response—but a good deal of time and planning still goes into making them a reality. Interviewees emphasized the amount of work that goes into making residencies a success: as well as the obvious work required around logistics (travel, arranging visas etc.) tailoring the residency to the artist, forging links with artists in the city of region of the residency and generally ensuring that the residency provides a safe haven but is also an artistic success—honoring the artist's work—is very labor intensive.

A few interviewees emphasized that even for artists at risk, it can be better to style a residency on artistic grounds: this keeps the residency within the professional sphere, respects the artist's professional identity and integrity, and avoids labelling and further politicizing their case (for example, if an artist who is under threat of government reprisal in their home country gets offered a residency for at-risk artists, that can lead to reprisals, endanger their families and complicate their eventual return).

While residencies are offered across many art forms, interviewees opined that in practice there are fewer residency places available for filmmakers than there are for other artists (for example, musicians, or painters), particularly as concerns residencies for artists at risk. For example, the New York City Safe Haven Residency offers residencies to musicians, writers and visual artists; while filmmakers fall in the "visual artist" category in practice only few if any of these places go to filmmakers.^{xciii}

Interviewees stressed that for residencies to be viable, it is important that the host organization itself is safe and financially stable—a residency that would take an artist from one at-risk environment to another is obviously counterproductive. Since residencies are typically offered by artists'

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organizations, this in turn requires investment in the host organization in addition to funding specifically marked for a residency.

Residencies for artists at risk include:

- New York City Artist Safe Haven Residency Program, in Westbeth Artists' Housing in New York,^{xciv} open to at-risk artists from around the world. In 2020, eight artists were offered a safe haven.^{xcv} The interviewee for this program indicated plans to expand, subject to funding, which would include residencies specifically for filmmakers which were identified as a category that seemed to be under growing threat (<https://artisticfreedominitiative.org>);
- the Safemuse residencies, originally available only to musicians but providing artists at risk from any discipline with shorter or longer placements in Norway with a prepared program of artistic work, presentations and performances. Safemuse resources are very limited; staff told us that they need to fundraise for each residency that they offer (<https://safemuse.org/>);
- the Perpetuum Mobile / Artists at Risk program, a platform and network that offers temporary relocation for artists who face persecution or imprisonment for exercising their right to freedom of expression across 17 countries, mainly in Europe but also including Morocco, Tunisia and Cote d'Ivoire (<https://artistsatrisk.org>);
- the International Cities of Refuge (ICORN) network, which is a network of cities and regions offering shelter to writers and artists at risk (<https://www.icorn.org>);
- the Institute of International Education's Artist Protection Fund, which makes fellowship grants to threatened artists and places them with host institutions in safe countries (<https://www.iie.org/Programs/Artist-Protection-Fund>);
- the Martin Roth Initiative, a Germany-based organization that facilitates safe havens in Germany and elsewhere for artists at risk (<https://www.martin-roth-initiative.de/>).

A smaller number of organizations offer safe havens for artists in South and Central America, Africa and the Middle East. The main ones identified in the course of this study are Culture Resource (Al-Mawred Al-Thaqafy), an organization that supports artistic creativity in the Arab region and which, as part of its work, offers emergency assistance grants for living expenses (including accommodation) and travel to any country in the Arab region for up to six months (<https://mawred.org/grants-opportunities>); and the ICORN and Shelter City safe havens in Brazil, Costa Rica, Tanzania, Benin, Georgia and Mexico City (listed at <https://www.icorn.org> and <https://sheltercity.nl>).

Filmmakers can also benefit from established residency programs available to all artists. These are not specifically aimed at artists at risk and will typically take longer to plan but may nevertheless be worth considering. Various websites offer databases of available opportunities, including TransArtists (<https://www.transartists.org/>) and ResArtis (<https://resartis.org/>).

Some human rights organizations also focus on supporting temporary relocation and safe havens, mainly in North America and Western Europe and in a small but growing number of cities in Africa and South America. This is an option only for those defenders who cannot stay in their own town or country, either permanently or for a short period of time. The Shelter City network is a network of cities that provide safe haven for human rights defenders in cities in the Netherlands and Costa Rica (San José), Tanzania (Dar es Salaam), Benin (Cotonou), and Georgia (Tbilisi and Batumi) (<https://sheltercity.nl/en/>). In Africa, the Pan-African Human Rights Defenders Network operates the Ubuntu Hub Cities initiative, a network of safe havens in Tunisia, Cote d'Ivoire, Uganda, and South

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Africa (<https://africandefenders.org/>). A number of additional, smaller organizations offer (funding for) temporary relocation. A map of these various groups is provided through the website of the EU Human Rights Relocation Platform (which is hosted by protectdefenders.eu, mentioned above): <https://www.hrdrelocation.eu/>.

(4) Legal support

Several organizations specialize in providing legal assistance to journalists, human rights or environmental defenders, artists and activists. At the international level, one of the main of these organizations is Media Defence (formerly known as Media Legal Defence Initiative), which provides legal assistance to journalists and independent media outlets around the world. It has an in-house legal department that works with lawyers around the world to deliver emergency defense as well as conduct strategic litigation. It takes in around 100 new cases annually, including some involving filmmakers.^{xcvi}

At the national level, journalists, human rights or environmental defenders or artists may be able to access legal defense through various different organizations. In some countries, human rights organizations provide legal assistance through their in-house lawyers to anyone whose rights have been violated (including visual storytellers and journalists); in other countries, organizations exist specifically to provide legal assistance to journalists. Media Defence has funding partnerships with a number of these organizations, mainly outside of Western Europe and North America: in Honduras, Ukraine, Hungary, Kyrgyzstan, Ghana, Russia, Italy, Colombia, Poland, Turkey, Uganda, and Nigeria.^{xcvii} In yet other countries, civil society organizations have agreements, formal or informal, with lawyers who defend activists and journalists as and when needed; so-called “barefoot lawyer” groups provide legal assistance to those in need regardless of who they are;^{xcviii} and in a few countries civil society groups have organized funds for the defense of freedom of expression.^{xcix} All these organizations are a very varied group and an in-depth assessment of each of them is beyond the scope of this study.^c

Some of the organizations in this category are large, relatively well-funded and have existed for many years; others have limited capacity and exist on insecure or intermittent project funding. The best funded of the legal assistance organizations (though even they would probably argue that they lack sufficient funding) are in the United States: the Press Freedom Defense Fund, part of the Omidyar group, has a large budget to fund legal defense;^{ci} the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press delivers legal defense through in-house lawyers and has taken on several cases involving filmmakers;^{cii} and the Artistic Freedom Initiative facilitates pro bono immigration representation and resettlement assistance for international artists who are persecuted or censored.^{ciii} There are also dozens of “lawyers for arts” groups in the United States that provide free legal services to artists including filmmakers;^{civ} Field of Vision has teamed up with New York-based Lawyers for Reporters to provide legal assistance to freelance documentary filmmakers,^{cv} and a few university law school clinics provide legal services to filmmakers.^{cvi}

Others are less well-funded, but even some of these can still deliver legal defense in large numbers. For example, the Mass Media Defence Center, based in Voronezh, Russia, in 2020 handled 82 court cases and provided nearly 4,000 legal consultations;^{cvii} and the Media Defence network of organizations, none of them richly funded, took in 286 new cases in 2019. However, as impressive as

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the numbers of cases dealt with by some of them are, the reality is that none of them are able to deal with the demand placed on them, to deliver defense in all cases. A simple statistic from the Guatemalan NGO, UDEFEGUA, illustrates the point: in 2017, it reported 76 criminal cases (including at pre-trial stage) against human rights defenders across the country, and 135 cases of other violence, harassment and other forms of aggression; yet it was able to provide emergency assistance only in 30 of these cases.^{cviii} This statistic is played out similarly in virtually all other countries, and, as set out in the opening sections to this study, the threat level to visual storytellers and journalists is rising every year.

A small group of organizations provide or arrange for support from pro bono lawyers (lawyers who usually work in commercial law firms and who occasionally take on human rights cases without charging a fee): TrustLaw (Thomson Reuters Foundation's global pro bono legal program, which has a media freedom focus), PILnet, Advocates for International Development, iProbono, the International Senior Lawyers Project (which also has a media law focus), and the Environmental Defender Law Center, which brokers pro bono lawyers and provides resources and grants for work on strategically important environmental rights cases.^{ciix} Pro bono lawyers are most useful in administrative services, from preparing contracts to clearing rights. Legal defense is not normally an option: only iProbono reported being regularly able to organize legal defense for journalists and activists on a pro bono basis.²⁵ The other pro bono organizations reported that while sometimes they can take on strategically chosen and potentially precedent-setting cases within their field of expertise,²⁶ legal defense is not normally an option for pro bono lawyers.²⁷

(5) Dealing with trauma

Many of the organizations that provide financial grants for emergency support list emotional trauma, or psychosocial support among the purposes for which their grants can be used. Of the organizations surveyed for this study, only few specialize in issues of trauma around journalism and documentary filmmaking, and none have the resources to provide emergency support.²⁸ Referrals to professionals can be made, but these usually charge—meaning that the person who requires the assistance either needs to have their own financial resources, or needs to make an application to one of the organizations listed above.

Among the organizations that specifically advertise their ability to fund trauma counselling is the International Women's Media Foundation, which runs three emergency funds that can provide finance for trauma counselling (one of which together with the Black Journalists Therapy Relief Fund, which is open to all applicants regardless of gender).^{cx} The Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human

²⁵ This is a highly bespoke service which iProbono is able to broker because of the close relationship they have with the lawyers they work with, particularly in India. It is labour intensive on the side of iProbono and scalable only if their capacity is also scaled up.

²⁶ Mainly in the US, UK, France and a few other European countries.

²⁷ The other pro bono broker organizations reported that lawyers are able to contribute to legal defense in a nonfrontline capacity, for example through providing legal research in cases or by providing other legal services to civil society organizations.

²⁸ The main NGO working on this is the Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma: <https://dartcenter.org/>. The staff person interviewed for this report mentioned that a small-scale pilot is underway in the US to link journalists in need with specialists.

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Rights—Africa, who carry out in-depth needs assessments with those who seek their assistance, told us that they earmark psycho-social care in nearly every protection grant that they provide.

(6) Digital security

As with legal support, there is a small group of organizations that specialize on digital security issues and who can help journalists, activists and visual storytellers respond to threats. A number of them are (loosely) coordinated through the RaReNet Rapid Response Network^{cxii} and the Computer Incident Response Center for Civil Society, CiviCERT.^{cxiii} CiviCERT includes a number of the human rights and journalist assistance organizations mentioned above as well as national and international organizations that work on digital security. The following of CiviCERT's international members specialize in countering security threats:

- Access Now, whose Digital Security Helpline provides rapid-response emergency assistance through a team of nearly twenty spread across New York, Berlin, Manila, San Jose, and Tunis, and an ability to provide support in various languages (<https://www.accessnow.org/>)
- Center for Digital Resilience, whose mandate is to keep civil society safe online and which provides incident response as one of its services (<https://digiresilience.org/>)
- Qurium Media Foundation, which offers a rapid response service to organizations and individuals that are under digital threat (<https://www.qurium.org/>)

CiviCERT also includes several country-specific members who provide rapid response to digital security threats: Digital Rights Foundation in Pakistan, which has an assistance portal specifically for journalists (<https://digitalrightsfoundation.pk/get-in-touch-journalists/>), Cyberhub Armenia (<https://cyberhub.am/en/>), Myanmar ICT for Development Organization (<https://twitter.com/myanmarido>), Share Foundation in Serbia, (<https://www.sharecert.rs/>), and TibCERT in Tibet (<https://tibcert.org/>).

There are also a few funders who provide grants to help defend against digital threats. The Digital Defenders Partnership's Incident Emergency Fund makes grants of up to €10,000 for urgent defense against digital threats or attacks against human rights defenders, journalists, activists, or organizations,^{cxiii} and the Open Technology Fund runs a Rapid Response Fund through which it offers financial support as well as technical services from trusted partners to bloggers, activists, journalists, and human rights defenders at risk. Depending on the threat, grants can be made for up to US \$50,000, for up to six months.^{cxiv}

In addition to these, the company Security First was mentioned by several interviewees, including filmmakers, for providing crucial emergency assistance in defending against threats as well as assisting filmmakers and human rights organizations with risk planning, assessment and mitigation (the latter as described above). Interviewed for this study, Security First's staff say that while they charge for their work they aim to fit within budget and, generally, "do what we can," although there are of course limits to that (this trying-to-be-helpful attitude and the high quality of their work may be a reason why many human rights groups work with them).^{cxv}

(7) Crisis communications

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Responding to a smear campaign or an onslaught of negative PR (variously referred to by public relations professionals as “dark PR” or “black PR”) is very different from other public relations work. The advice generally given is that countering negative PR is extremely difficult, and that it’s usually better to be proactive and get the artist or journalist’s own story out first; essentially, to pre-empt any potential negative PR points in one’s own publicity and impact campaign. This is not dissimilar to the advice given by lawyers and digital security specialists all of whom speak of how it is better to pre-empt legal or digital threats than to pick up the pieces after a threat has become apparent. It is understandable and common-sense advice—but of no help whatsoever to someone facing an emergency (rather like a doctor telling a patient it would have been better if they had not gotten sick in the first place).

Unlike with legal or digital threats, there are no NGOs that provide crisis communications services for human rights defenders, activists, journalists or visual storytellers. A few filmmakers and other professionals interviewed spoke of how they had developed their own skills in this, very much learning through trial and error.^{cxvi} Some have shared their experiences—DocSociety’s general counsel, Prash Naik, for example, has spoken at various film festivals on this topic—but there is a dearth of freely available resources to help visual storytellers or journalists facing a threat.

There are a number of PR agencies that specialize in work for charities and “good causes” and who have been recommended for work with filmmakers.^{cxvii} Sundance has a list of US-based PR agencies who have represented documentary filmmakers on its website.^{cxviii} Some PR agencies that specialize in work with charitable causes work for a low fee or even for free, but they may not have experience in working with filmmakers or journalists and the specific, targeted and very powerful negative PR challenges they face.^{cxix} There is a practice of pro bono among some of the very large PR companies, but they may also lack experience in countering negative PR or working with filmmakers or activists.^{cxx}

(8) “Pest control”: defense against trolls

There are a number of guides on digital self-care and self-defense against trolling, listed above (under “guides”), but not many organizations that can assist visual storytellers or journalists facing an attack. For very serious cases including threats of harm, the advice given in guides is to report them to the police and to alert the social media platform concerned, each of which has dedicated procedures to complain and have material taken down.^{cxxi} Obviously, depending on the country and the source of the attack, the law enforcement authorities may not always be a trusted entity.

A small number of organizations and individual lawyers provide assistance to victims of trolls; research for this study turned up dedicated organizations in the United States, Australia, Brazil, Palestine, Pakistan, South Korea, Taiwan, and the United Kingdom.^{cxxii} Most of these are set up to assist anyone who has fallen victim to online trolling and, given the level of misogyny found online, many specialize in assisting victims of revenge porn or other forms of online sexual violence. A few organizations specialize in assisting journalists and activists who have fallen victim to trolling:

- Trollbusters, which provides support with defense against trolling, or, as they describe it, “Pest Control for Journalists” (<http://troll-busters.com/>);

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- The Coalition for Women in Journalism developed an app through which they collect information on attacks as well as respond to urgent situations (<https://womeninjournalism.org/jsafe>).

D. The role of intergovernmental organizations and initiatives

Various intergovernmental organizations have the protection of media freedom or artistic freedom as part of their mandates. While none of them provide direct support to journalists, filmmakers or artists under threat, their activities typically include training, awareness-raising, and monitoring the implementation of states' international commitments to respecting and upholding freedom of expression,²⁹ and some have mechanisms that allow artists or journalists whose rights have been violated to appeal directly to them.

Within the UN system, UNESCO is the lead organization on issues of culture and houses departments concerned with press and media freedom as well as artistic freedom. Its mandate includes promoting media freedom and cultural freedoms. UNESCO houses the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IDPC),^{cxxiii} which has “Promoting the safety of journalists” and “Capacity building for journalists and media managers” among its priorities; it also monitors the implementation of the 2005 Convention for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.^{cxxiv} UNESCO fulfils these mandates through a combination of training, monitoring (including issuing reports),^{cxxv} awareness-raising through events such as World Press Freedom Day,^{cxxvi} providing technical assistance to member states, and providing funding for initiatives that promote media freedom. In terms of training, UNESCO runs tailor-made trainings to artistic freedom but we were told that budget limitations mean that its capacity for this is limited.^{cxxvii}

UNESCO also houses the “Global Media Defense Fund,”^{cxxviii} a funding program for civil society projects that “enhance media protection and improve the access of journalists to specialized legal assistance.” The Fund received initial funding of US\$5m from various governments as part of the intergovernmental “Global Coalition for Media Freedom”^{cxxix} led by the UK and Canada, and is projected to run until 2024. Calls for proposals are issued annually. Thus far it has funded mainly legal defense-related projects, ranging from legal clinics, lawyers' networks and other pro-bono media defense mechanisms within journalists' associations and newsrooms, to fostering strategic litigation laws and judicial practices that curtail media freedom.^{cxxx}

It is important to note that, as an intergovernmental organization, UNESCO is ultimately bound by the political will of its member states. This limits what it can do; it also impacts on how it is perceived, particularly in countries where artists, filmmakers and journalists are at risk of reprisal at the hands of their own governments. A regranting program such as through the Global Media Defense Fund and the trainings that UNESCO provides to artists are about as far as it can go without running into opposition from its member states (it would not be feasible for it to provide direct support to visual storytellers and journalists at risk, for example).

²⁹ Most states have internationally committed to respecting the right to freedom of expression, either by signing the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights or through other treaties or declarations.

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Within the broader UN human rights system, the quickest route³⁰ through which journalists, artists and filmmakers whose rights have been violated can bring their cases to international attention is the system of Special Rapporteurs: individual human rights experts appointed by the UN Human Rights Council with mandates to report and advise on human rights from a thematic or country-specific perspective.^{cxxxix} These individuals pursue their mandate independently and can often have strong impact, internationally or at the national level (for example, the UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions brought sustained global exposure to the case of the murdered Saudi Arabian journalist Jamal Khashoggi).

Most relevant to artists, journalists and filmmakers are the Rapporteurs on freedom of expression and on cultural rights, currently held by Irene Khan and Karima Bennouna.^{cxxxix} Both have a mandate to receive complaints from those whose rights have been violated. Typically, once a complaint has been received and is verified, the special rapporteur then enters into a dialogue with the state concerned to seek a resolution to the situation. Bringing this kind of international attention to a case can be an effective way of resolving a threat.

Similar Rapporteur positions also exist at the regional level within the Organization of American States,^{cxxxix} the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights,^{cxxxix} and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.^{cxxxix} Each of these function as an independent watchdog within these intergovernmental organizations and can call states to account for violations of media freedom or the right to freedom of expression. While they cannot compel redress, they can be a useful way for visual storytellers or journalists whose rights are violated to bring international attention to their case. In Europe, the Council of Europe has set up an online Platform to promote the protection of journalism and safety of journalists. A group of press freedom NGOs lodges alerts on the platform, which the Council of Europe member states have pledged to respond to, using the power of publicity to open up dialogue and ways of resolving media freedom situations without recourse to lengthy proceedings.^{cxxxix}

An emerging initiative outside of established intergovernmental organizations is the “Media Freedom Coalition,” a group of countries that pledged to advocate for the safety of journalists and media workers, and hold to account those who harm journalists. A pledge to this effect has been signed by several dozen states who have said that they will “take action on individual cases by coordinating efforts to raise specific cases where journalists and media workers, or media organizations, have come under threat.”^{cxxxix} The group was established by the United Kingdom and Canada, and is currently co-chaired by Botswana and Canada.

³⁰ There are also the formal treaty-based mechanisms through which individuals can complain of violations of their rights, for example to the UN Human Rights Committee, the Inter-American human rights system and the European Convention on Human Rights, but these are lengthy legal procedures and not the focus of this report.

V. Current resources for safety and security of visual storytellers and journalists

VI. Connections between stakeholders and outreach across silos

One of the striking issues encountered in the research and interviews conducted for this study is how poorly the different professional groups we look at (journalists, filmmakers, visual artists) are networked outside of their own “bubbles” or silos. By and large, filmmakers are networked with other filmmakers; journalists are networked with journalists; and artists are networked with artists. Each of these silos has its own dedicated organizations that provide safety and security resources. Human rights and environmental defender organizations focus their outreach on human rights and environmental defenders, and to some extent journalists and artists (in particular, “artists”). There are some connections between the silos, but not that many. Filmmakers are not part of the target outreach audience of organizations set up to defend journalists, artists, or human rights or environmental defenders.

A. Professional connections between stakeholders

Journalists

Journalists tend to be networked through professional unions, associations and guilds. In many countries there exist a few different journalists’ unions or associations, including often one that is (seen as) being either run by the state or dominated by journalists working for state media, and one or more other associations that describe themselves as independent. There are often also separate associations for journalists who specialize in different thematic areas (economics, finance, environment), while broadcasting journalists may have separate associations from print journalists. These national associations and unions in turn are networked internationally through organizations such as the International Federation of Journalists. A relatively small number of individual journalists network internationally, through groups such as the Association of European Journalists and the African Editors Forum, but by and large it is the national unions that are networked internationally rather than individual journalists. Many publishers are also networked internationally, through industry bodies such as the International Publishers Association and the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers, which in turn houses the World Editors Forum.³¹ Each of these associations has regular meetings and conferences, which provide opportunities for networking, professional learning and exchanges of knowledge and experiences. For journalists, there is also a level of organization through employment: most of them are employed by large or sizeable companies. In terms of safety, this means that they have an organization to draw on in terms of providing resources, and to fall back on in case of need.

In sum, journalists are relatively well organized and may be able to draw on the support of journalists’ unions, associations and NGOs set up for their protection, as well as their own employer (a large employer would generally have more resources for protection). At the international level there are at least several dozen NGOs set up for their protection. Journalists are generally somewhat more aware

³¹ There are other publishers’ associations; these two are mentioned just for the sake of making the point that it is the companies who network internationally more than individual journalists.

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of safety and security issues than artists or filmmakers, possibly because journalism schools tend to pay attention to this and journalists' employers may have internal guidelines.

Filmmakers

Many filmmakers are similarly networked through professional associations. At the national level, there are unions and associations, and a number of filmmakers see membership of one or another as important to furthering their career. It was striking, however, that a number of the documentary filmmakers and visual storytellers interviewed for this study did not belong to a professional union or association, either by choice or by exclusion (for example, because they are not accepted as being professional journalists or no filmmakers association exists in their country). Some of them saw their work as a calling more than a profession, and networked with their self-perceived peers in their own locality or country. The strength of these networks very much depends on the circumstances; some almost resemble unions in their strength and level of organization, others are no more than an informal WhatsApp group (though even a WhatsApp group can be strong). Many of the documentary filmmakers interviewed for this study tended to be employed by small production companies with few resources or were self-employed. This means that when it comes to safety, they don't have the resources of a company to draw on nor can they fall back on one in emergencies; they also lack the strength in numbers and solidarity that comes with being part of a large media company. This places them at greater risk. The different way in which many of them are organized also has implications in terms of the outreach that needs to be conducted to raise awareness of safety issues and resources.

In some of the countries where in-depth research was conducted for this study (Brazil, Mexico, Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, Peru, Colombia and Venezuela) there was a perceived distinction between filmmakers in capital cities who were seen as being somewhat of an elite group, often networked internationally and with access to resources, and filmmakers outside of capital cities or in underprivileged areas of cities who were outside that elite group. The second group was often networked through WhatsApp groups and other informal connections, which have the advantage of reaching those in remote areas; and there are some civil society efforts to improve connections between these filmmakers, including internationally, across the region. An important connector for documentary filmmakers is through film festivals and events such as *Ambulante* and *Good Pitch*, which have generated or strengthened networks of documentary filmmakers in many countries—and which provide one of the few opportunities where filmmakers can network outside of their own bubble.

There are also significant differences between fiction and documentary filmmakers, in terms of funding and exposure as well as safety. Documentary filmmakers are generally exposed to more and greater risks than fiction, as are the protagonists and communities featured in their films, but often have less access to safety resources. Awareness of issues of risk and safety ranges from “very well aware” to “dangerously low,” and as indicated, many filmmakers interviewed for this report were self-taught and relied on their own experience when drawing up risk assessments and safety plans. At the international level there are hardly any organizations set up to advocate for their safety and security.

Artists

The level of organization of artists depends on the art form concerned. Some sectors are quite well organized (for example, in many countries composers have guilds set up to advocate for their rights

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and collect royalties), other sectors less so or not at all. Artists often work in collectives or alone, and don't usually have the resources of an employer to fall back on. Awareness of safety issues is quite low. At the international level, several NGOs advocate specifically for the protection of artists (for example, Freemuse and Artists at Risk Connection) and there are a number of safe haven residency initiatives. Because of the focus of this study on visual storytellers, and in particular, documentary filmmakers, we did not delve into how the arts world is organized beyond these categories.

Human rights and environmental defenders

Human rights and environmental defense is not a profession as such, but rather a descriptor for activism that any human being can engage in regardless of their profession, either permanently or from time to time. As a term it can be used quite loosely by international donors and human rights organizations, and it is even applied to individuals who might not wish to be seen as human rights defenders (because of the political connotations that that term has in some countries). At the national level it is usually human rights NGOs who see themselves as falling in this category; journalists, filmmakers and artists often don't perceive themselves as human rights defenders (although the international community sometime does). Human rights activists and environmental defenders are often exposed to various categories of risk in their own countries or regions, including very real risks to their life. The number of environmental activists killed for their activism increases every year. At the international level there is some infrastructure dedicated to the defense of defenders; but national organizations that provide protection for defenders struggle for resources.

B. How the protection organizations connect to their stakeholders

Many of the filmmakers that were interviewed for this study did not connect with any of the protection organizations and had no idea how to access emergency assistance resources (or even, that such resources exist). One award-winning documentary filmmaker, who had been involved in legal battles and had to seek international assistance for a protagonist, had struggled to get assistance and said that there should be a "filmmakers help button"—but hadn't heard of the launch of the International Coalition for Filmmakers at Risk, presented just a month before at the Venice Film Festival. This illustrates how hard the job of outreach really is.

The protection organizations that exist for each of the professional groups that were part of this study—journalists, artists, filmmakers—engage in ongoing outreach targeted at their core constituencies. The international groups tend to network to national groups, associations and unions, as well as with partner and peer groups in various countries and at the regional level. The majority of these connections remain within their own professional circle, or silo. The groups all have very limited resources and the outreach they can realistically engage in beyond their core constituencies is limited. This is entirely understandable: the donors and supporters that fund these groups might question if their money is used for what seems like random travel to attend tangential conferences or other activities that seem to be on the fringes of their mission. Social media has helped protection organizations increase their outreach and connections, especially with individual journalists, but it probably still remains largely within the same professional silo or bubble.³² This means that their outreach does not connect with those on the fringes of their mandate, across mandates, or with those who are not as well networked.

³² We have not conducted social media analytics so we can't tell for sure.

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The human rights and environmental defender protection groups under whose mandate visual storytellers and journalists could fall are well-aware of the need for constant and ongoing outreach. Interviewed for a 2020 study,^{cxxxviii} a staff member at ProtectDefenders.EU (the largest international network of protection organizations) described how they have specific funding allocated to an outreach program through which they conduct missions to reach groups that are not connected through the usual channels: those outside of capital cities and those who operate in indigenous languages. They described that their network extends to 2,000 partners around the world, but even so indicated that outreach remains a “permanent challenge,” as well as one that is hard to measure or quantify: you generally don’t know whom you’re not reaching. Language is also a real barrier—most international protection groups operate only in a few of the main international languages. Local human rights and environmental defenders’ groups tend to do better at reaching potential beneficiaries, also in linguistic terms (by working in various national and indigenous languages). However, the outreach conducted by international as well as national or local groups is usually targeted at those who self-label as activists, or who are clearly and directly engaged in human or environmental rights defense—not visual storytellers.

As evidenced by the fact that very few knew of these protection resources and structures, many documentary filmmakers’ needs are ignored in this setup: while they are theoretically “in mandate” for the protection groups, neither journalists’ protection groups nor human rights or environmental defenders’ protection groups see filmmakers as a core group for outreach. The artists’ protection community is smaller than the human rights protection community and far less able to engage in outreach; and the filmmakers protection community currently consists of only one dedicated international organization and a few dedicated individuals. This leaves many filmmakers in the cold, especially those outside of metropolitan areas and privileged circles. Even if filmmakers are aware that protection organizations exist to help them, there are various hurdles to overcome: language (only very few organizations operate in languages other than the main international languages), online forms may need to be filled in, internet connection may be intermittent or data is expensive, and even a degree of trust may be lacking (why would a filmmaker at risk, probably in a traumatized state of mind, trust an organization that is based in a different country or even continent, and whom they know only through a website they have no way of verifying?).

Generally speaking, journalists find it easier to access support than filmmakers. As noted above, journalists have a degree of organization through their employers and professional associations; even when national journalists’ unions or associations are dysfunctional or under the control of the government, a journalist under threat may find their way to a regional or international journalists’ association with emergency support funds or connections to other resources.

C. Connections between silos

While most interviewees acknowledged the existence of the silos or bubbles for each of the groups, they pointed out that there are a number of events and initiatives that foster connections and offer opportunities for more networking and outreach. The following were referenced:

- Film festivals and events such as Good Pitch, that bring together filmmakers with human rights activists and other stakeholders

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- Civil society initiatives specifically designed to bring together human rights defenders, activists, journalists and filmmakers
- Conferences and meetings designed to bring together a large group of stakeholders around freedom of expression issues, such as editors' forums or journalism conferences and the RightsCon conference series
- Specific events and commemorations such as World Press Freedom Day

Film festivals were mentioned by several interviewees as obvious opportunities to connect, internationally as well as across professions. Interviewees particularly mentioned the possibility to hold side-events and workshops on security issues—not something that has been focused on much in the past, but something that certainly could be focused on in the future. Festivals such as IDFA and Sheffield Doc/Fest have held a few security-focused sessions and workshops in the past, and this could be built on and expanded to do more awareness-raising and foster connections between filmmakers, human rights activists and security experts. Good Pitch was specifically mentioned by quite a few interviewees. While Good Pitch doesn't have a security focus, its stated aim of “connecting the world's best social justice films with new allies and partners” certainly creates scope for protection and safety-focused partnerships.

Interviewees in Central and South America mentioned several initiatives designed to bring together human rights defenders, activists, journalists and filmmakers, such as Skylight's Solidarilabs initiative and Ambulante's work. Solidarilabs is “designed to foster regional cohorts of media makers, artists, movement actors, and human rights organizations to collaboratively create enduring media ecosystems that advance a shared mission, whether to defend indigenous or women's rights, battle extractive industries, or promote transitional justice.”^{cxix} It is run as an extensive multiday workshop, with follow-up to foster opportunities for collaborations. They are reportedly very successful, but also very labor and resource-intensive. Ambulante's “Mas Alla” training program was mentioned as another space in which filmmakers could be brought together with human rights defenders and security experts (while most of Ambulante's work has been in Central and South America, it has also run events in other parts of the world).^{cxl}

As a third category, interviewees mentioned a group of conferences and international meetings focused around freedom of expression issues. One of these is RightsCon, which started as a digital rights conference but evolved through greater participation by human rights organizations, journalists, filmmakers and environmental defenders. While it still has a tech focus, many of the issues addressed have broader relevance and security issues have been on the program in the past.^{cxli} RightsCons are an excellent opportunity to convene stakeholders from different backgrounds to discuss digital security issues, dealing with negative PR and trolling. Journalists' and editors' conferences are another clear opportunity. These range from large meetings of investigative journalists such as the Global Investigative Journalism Network^{cxlii} and the World Editors Forum^{cxliii} to national or regionally focused gatherings—all good opportunities to talk about safety and security *and* foster greater connections between filmmakers, journalists and safety experts.

Another connecting opportunity is through events around specific days such as World Press Freedom Day (May 3) and International Human Rights Day (December 10). Main events as well as side-panels at celebrations of these days could be used to focus on safety issues. World Press Freedom Day events are organized under the banner of UNESCO, which hosts the Global Media Defense Fund (referenced

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above), monitors states' compliance with international agreements that they have signed up in the field of freedom of expression and culture, and functions as a network and umbrella under which artists, journalists and filmmakers connect.

Finally, some interviewees mentioned the convening power of the International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies (IFACCA), a global network of arts councils and ministries of culture with member institutions in over 70 countries.^{cxliv} Its mission is to act as a global voice advocating for arts and culture. It does not work explicitly on issues of safety and protection. Through its conferences it can provide a space for discussions on issues of safety—although the fact that its members include government ministries and government-dominated arts councils in countries where artists are at risk puts into question its ability to provide a safe space, especially for sensitive discussions. A 2019 report commissioned by IFACCA suggested that it could look into “the potential to develop a fund that provides financial support to displaced artists with co-investments from public, private and philanthropic sources;” it is not clear whether there are plans to follow up on this.^{cxlv}

VII. How can protection be improved?

The need to improve protection is urgent. Respect for human rights and the rule of law is steadily backsliding. The reports of free speech and human rights watchdogs show annual increases in attacks on rights, with hundreds of artists and journalists killed or imprisoned because of their work and thousands more suffering other kinds of attacks and threats. Unfortunately, this trend is not likely to be reversed in the short term. As set out in the scene-setting chapter, the Covid-19 pandemic has given cover to authoritarian governments to increase repression, and the financial and economic effects of the pandemic have impacted across the world exacerbating existing security risks. The international human rights system is not effective in securing immediate redress (and in a growing number of countries is not effective at all) emphasizing the need for solutions on the ground, in the countries and regions where the need is greatest. But while there are a number of organizations that focus on providing protection to human rights defenders and journalists under threat, demand on these organizations is high, and their resources are totally insufficient.

Visual storytellers and journalists, and in particular filmmakers, are not well served under the current ecosystem of organizations that provide emergency assistance to journalists, artists and human rights defenders. This was acknowledged by many interviewees. At the same time some interviewees thought that the situation of visual storytellers is not *that* urgent, and that those most at risk are frontline environmental and human rights defenders. It is easy to understand why interviewees would see things that way. At the national level, some interviewees even thought that filmmakers are a fairly elite category who are already well-connected and sufficiently resourced. This is an unfair perception—even if some do well, a much larger number of filmmakers truly struggle—but opinions like this don't help prioritize the mobilization of safety resources for visual storytellers. Pushed for resources, protection organizations cannot be expected to shift their priorities away from their core constituencies and while most agreed that assisting visual storytellers and journalists is theoretically within their mandate, they need to be provided the resources to address their needs.

Drawing on the analysis set out in this study, recommendations to improve protection can be made for improving protection under, broadly speaking, four headings:

1. Raising awareness;
2. Empowering visual storytellers and journalists to invest in their own safety and security, and bolstering the role of funders in that;
3. Strengthening emergency resources offered by national and international protection organizations;
4. Improving links between the organizations that can provide protection and potential beneficiaries, including visual storytellers and journalists and, in particular, filmmakers.

A. An impact campaign for safety awareness

To a worryingly large extent, there is still a lack of awareness of safety and security—among visual storytellers and journalists but also among funders. A number of artists and funders “get it,” but an equally large (or possibly larger) number don't. We heard that this problem is greater among

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filmmakers than among journalists, and to address it, there needs to be concerted and sustained awareness raising campaign within the industry. There are clear opportunities for this, such as panels at film festivals and discussions in filmmakers forums and communities.^{cxlvi} These conversations need to be very deliberate, intentional, and sustained—a few panels scattered around a couple of festivals won't have much of an impact.

The awareness-raising can build on work already happening (for example, Doc Society's work and the awareness-raising push by PEN's Artists at Risk Connection) but needs to be more prominent as well as sustained. The Ford Foundation and other safety-focused funders could lead this in partnership with like-minded organizations, many of whom have been named in this study: global organizations such as Doc Society, the International Coalition for Filmmakers at Risk and Artists at Risk Connection, and national and regional organizations such as DocSP (in Brazil), *Ambulante* and *DocsMX* (Central America), *Beirut DC* (in Lebanon), *In-Docs* (in Indonesia), *DOCUBOX* (in Kenya) and similar organizations are all clear and obvious candidates. For organizations who have developed significant safety resources, such as *ARC* and *Doc Society*, this is crucial outreach—they should see it as an “impact campaign” for their safety resources (but they have emphasized that they need to be resourced to do this).

For journalists, there is a higher level of awareness and organization around safety issues, but here too, further awareness could be raised. Organizations such as the *Culture of Safety Alliance* and the *Committee to Protect Journalists* could be funded to do more outreach, but crucially this needs to be alongside regional and national organizations such as the *Latin-American Conference of Investigative Journalism* (*Conferencia Latinoamericana de Periodismo de Investigación, COLPIN*)^{cxlvii} and the *Vladimir Herzog / ABRAJI* network for the protection of journalists in Brazil^{cxlviii} (to name but two) in order to penetration into national communities.

As well as visual storytellers and journalists, funders of their work (including employers, media companies) should work to raise awareness of safety issues among their staff. Except for a few specific individuals, very few funders really appeared to understand and appreciate the urgency of the safety issues faced by visual storytellers and journalists. As a result, they are likely to fail to spot potential security concerns and safety shortcomings in the projects that they fund.

Awareness-raising should extend to all aspects of safety discussed in this study, including the risks faced by protagonists, crew and families.

B. Empowering visual storytellers and journalists to invest in their own safety and security, and that of protagonists

Alongside the awareness-raising, visual storytellers and journalists need to be empowered to invest in their own safety and security. They should be able to address their safety needs in the first instance, leaving the over-subscribed emergency safety resources as a last resort. Given the reticence among filmmakers to initiate conversations with their funders about safety and their tendency to underestimate safety concerns—something that many interviewees flagged—funders should be proactive in initiating this conversation. Instead of the onus being on filmmakers to ask for safety resources, funders should ask questions: “tell us how you have you considered and implemented

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measures to protect the safety of your crew and any protagonists, and what contingencies have you built in?” Similarly, those who fund journalists and artists—including media companies—should be proactive about protecting those in their employment or, in the case of freelance journalists, whose work they publish or use.

In short, there should be a safety partnership among visual storytellers and journalists and their funders or employers. The notion of such a partnership is not a new, unique or particularly revolutionary insight. Doc Society’s *Safe and Secure* emphasized, in 2018:

“By standing together as funders, filmmakers and partners, we are a formidable force to be reckoned with.”^{exlix}

Those visual storytellers and journalists who were well aware of the safety and security risks that they and protagonists are exposed to expressed frustration that they could simply not afford crucial protection related services, including legal advice, digital security resources, protective equipment and insurance. This leaves them vulnerable and potentially reliant on already overstretched protection organizations to provide assistance in case of emergency. With regard to filmmakers, where the need seems to be highest, funders could make available additional funding for security on a case by case basis. However, given the high volume of need, there may be other and potentially more cost-effective ways of addressing these needs. For example:

- Funders could make their own in-house legal teams available to grantees. Luminare and Justfilms have some experience with this. The limitation to this approach is that they can assist only within their sphere of competence: Luminare or Ford’s in-house lawyers in New York would not be able to deal with a blasphemy or obscenity case against a filmmaker in Indonesia or Pakistan;
- Funders can fund pooled services for grantees, ranging from safety training and experts to lawyers to digital security specialists and trauma counsellors;
- Funders could purchase group insurance and make this available to grantees (possibly only to grantees who have passed certain training courses, to satisfy an insurer’s likely demand that filmmakers will follow appropriate security protocols).

It was noted by several interviewees that funders, knowing the risks that filmmakers are exposed to, have an ethical, moral duty of care to invest in their safety—in the same way that filmmakers have an ethical duty of care toward protagonists.

Some film funders have already begun to move in this direction. For example, the International Documentary Association’s Enterprise Fund has a partnership approach with filmmakers through which it provides not just finance but various resources and expertise tailored to the project, often safety-related. Resources provided include information about digital and physical security, research databases, legal and other experts, public relations strategists and mentors as well as access to discounted insurance.^{cl} Another funder described how they ask filmmakers questions about their safety assessments and, when it becomes clear that the risks are greater than the filmmakers had initially identified, funds a more in-depth risk assessment as well as additional safety resources as needed.

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For many funders this is a new direction and may seem like a daunting prospect. It is undoubtedly more expensive: funding is tight and filmmakers will not want to see safety resources provided at the expense of other budget items. In the absence of overall budget increases, this may lead to fewer projects being funded. Funders should consult with those who are already moving in this direction—Luminate, IDA—and learn from their experiences. Funders could also poll (a group of) their grantees and ask them about their experiences in relation to safety and security and suggestions to funders—but the findings of such a poll should be calibrated with the knowledge that many filmmakers currently underestimate safety and security concerns, and, knowing how tight funders' budgets are, filmmakers may not suggest more investment in safety if they think that that would be at the expense of other budget lines.

But there are a few things that any film funder could do straightaway without resource implications, including raising awareness and providing training for their staff on safety and security issues; and asking questions about safety as part of the routine due diligence in grant and funding requests.

C. Strengthening emergency resources

This study has referenced many organizations that can provide emergency assistance and resources to visual storytellers and journalists at risk. The Artists at Risk Connection's Guide lists hundreds of them, providing resources ranging from safe havens to legal assistance to providing emergency grants. A casually informed observer might wonder what the problem is. The problem is this: every single one of these organizations is run on a shoestring and is overwhelmed with demand. They serve human rights and environmental defenders, journalists and artists who speak truth to power and whose projects put them at risk. For them, the world is a hostile environment and it's getting rapidly worse, not better, in nearly every country. The need for emergency assistance is growing year by year.

It is worth emphasizing how short-staffed the protection organizations are. For example, focusing on the best-known international ones that focus on journalists and artists:

- the Committee to Protect Journalists, which is one of the largest international organizations for the protection of press freedom and has a global mandate, has two dedicated staff in its emergency assistance department.
- Artists at Risk Connection, with the mandate to assist artists at risk around the world in finding the right resources to help them, has three members of staff, and three part-time regional representatives in Latin America, Africa and Asia.
- Freemuse, the foremost international organization for the protection of artists with a global mandate, has a staff of seven, none of them dedicated full-time to emergency assistance.
- Safemuse, which organizes safe haven residencies, is so poorly financed that it has to fundraise separately for every single residency that it can offer to an artist at risk.
- The newly created International Coordination for Filmmakers at Risk, unique in its focus on filmmakers, only has one member of staff and no long-term funding.

Many national level organizations are even less well-resourced; some function with only one or two members of staff, or are entirely voluntarily. Many are funded on a project-by-project basis which denies them the opportunity to invest in developing their own capacity, and many of their donors insist on maximizing project outputs and keeping budget items related to internal capacity (including

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safety and security costs) to a bare minimum. Some organizations go through periods of being virtually dormant and unable to carry out any work until they access the next batch of funding. This state of affairs leaves the sector continually struggling to meet the demand placed on it and many organizations—aware of the increasing need in the world—are nervous about engaging in outreach for fear of becoming even more overwhelmed. This is not a healthy state of affairs for a group of organizations that should function as a safety net for a human rights and social justice sector that is increasingly under threat.

The publicly funded mechanisms for the protection of human rights defenders and journalists that exist in a number of countries, especially in the Central and South American countries surveyed in this study, are by and large discredited, partly by the actions of the national and local authorities in these countries (which commit, encourage or condone serious human rights violations) and partly because of mandate and funding restrictions. They cannot be relied on as a viable avenue for protection.

Human rights and social justice funders should recognize that with the rising threat levels for social justice activists around the world, there is an urgent need to bolster investment in safety across the board and strengthen protection organizations. In doing this, resources need to be built as close to the ground as possible, where the need is greatest. This means primarily directing resources to local organizations, who best know the situation on the ground and are best placed to deliver support (although not to the exclusion of funding international organizations: as outlined above, they do fulfil an important function and they too require strengthening). In nearly every country surveyed (with the exception of Venezuela), there are national organizations who could play a lead role in this.

Funders should also recognize that providing emergency assistance requires sophisticated skills and cannot be done “on the cheap.” Providing effective care and assistance and ensuring that the person in need of the assistance is put back on a path where they can return to their work and activism is more than just writing a check: it requires speaking (via whatever means) with the applicant, diagnosing their needs and agreeing with them the kind of support they require and where that can be best sourced. The job is, literally, that of an emergency responder. This type of triage takes both skills and experience: communicating with someone who has gone through, or is still going through, trauma, is not something that anyone can do. Unfortunately, very few organizations currently have the time and resources to invest in this skill, or to do it fully. Often the depth of analysis and support provided depends entirely on individuals within organizations. Given the labor-intensive nature of the job, protection organizations should also have sufficient numbers of staff in their emergency departments to provide support and assistance.

Funding for protection organizations should also enable them to engage in constant and ongoing outreach. Building the emergency assistance capacity is one thing; but if those in need don’t know that the assistance resources exist then that is a huge problem. This is a bigger issue for international than for national organizations.

Donor support should come in the form of very long-term general operating support (ideally, five years or longer). To fund a protection initiative for a shorter period of time makes no sense: the threats are not likely to abate anytime soon, and should a funder be concerned that the protection organization is, for whatever reason, not delivering then a contract can be ended on grounds of non-delivery.

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Without such long-term support, protection organizations cannot provide the protective measures that the sector badly needs. Several interviewees recommended that, given the increasing pressures on civil society everywhere, emergency support should be funded as part of overall support for and strengthening of the sector. Every donor that funds in social justice has a stake in the safety and security of civil society and should direct a sizeable portion of its funding toward it.

The above remarks are all made in the context of protection organizations serving their de facto current beneficiaries: human rights and environmental defenders, journalists and artists. As discussed, visual storytellers—filmmakers—are not currently well served, not because they're not in mandate but because they aren't aware of the existence or availability to them of the mechanisms. Should they become aware and request support, protection organizations need to be able to handle these requests—all the more reason to bolster their capacity. Only if their capacity is increased can they engage in more outreach to visual storytellers.

Specific issues and areas for support

While the overriding need is for general operating support, strengthening the ability of protection organizations to make emergency grants for a variety of purposes, a few areas stand out as needing strengthening:

- Gender and identity-based threats

There is a crisis of gender and identity-based violence in countries around the world, and few protection organizations have the skills to recognize the specific needs in this regard of those who request their assistance. Donors should fund protection organizations to develop an understanding of these overlapping threats and respond appropriately and holistically.^{cli}

- Trolling

The professionals interviewed for this report all noted how few resources are available to visual storytellers and journalists who fall victim to trolling. Law enforcement authorities are not perceived to respond effectively.^{clii} A few small organizations help journalists deal with online trolling but the need for assistance far outstrips what they are able to do. More support is needed, in the form not just of specialized organizations but also through networks, and, for those employed in media or production companies, institutional support.

- Crisis communications

A related need is in responding to negative PR. As with trolling, there is a dearth of organizations that specialize in this, the only available options being commercial PR firms (who are expensive and may not be attuned to the needs of visual storytellers and journalists).

- Investing in trauma support

While there are strong indications that a majority of those who seek emergency assistance are in need of support with trauma, there are hardly any organizations that specialize in providing such support. While NGOs cannot take the place of trauma counselors, considerations should be given to looking into what more NGOs can do, and bolstering the resources of the few organizations that specialize in this.

- Legal and digital

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Each of these niche areas is underinvested in, particularly at the national level (though not to the extent of the underinvestment in trauma support, support for victims of trolls and negative PR).

- Safe havens closer to the ground

Nearly all safe haven residencies are in North America and Western Europe. There is a need for safe havens closer to the areas of need (which will also likely be cheaper to run than safe havens in expensive locations); ideally, so as not to unnecessarily politicize cases, these should be presented as artistic residencies even if they used by artists-at-risk.

D. Improving outreach and connections

Outreach and the forging of connections are crucial to ensuring that current human rights, artists', journalists' and environmental rights defenders' organizations can more effectively serve visual storytellers. Interviewees from some protection organizations told us that outreach is an ongoing and very deliberate effort, and that they try to ensure that groups and individuals most at risk know about the assistance potentially available to them. The most effective outreach is conducted in the language that those in need operate in and builds a connection of trust. It should go beyond the usual circles in metropolitan centers; concerted efforts must be made to identify those most at risk—often in outlying areas—and conduct outreach to them.

Unfortunately, partly because of the fact that many protection organizations are so short-staffed, many organizations cannot engage in the level of outreach that they should. While they still serve large numbers of beneficiaries, it is likely that an even larger number of potential beneficiaries goes unserved because they don't know about the assistance potentially available to them. As a result, outreach in general is probably sub-optimal and outreach to potential beneficiaries on the fringes of mandates—in particular, visual storytellers—is sporadic.

The good news is that there are many current initiatives that can be strengthened:

- Hub organizations such as Artists at Risk Connection and networks such as Journalists in Distress are very good at connecting those in need with the right assistance organization, yet operate on a shoestring. They should be strengthened;
- All the “connections between the silos” mentioned in Section VI.C above should be strengthened:
 - o Film festivals and events such as Good Pitch that bring together filmmakers with human rights activists and other stakeholders
 - o Civil society initiatives specifically designed to bring together human rights defenders, activists, journalists and filmmakers
 - o Conferences and meetings designed to bring together a large group of stakeholders around freedom of expression issues, such as editors' forums or journalism conferences and the RightsCon conference series
 - o Specific events and commemorations, for example World Press Freedom Day and International Human Rights Day
- While protection organizations require general operating support, donors and protection organizations (national and international) should engage in conversations about investing in

VII. How can protection be improved

outreach and identifying the extent to which this can be targeted at visual storytellers and journalists at risk³³

Funders can play an important role in bringing together different stakeholders: an organization such as the Ford Foundation, which funds in human rights as well as in moving image arts and journalism, could be much more intentional about convening its grantees from these different sectors and curating connections, in-country and in regions as well as internationally (this also links to the awareness raising, mentioned above).

E. Solidarity organizations and networks

There is great strength in numbers. Many interviewees told of how visual storytellers and journalists who operated in groups and worked together were always better protected for that reason: in emergency situations they could draw on the solidarity of their colleagues and peers, who would also often engage in advocacy for them. There is a lot of learning in these networks that contributes to keeping visual storytellers and journalists safe and avoiding emergency situations. Networks can take the very simple form of WhatsApp groups but can also rise to more organized levels, covering various regions.

These networks can be strengthened in two ways. First is to provide support to solidarity networks that function as organizations. The two fledgling international initiatives for solidarity among filmmakers, the International Coalition for Filmmakers at Risk and the Sisterhood Foundation, are prime among these. They are rooted in communities of filmmakers and much of their purpose is about fostering networks and safety. There is a clear need for each organization: there are currently no international organizations at all that focus on the protection of filmmakers and visual storytellers at risk; and the very real heightened risks and threats to women filmmakers justifies the establishment of the Sisterhood Foundation.

The second way of supporting networks is by supporting the initiatives that give birth to them. This links to some of the outreach and awareness building suggestions above and the work of organizations such as Doc Society, Ambulante, Skylight's Solidarilabs, DocSP, DocsMX, Beirut DC to name but a few—each of which engage in work around safety (as well as impact, and various other initiatives) and nurture communities of filmmakers that form into networks. What should not be underestimated is the ongoing effort in establishing, curating and sustaining these networks, particularly following the events around which they are built. For example, Skylight's Solidarilabs spoke to us about the effort that goes not just into making the Solidarilabs events happen, but the work required to sustain the networks that are formed at these labs on an ongoing basis (the lead author of this report can attest to that from personal experience with networks).

Finally, networks can exist and function without any donor support. Where this is the case, and unless there is a very clear request from the network for support for specific activities, donors should

³³ At the same time donors should beware the trap of imposing their ideas on NGOs, who may be tempted to agree with any donor suggestion that sees them getting additional funding—bluntly, organizations might say “yes that’s a great idea and we’ll do it” and take the funding without properly considering pros and cons.

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probably resist the temptation to proactively suggest financial support as this has the potential to be disruptive and generate conflict (there may then be arguments over what the funding gets used for and, in particular, who (is seen to) benefit from it).

F. Opportunities for donor collaboration

A few opportunities present themselves for donor collaboration, and representatives from donor organizations interviewed for this study all indicated that they were, in general, open to collaboration.

Several interviewees suggested that the Ford Foundation should use its leadership as a documentary film funder as well as a human rights funder to convene film funders' discussions around safety, and to take forward the suggestions and recommendations in this study. This could take the shape of one convening, or a series of meetings or workshops and side-events at funders' meetings, film festivals and similar gatherings to raise awareness and educate other funders (as well as other stakeholders) of safety and security issues.

Some of the specific suggestions in this study could also be taken forward with like-minded film funders. For example, the suggestion of purchasing insurance, or pooled services of lawyers, digital security consultants and other experts, could be bought (more cheaply) with other donors who are already more or less on board with the concept of providing additional security resources to grantees—Luminate and IDA, for example. The film funders and donors that we spoke with—Luminate, IDA, Sundance, IMS—were all open to collaboration in principle (we did not discuss with them specific ideas, such as buying in pooled services or insurance) and discussions can be taken forward. Other like-minded funders are likely to include Bertha Foundation, Skoll Foundation, Field of Vision, Oak Foundation as well as a group of funders involved around Doc Society's Safe and Secure work: A&E, Catapult Fund, Chicken and Egg, Chicago Media Project, Compton Foundation, Field of Vision, Filmmaker Fund, First Look (part of the Omidyar group with Luminate, Field of Vision), Fledgling Fund, Hartley Film Fund, Impact Partners, ITVS, Media Impact Funders, Perspective Fund, POV, Tribeca Film Institute, and Wyncote Foundation (none of them were interviewed for this study due to restrictions in time and availability).

The suggestion of using Ford's convening power as a funder in human rights as well as in film and freedom of expression could be taken forward together with other funders in the same position: mainly, Oak Foundation, Open Society Foundations and Bertha Foundation (whose theory of change explicitly talks about convening activists, lawyers and storytellers for social justice).

One arts funder who was interviewed—the Swedish Arts Council—runs a funding program to promote artistic freedom. Scheduled to run until 2023, its aims include the improvement of “conditions for artists to work without being subject to threats or harassment;” “increased opportunities to access a safe haven;” “increased capacity and networking on an international level, the development of a shared understanding, and knowledge of how the conditions for artists to work can be improved;” and “increased capacity of relevant actors to strengthen women's opportunities to be artistically active.”^{ciiii} Arts Council staff interviewed for this study said that although the program had only just begun, they would be interested to consider opportunities for collaboration.

VII. How can protection be improved

VIII. Recommendations

This study has surfaced significant and growing threats to the safety of visual storytellers and journalists, a lack of resources for their protection, and a worrying lack of safety awareness. The following recommendations are based on findings from interviews with experienced stakeholders as well as literature research. No single one of these recommendations is a silver bullet; they should be seen as a package of interconnected and related measures.³⁴

The recommendations are to all funders, not just the Ford Foundation: the issues described should be of concern to all social justice and human rights funders.

Cross-cutting:

There are four cross-cutting recommendations for any initiatives that seek to address safety and security (these recommendations are to funders, and do not replicate or seek to go over the same ground as those made in various excellent existing safety guides).

1. Raising awareness of risk and safety issues is crucial to seed the importance of the issue more widely in creative communities and connect them with protection organizations. A culture of safety should be nurtured among visual storytellers and journalists and their funders, employers and other stakeholders, centered around feminist and holistic principles of protection, equity, fairness and respect; forging connections, solidarity and support for networks and safe spaces; an encouragement of collective efforts to define and create protection practices; strengthening the skills of visual storytellers and journalists; expanding the social recognition of their work; and self-care, mutual respect and support, and well-being.
2. Building on the awareness raising, training and education should be made available to visual storytellers and filmmakers as well as to funders and other stakeholders. This should include funding to organizations that specialize in providing risk training and for dedicated workshops, with specific attention to psychosocial trauma, an often-overlooked aspect.
3. There is a crisis of gender-based violence in countries around the world, and female visual storytellers and filmmakers face risks and threats that are different and more severe than those faced by their male colleagues. Their security needs differ from men's, but there are few resources and organizations that specialize in providing protection. Visual storytellers and journalists from indigenous groups, (sexual) minorities, and others who are at a position of disadvantage or at heightened risk in society also have specific protection needs. Funders should finance protection organizations to develop an understanding of these overlapping threats and respond appropriately and holistically.

³⁴ The recommendations are based in the research evidence, including the many stakeholder interviews, as well as the authors' considerable professional experience. They have been "tested" with a few interviewees but the lead author takes full responsibility for them.

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4. The agency of visual storytellers and journalists should be respected. In the first instance they should be empowered to invest in their own safety, and that of their crews and any protagonists or communities potentially at risk. The safety net around them should include local, national and international organizations and networks that specialize in safety and protection, with the role of each understood and agreed with visual storytellers and journalists. In principle, safety resources need to be built as close to the ground as possible.

Specifically:

The following further, specific, recommendations are made.

5. Fund key organizations at the international, regional and national level to engage in a strategy to raise awareness of safety and protection issues through events (high profile as well as side events) at established gatherings such as film, journalism, arts, or human rights festivals and conferences, and, as funders, take active part in that strategy;
6. Empower visual storytellers and filmmakers to have control over and invest in their own protection by:
 - f. Starting conversations about safety and funding safety assessments and protection/mitigation strategies for all stages of a project (including during production and after launch), separate to any other funding that is provided so grantees are clear that safety funding does not “come out of” a grant they would have received anyway. This should cover risks to physical, digital, legal and reputational safety as well as psychosocial well-being;
 - g. Promoting the use of good security protocols;
 - h. Making safety training tailored to the needs of visual storytellers and journalists available to all grantees at low or no cost;
 - i. Ensuring the availability of expertise and resources to counter legal, physical, reputational, psychosocial and digital threats, for example through retaining specialist lawyers or purchasing group insurance and making this available to grantees and funded projects (this could be pooled among several donors);
 - j. Supporting (advocacy for) initiatives that boost the financial sustainability of the moving image arts sector, such as a basic income.
7. Invest in resources for visual storytellers and journalists in need of urgent assistance, by:
 - a. Ensuring the availability of contingency finance to grantees in need (whether through a funder’s own means, by purchasing collective insurance for grantees, or otherwise);
 - b. Providing long-term, unrestricted funding for existing and emerging protection mechanisms that can provide emergency assistance to visual storytellers and journalists under threat. Funding should be targeted at initiatives that are as close to communities of artists and filmmakers as possible (either geographically, or because they are part of a community that is geographically dispersed but close-knit in other ways) as these are most likely to reach those in need;

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- c. Funding protection mechanisms to invest in their own resources, including appropriate skills for staff fielding requests;
 - d. Funding constant outreach by protection organizations to visual storytellers and journalists and bridging to communities outside of urban centers and in languages other than the main national language, to ensure that those at risk and in need of emergency assistance are aware of the existence of protection mechanisms and are able to place their trust in them;
 - e. Funding currently underfunded safety resources:
 - (v) resources for psychosocial care
 - (vi) defense against digital threats, negative PR and trolling
 - (vii) specialist legal resources, especially in-country
 - (viii) safe havens close to the countries/regions where the threat is greatest, and specifically for visual storytellers and journalists at risk (but de-politicized and styled as arts residencies, not at-risk residencies).
8. Support hub organizations and solidarity and protection networks of and “bridges” between communities of artists, filmmakers and human rights and environmental defenders at the local, national, regional and global level, encouraging the establishment of formal and informal solidarity networks (and recognizing that keeping these networks going requires an ongoing effort).
 9. Given the focus of this study on documentary filmmakers and the dearth of support specifically for them, strong consideration should be given to supporting the few fledgling efforts to provide them with protection (specifically, at the international level, the International Coalition for Filmmakers at Risk and the Sisterhood Foundation, as well as appropriate national initiatives).
 10. To the Ford Foundation, as the instigator of this study: use the Foundation’s convening power, status and experience of funding in the arts, journalism as well as human rights to:
 - a. Convene other funders to bring along on this journey toward a greater culture of safety, beginning with like-minded funders such as Luminate, IDA, IDFA, Sundance, IMS, Doc Society, Bertha Foundation, Skoll Foundation, Field of Vision, Oak Foundation and Open Society Foundations;
 - b. Bring together key organizations from among its human rights, social justice, arts and free expression programs (including organizations that specialize in protection) to build bridges and foster connections.

Annex 1: Region and country reports - Colombia, Peru and Venezuela

Camila Mariño *

1. Introduction, issues of definition, and methodology

The Andean region (Colombia, Peru, and Venezuela) is one of the most dangerous places to speak up against powerful interests. This study examines the safety and protection needs of filmmakers, photo or film journalists and visual storytellers (hereinafter referred to as “visual storytellers”) in the Andean region who have come under threat as a result of their work, and the resources available to them.

There are a number of protection resources in the region aimed at human rights defenders. Visual storytellers who expose or report on human rights issues should also be seen as human rights defenders. However, there has been a narrow understanding among civil society (including donors) regarding who is classified as a “human rights defender,” limiting the concept to activists or social leaders who advocate either for the interest of their communities (for example, to suspend the development of mega-projects that affect community rights) or for a specific cause (for example, indigenous peoples’ rights or LGBTQI rights). Subcategories of defenders have been developed within this (environmental rights or indigenous rights), but other actors that are also targeted for their human-rights work and who are exposed to multiple risks across the region—such as visual storytellers—have been de facto excluded. This has led to a lack of protective mechanisms available to them—whether operated by the state or by civil society.

It must be highlighted that the work of documentary filmmakers, visual storytellers and visual journalists is often very lonely. Many of those who work or report on human rights issues do not consider themselves to be human rights activists, nor do they perceive themselves exposed to risk or danger because of their work. The large group of “visual storytellers” is very diverse and includes some who are widely known among the public and others who are not. Some storytellers work as part of collectives and gain a degree of protection from that, some do not. Often it is those who lack a public profile and who do not work as part of a collective who are the most vulnerable.

Since the three countries have a different context, the main body of this study is divided into three chapters—one for each country—focusing on five points:

- 1) Safety and security needs: what are the threats?
- 2) Existing resources for safety and security;
- 3) Connecting the dots: how are stakeholders connected?
- 4) How can protection be improved?
- 5) Recommendations

* Camila Mariño, Consultant in International Law, Human Rights, Environmental Law:
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/camilamarinov/>

The study finishes with conclusions and reflections on common points across the region and corresponding donor priorities.

The research was conducted through a qualitative method, based on semi-structured interviews and desk research. Between October and December 2020, 25 interviews were conducted with individuals (filmmakers, photojournalists or artists), organizations (NGOs) and public officials from Colombia, Peru and Venezuela. Interviewees included some grantees of the Ford Foundation as well as others. Each interview was conducted via online videoconference and lasted approximately one hour. A list of interviewees is provided as Annex 4; it was agreed that quotes are not attributable to specific interviewees.

2. Colombia

2.1 Safety and security needs: what are the threats?

During the last years, repression has risen and visual storytellers in Colombia have suffered increasing violations of their right to freedom of expression. The risks and threats to which they are exposed are primarily to their physical safety and to their reputation and stem from a variety of actors, including organized crime,³⁵ the government, as well as powerful individuals and corporations whose wrongdoings are exposed. A new generation of younger visual storytellers tends to be invisible, especially those that work locally, in contrast to better known (and older) visual storytellers who have a degree of leverage and protection because of their public visibility.

In many places the camera is seen as a weapon, and documentary filmmakers, filmmakers or journalists risk direct retaliation from people who feel threatened by the camera. Most of the visual storytellers interviewed for this study emphasized that the most important risk they face is physical, although there is also a trend of engaging in smear campaigns against those who speak truth to power. Visual storytellers also reported a growing threat to their digital safety, although this can be hard to track particularly when measures such as phone or email interceptions are carried out without the victim's knowledge. A compounding factor is that visual storytellers in Colombia tend to be independent and work alone, without a clear community that supports them. Sometimes they can be exposed to higher risks because they don't engage in risk assessments before performing the work and they do not contact organizations and that can help navigate challenging situations, either because they don't know of them or simply because they prefer to do their job without telling anyone. Despite these threats, the general population does not consider visual storytellers as a group at risk.

Interviewees indicated that during field work, their highest priority is to avoid being killed or kidnapped, and otherwise preserving their life and liberty. The second priority related to digital security and protection of information. Interviewees mentioned that the main threat in this regard came from the state: one said that the military installed a virus on her computer that had resulted in her email being hacked and files deleted; and another interviewee said that her material had been

³⁵ In the Colombian context, this includes former paramilitaries as well as former members of FARC alongside organized drugs gangs and others.

modified and publicly presented as if it had been produced for the army, affecting her credibility as an independent filmmaker.

A third priority was the countering of threats to reputation through smear campaigns against visual storytellers. This can happen when filmmakers are associated with those who are featured in their films, or when the stories they tell are twisted to place the filmmaker in a negative light. For example, when a film denounces the weaknesses of the peace process in Colombia, the filmmaker can be stigmatized as a “terrorist” guerrilla member or sympathizer.

Fourth, threats of legal action often loom on the horizon. Defamation laws in particular are easily abused to silence visual storytellers—it is very easy to claim that a particular allegation is defamatory, and hard for a filmmaker to prove that it is not. Defamation claims also require filmmakers to have recourse to lawyers, requiring them to run up legal bills and invest time and resources in defending threats and cases.

A final, but often overlooked, priority mentioned by some filmmakers was to look after their own mental well-being. Many filmmakers face significant risks of mental or emotional harm because of the events that they witness and document.

The threats faced by visual storytellers are exacerbated by a lack of resources. For example, visual storytellers lack the funds to protect their material by investing in digital backups; they even lack the funds to invest in protecting their own safety through GPS locators or other tracking systems that would allow someone (a trusted person as opposed to an adversary) to track their whereabouts during fieldwork.

Differentiation can exist among threats and risks with regards to gender, socioeconomic background and race. Some women reported receiving threats of sexual violence via social media, and also said that in general they feel that they are not as well respected for their work as their male counterparts. At the same time, in certain situations women reported feeling less threatened because the subjects of their reports thought that they did not pose a risk (a stereotypical male way of viewing women as inherently “harmless”).

Risks can also vary between local and external filmmakers (either from abroad or from another part of the country). Local filmmakers can be exposed to higher risks after filming since they remain in the territory, often isolated from visible protection and at risk of confrontations from those whom they exposed in their documentaries. External filmmakers have the safety of being able to leave the territory following filming, but during filming they often lack local knowledge and ignore the protection and security protocols followed by local communities. For example, an external filmmaker can reach a territory without knowing the people with whom they have to deal or which areas they can enter, risking their lives as a result as well as sometimes the lives of their protagonists or communities they interact with.

Protagonists are confronted with risks that vary according to the situation. On the one hand, protagonists can be at risk of reprisals from those whose wrongdoings they exposed. For example, one of the interviewees shared the example of a fine received by one of the protagonists of the

documentary that she did that was critical of a government representative. The filmmaker supported the protagonist through the legal proceedings, and was also fined. The harassment only stopped when the governmental representative resigned from the public institution concerned. At the same time, interviewees also emphasized that the screening of a documentary can place protagonists in a positive light and make them recognizable to a larger public, offering a degree of protection.

2.2 Existing resources for safety and security

Government programs

The best-known government protection program is implemented by the National Protection Unit (Unidad Nacional de Protección, UNP).^{cliv} The program offers protection to 19 categories of individuals, including human rights defenders, journalists and social leaders, in three different scenarios: 1) internal armed conflict, 2) natural disaster and 3) generalized violence. The goal of the program is to identify individuals or collectives that are under threat and need governmental protection and to provide them with a security scheme that can include a permanent security agent. There are three types of risk: 1) ordinary, 2) extraordinary and 3) extreme; and the measures require groups or individuals to comply with strict requirements^{clv} and wait around three months for the decision to be taken. Filmmakers could be included in the category of journalists and social communicators; but at present, no filmmaker or artist enjoys protection under the program.

While the UNP has been able to offer protection to human rights defenders, critics have pointed out that its budget is very limited and that it has turned down the vast majority of collective protection requests. Furthermore, it has been criticized for providing protection only in response to reported threats, not proactively, and for being slow and bureaucratic in its responses.^{clvi}

The government runs several other lesser known protection programs, including a national police protection program, a protection program for victims of crime and a protection program created under the umbrella of the Peace Agreement. Each of these could only offer protection to visual storytellers if they fit one of the specific categories of protected persons (for example, if they chose to act as a witness in judicial proceedings). At present, no filmmaker enjoys the protection of any of these programs.

Finally, the Ombudsman's Office has a protection strategy for those who don't qualify for UNP protection measures or for those who are waiting for an answer providing them with alternative measures to avoid exposure. Under this strategy individuals are first advised to make a declaration before the UNP, and pending an answer, seek protection as a "victim" from one of the protection programs run by the police, the General Attorney's office or under the Peace Agreement. An interviewee from the Ombudsman's Office remarked that inside the institution there is an early warning system to monitor threats in rural areas, but that these are ignored or not sufficiently followed up by other government institutions.

Civil society programs

In Colombia, a number of organizations assist human rights defenders and journalists under threat. The two prominent groups—the Foundation for Freedom of the Press (FLIP, Fundación para la

Libertad de Prensa)^{clvii} and the Colombian Commission of Jurists (Comisión Colombiana de Juristas, CCJ)^{clviii}—were interviewed for this study and indicate that they don't differentiate between journalists or human rights defenders, and that they have both provided protection to visual storytellers. FLIP has a network of correspondents throughout the country and provides legal advice and psychosocial support, denounces violations of freedom of expression and provides trainings on safety and security. CCJ provides legal assistance related to the implementation of the protection measures from the government and takes on legal cases deemed to be of strategic importance. Additionally, CCJ is part of the platform Somos Defensores (We are defenders) which promotes the physical protection of human rights defenders.^{clix} Numerous other organizations also engage in strategic litigation for human rights defenders, and some, such as CAJAR, have in the past taken on a limited number of cases of visual storytellers.^{clx}

Communities have common practices in their territories to protect themselves and in many cases, those are the same security protocols that should be implemented by visual storytellers when they visit the territory. Typically, these protocols cover issues such as whom to contact in case of an emergency, what to do and where to go. These protocols are not public, they are based on established community practices, and visual storytellers can have access to them only when they work directly with the community.

FLIP has also published a number of manuals, aimed primarily at journalists but useful also for artists and filmmakers (and any other activist who faces threats in repose to their work). These include a guide for journalists accused of defamation or slander; a guide to defense against judicial harassment; a guide on tools for digital protection; self-protection manual for journalists; a self-protection manual for community radio; a protection manual for journalists at the border; and a manual for psychosocial and emotional support of journalists.^{clxi}

2.3 Connecting the dots: (how) are stakeholders connected?

In Colombia, visual storytellers are not connected through formal associations, and there are no formal connections between visual storytellers and human rights defenders: many interviewees indicated that they are not aware of any organization that can support them or provide them with information or guidance when they suffer threats or are at risk. While interviewees were aware of several human rights defender organizations, they did not view themselves as human rights defenders and did not think that these organizations could come to their aid. The same applied to environmental defender organizations: visual storytellers do not consider themselves to fall in this category and so do not approach them for support, guidance or information.

Visual storytellers do connect informally, mainly through film festivals. These create a safe space for documentary filmmakers, allowing them to present their work and ideas without suffering direct reprisals or repercussions. *Ambulante Colombia* was frequently mentioned as a good example; and this also attracts civil society organizations.^{clxii} Other opportunities for networking are through community screenings, often facilitated by civil society organizations, which allow filmmakers to expose a specific situation or wrongdoing taking place in one community and share this with other communities suffering a similar situation (for example, a film exposing the development of the

exploitation of a mine without consent from the local community is screened in another community where there are plans to build a dam without consent). The human rights media organization, Skylight Pictures, ran the first of its Solidarilabs retreats in Colombia in 2016, bringing together media makers, artists, movement actors and human rights organizations in a safe space to exchange experiences and develop storytelling approaches to human rights challenges.^{clxiii} Spaces such as this can be used for develop safety and security strategies as well.

2.4 Opportunities to improve protection

Many interviewees suggested that while there are no protection measures specifically adapted to the needs of visual storytellers, measures could be developed by building on the protection mechanisms that exist for journalists, human rights defenders and environmental defenders.

One suggestion was to improve the safety of visual storytellers and the protagonists of their work by ensuring that there is a team who monitors all stages of the process—from scouting, production and filming to screenings—and which can coordinate support as required. Another suggested strategy was to raise the public profile of visual storytellers, in particular on social media, so there will be greater public awareness of any threats to them. In general, it was suggested that visual storytellers should strive for good relationships with communities by being transparent with them about work that will be filmed in community territory and to gain community endorsement. This will in turn engender a positive community attitude to the film crew and ensure community support in situations of threat.

The security protocol implemented by Peace Brigades International, which includes notifying the military and other authorities of places where they will work,^{clxiv} was contemplated as another strategy. While one interviewee suggested this was too rigid for the context of Colombian visual storytellers, particularly insofar as it included many bureaucratic steps, the implementation of a similar protocol could nevertheless be an improvement. Such a protocol could include notification to any kind of organization in the area (not necessarily a human rights organization) so they could function as a source of support in case of an emergency.

Digital communications technologies also present an opportunity to better connect and generate users' know-how and information (i.e., evidence, particularly when filming human rights or environmental abuses. However, this presents a challenge in terms of connectivity—there needs to be either internet access, either mobile or through satellite). To exploit this fully would require the development of partnerships and a commitment to working collectively (since it is harder to target a group of people than someone working alone).

There were several suggestions to improve the protection offered through the UNP. Merging the various categories into a general category was suggested by one interviewee, since the subcategories become very restrictive and the UNP doesn't engage in fundamental analysis. However, another interviewee said that the UNP program is restrictive and ineffective, and the very fact that it is financed by the government which is itself responsible for human rights violations means that there is an inherent problem with regards to legitimacy and public perception. As a result, this interviewee said that the program would be the last resource where he would refer an individual at risk. Finally,

most of the interviewees highlighted that protection mechanisms should be extended to the families of the visual storytellers and their protagonists, since they were often at risk also.

2.5 Recommendations for donor and stakeholder action

Several suggestions and recommendations emerge from the research and interviews.

Although a group of interviewees argued for the creation of specific protection measures for visual storytellers, most interviewees suggested that would be better to invest resources in the strengthening of existing protection programs and ensuring that they can assist visual storytellers. Supporting UNP is not recommended; many in civil society are distrustful of it because it is ultimately led by the government, and because of human rights defenders' experiences with it. Instead, resources should be invested in on efforts that already exist regarding the protection of human rights defenders and journalists. These organizations know how to develop these resources and implementation strategies, but require funding in order to make them stronger and extend their reach.

A related suggestion was to invest resources in the development of outreach campaigns by organizations such as FLIP in order to create awareness of the risks that visual storytellers face and create tools for their use. A network could be created for visual storytellers that could send alerts and function as an early warning system, and which would also function as a central point for those in need to reach out to in terms of protection, information and guidance about protection mechanisms, learning tools and psychosocial support. Interviewees also highlighted the need for training and capacity building in terms of using secure digital means for information sharing and gathering.

It was also suggested that a community risk management manual should be created, based on experiences of visual storytellers and communities and past security protocols. An organization, or network, could be created for the support of documentary makers and others who work in the territory. Such an initiative could be led by visual storytellers who have experience of direct contact with communities through their work or as part of the crew or as protagonists of films. Concrete steps that could be taken to improve the safety of visual storytellers include the use of GPS trackers, such as those used by war journalists, and provide special training. Specific protocols are needed for rural areas and conflict zones.

As part of building better relationships with communities it was also suggested that visual storytellers should endeavor to show their works in the communities featured, or where filming took place (subject to the agreement of protagonists and communities, and a prior risk assessment and safety contingencies).

The role of the Ombudsman's Office can be strengthened as well. While the institution has limited resources, it should engage in far more outreach, including in rural areas, so the population knows what they do and can reach out to them. In parallel, the office should expand the channels that it uses to serve people and simplify the processes to access the institution.

3. Peru

3.1 Safety and security needs: what are the threats?

Threats to the safety and security of activists, journalists and visual storytellers have evolved over time. During the years of the dictatorship—the Fujimori regime—it was clear that most of the threats and risks came from the government. During recent years, however, the sources of the threats have evolved, as has their nature: interviewees reported receiving threats that range from physical and psychological to digital persecution, espionage and reputational damage.

Some interviewees maintained that many of the risks confronted by visual storytellers still originate with the government. Risks reported range from limiting access to funding or distribution; and legal persecution on bogus grounds such as alleged links with terrorism or opening criminal investigations into the organizations where they work. The army is also mentioned as a source of threats, as are subversive groups. A primary risk that visual storytellers face is digital security—protecting the information and data gathered during production and post-production processes from theft or being tampered with. The challenge varies, depending on the subject that the artist, journalist or filmmaker is dealing with. For example, a documentary about a mega-project that threatens the rights of communities will face threats from actors interested in the development of the project, such as the company or the government. Interviewees also mentioned suffering secondary psychological trauma, as a result of the trauma that they witness and document in the communities that they visit. Legal threats, particularly through defamation cases, are also a very real prospect.

Threats can differ as a result of gender, race or socioeconomic background. Women often receive either threats of sexual violence or threats related to their family. Members of indigenous groups experience strong and unambiguous death threats, because they live in remote areas where there is no protection (also evidencing the latent racism in the country against indigenous groups).

In general, risks are higher in rural areas because of a lack of connectivity and communication. It is notable that productions from abroad tend to be better prepared to visit rural parts of the country, but it should be noted that they do face additional legal obstacles in the form of legislation that targets foreigners who are considered a threat to national security. This legislation is in active use to prosecute foreign documentary filmmakers who criticize internal situations.^{clxv}

Smear campaigns constitute another significant category of risk. Visual storytellers can be stigmatized in many ways, most frequently as “terrorists.” The media plays a role in this by spreading rumors of such association and thereby justifying violence to which visual storytellers may have been exposed. Visual storytellers are frequently denounced as terrorists when their work is related to the armed conflict, or as eco-terrorists when they cover environmental conflicts. For example, activists who exposed wrong-doing in the context of the Conga mining project have been denounced in pro-government media as drug dealers and terrorists.^{clxvi} Similarly, artists denounced as “terrorists” are excluded from government funds and locked out by institutions that don’t recognize their work as art and refuse their participation, for example in exhibitions. Artists also see their work damaged; for example, murals or other public art are painted over in white or otherwise vandalized.

3.2 Existing resources for safety and security

Peru's institutional framework for the protection of human rights defenders is weak. A step forward was the adoption by the government, in 2019, of a Protocol for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders,^{clxvii} which includes a commitment to protection measures for those at risk, as well as a commitment to work toward preventive measures and to investigate threats. The Ministry of Justice explained that there are two mechanisms to protect human rights defenders: 1) an early warning tool and 2) a registration tool. The first identifies situations of risk and provides protection measures; the second registers and analyzes the risks faced by human rights defenders. Currently, the Ministry of Justice has identified the main risks as being in remote areas, in territories where indigenous groups live or with a heavy presence of organized crime. Environmental defenders face the gravest risks, including death threats. The protocol doesn't envisage specific measures for visual storytellers, but they could be considered under the same umbrella that human rights defenders

Implementation of the protocol remains pending. A mechanism is envisaged in which various governmental institutions will work together, each with specific responsibilities toward the protection of human rights defenders. However, NGOs report that the Ministry of Justice does not have sufficient budget to implement the protection measures required, including the envisaged resources for personal protection such as bodyguards or relocation. Additionally, NGO report that the Ministry is influenced by powerful groups that limit the Protocol's execution and implementation on the ground.

Various civil society groups provide aspects of protection. The Asociación Pro Derechos Humanos (APRODEH)^{clxviii} and the Coordinadora Nacional de Derechos Humanos (CNDDHH)^{clxix} provide legal defense to people, organizations and artists that have been criminalized for their work. With limited capacity and resources, their priority is to support ongoing cases. Both report that while they could support visual storytellers, they haven't had any requests for assistance as yet. CNDDHH works as a platform of 90 human rights organizations; it is not clear how they interact and coordination is challenging. APRODEH also provides psychosocial assistance to victims of legal persecution. APRODEH has developed detailed protocols for the safety of human rights defenders, including information on strategies used by the government, specific scenarios of risk for organizations and communities, guidance on prevention mechanisms, and suggested ways of reacting in different scenarios.^{clxx} Peru's National Association of Journalists defends criminalized and persecuted journalists, and could be a source of assistance for visual storytellers—although they haven't yet had any cases. The Instituto de Defensa Legal (IDL) provides legal defense to human rights defenders and has defended some cases involving journalists. However, its resources are limited and it takes up only cases thought to be of strategic significance and its resources are however very limited. Organizations such as CNDDHH and APRODEH also have limited resources and capacity to provide legal or psycho-social support, but they are able to reach to communities in rural areas.

3.3 Connecting the dots: (how) are stakeholders connected?

In Peru, there is a clear distinction among filmmakers, journalists and artists. Journalists have a clearer structure of organization and they tend to work together to protect themselves against threats

to their life or liberty, for example, through the National Association of Journalists of Peru. Filmmakers and artists are more solitary, most of their work is done independently—although they do use collectives to enhance their protection. However, there is no dedicated organization, association or union that unites and publicly defends visual storytellers. Visual storytellers are generally not informed about the protection measures that exist for human rights and environmental defenders; there are no clear channels for the exchange of information among the organizations and visual storytellers. None of the visual storytellers interviewed for this study was aware of any spaces or organizations that could support them in case of emergency.

3.4 Opportunities to improve protection

Interviewees saw several opportunities to improve protection. In terms of improving digital security, the use of secure messaging apps such as Signal and secure email servers should be implemented. Political actions were seen as an effective way to prevent aggressions toward visual storytellers by giving them a greater public profile; and psychosocial support could be improved by opening spaces for visual storytellers and others to reach out to during the process of filming.

Visual storytellers can improve their protocols, for example, by improving their risk assessments. It was recommended that they should undertake a mapping study about the actors that control the territory to determine which are the best ways to enter the community (i.e., with local organizations or by contacting the leaders); and to identify whether and where there is internet connectivity that can be used in a situation of risk. It is also recommended that risks can be decreased if visual storytellers take time to build a relationship of trust with the community that they will visit and with its leaders. This can be done in many ways, including by sharing the project that is going to be developed so as to get community buy-in and give communities a voice and involvement.

If visual storytellers do more collectively, that would improve safety and also lead to more solidarity and visual storytellers being able to call on a bigger group in emergency situations. Journalists use a technique that consists in reporting collectively and that can be replicated by filmmakers. The technique was developed during recent protests, when there was strong repression by the authorities. Journalists decided to go to the streets in groups and act as a collective, regardless of which media outlet they were reporting for; camera persons were strongly recommended to always wear bulletproof vests.

The safety of protagonists can be improved by using anonymity or speaking collectively about a group rather than exposing individuals.

The protection mechanisms for the protection of environmental and human rights defenders run by organizations such as APRODEH and CNDDHH do in theory include visual storytellers. There is however a lack clear lack of awareness and more could be done in terms of outreach. It was recommended also that any protection measures that are afforded should be extended to the families of visual storytellers and protagonists.

3.5 Recommendations for donor and stakeholder action

Interviewees recommend that the safety and security of visual storytellers can be improved by investing resources in a number of resources—similar to recommendations made by interviewees in Colombia:

- i) legal and psychological advice for the artists and protagonists;
- ii) training on human rights and technology, and support for secure digital tools;
- iii) develop strategies for monitoring and accompaniment, including the provision of necessary resources for this in terms of mobile or satellite connectivity
- iv) support for better safety protocols adjusted to the needs of visual storytellers;
- v) fund the provision of protective equipment, including bulletproof vests;
- vi) developing networks among the traditional human rights organizations and communities of artists where safe spaces can be created including for visual storytellers and promoting a broad category of human rights activists that includes visual storytellers when their work concerns or exposes social justice and human rights issues;
- vii) support and create spaces to connect human rights defenders and visual storytellers;
- viii) strengthen organizations that already exist and promote the defense of human rights;
- ix) spaces for exhibitions and viewings in the communities featured in, or affected by, works of visual storytellers.

Interviewees did not highlight any specific organization that could take the lead on the protection of visual storytellers. However, the three established human rights organizations mentioned above—APRODEH, CNDDHH and IDL—would be natural options.

4. Venezuela

4.1 Safety and security needs: what are the threats?

Venezuela is a failed state. There is no rule of law and the primary principles of democracy are under threat. It ranks in the lower reaches of most human rights and democracy indices, scoring similarly as countries such as Belarus, Azerbaijan, Sudan and Bahrain. Citizens' rights are limited and controlled by the government, and it is extremely challenging for visual storytellers to do any kind of work. Governmental institutions consider anyone that is not in favor of the political regime as part of the opposition and a threat to national security.^{clxxi} The Ministry of Culture has a list of filmmakers—around 600—considered as opposition. While there are state institutions created to support the film industry—the National Autonomous Center of Cinematography^{clxxii}—it is deeply politicized and will not support works that do not portray the government or its policies favorably.

Any visual storyteller who dares to work independently faces threats to their life, liberty and freedom of expression. Criminal laws are used to censor and imprison the authors of works deemed contrary to the government; the government also uses force to detain or imprison people without due process, leading to disappearance and death. Independent artists also face the threat of having their property destroyed or confiscated. These threats lead to broad self-censorship, and to artists keeping a low profile in an attempt to prevent retaliation against them or their families.

The risks are different in the cities and in rural areas. Interviewees have different perspectives on this, some considering the cities to be more dangerous, exposing them to greater censorship and physical threats compared to rural areas. However, others considered that in rural areas the risks were greater because territories are controlled by different actors, including organized crime groups, and people can disappear without anyone noticing. The reality is that the risks, while different, are probably equally serious; with people having a different opinion due to their own perspectives and experiences.

Gender is an important distinguishing factor as well. While some interviewees said that “repressive actions don’t discriminate,” the risks and threats of sexual violence that women filmmakers (and their families) are exposed to simply do not exist for men.

The threat of violence is so severe that even those artists who have resources choose to invest in protection choose to invest more resources in the security of the material than in their own protection. In other words, even a well-resourced filmmaker faces the same, and equally grave, threats to their personal liberty and safety as a low-income artist.

The gravity of the threat is such that many independent visual storytellers have decided to leave the country.

4.2 Existing resources for safety and security

Given the severe politicization of all public institutions and the government’s zero-tolerance policy in respect of dissent, there is no public initiative or institution to protect the rights of its citizens (let alone human rights defenders), including visual storytellers. Autonomous National Center of Cinematography (Centro Nacional Autónomo de Cinematografía, CNAC), the kind of institution that in less controlled societies filmmakers and directors can turn to for support, is politicized and as a result distrusted. National film festivals also do not provide safe spaces, leaving only international film festivals as spaces for the exchange of information and networking. There is no institutional support for the development of safety protocols, so each individual filmmaker promotes their own protocol.

Despite the tough political environment there are some organizations that provide support to victims of human rights violations. PROVEA (Programa Venezolano de Educación Acción en Derechos Humanos)^{clxxxiii} focuses on support to victims of social, economic and cultural rights violations; Foro Penal provides legal services to people that have been detained arbitrarily and teach people how to launch alerts from social media to notify about the detention.^{clxxxiv} Both groups struggle to function in the political environment and have very limited financial resources. Neither focuses on support for journalists or visual storytellers.

Some interviewees did not consider that visual storytellers were under any greater threat than activists or members of the opposition; and they are not generally perceived as agents of risk.

4.3 Connecting the dots: (how) are stakeholders connected?

There are a few channels of connection for filmmakers, including the Venezuelan Film Forum, the Venezuelan Cinema Forum, the Autonomous National Center of Cinematography, the Caracas Cinematographic Film Circle and film festivals—although the few independent film festivals and associations that exist, such as Circuito Gran Cine,³⁶ struggle to survive. Furthermore, the political climate leads to deep distrust and independent filmmakers avoid connecting with people whom they do not know. As a result, there is no interaction among filmmakers (documentary and fiction) and journalists. Those interviewed did not know of any organization that they could turn to for protection in emergency situations.

4.4 Opportunities to improve protection

The challenging political environment means that there are inherent risks, and as mentioned above, well-resourced filmmakers are at similar risk of arrest or other threats that emanate from the state as those who are less-well resourced. However, there are opportunities to improve current practices.

Interviewees highlighted that protection can be improved if individuals are well-organized, assess and plan for risks and take the necessary precautions to mitigate those risks that can be mitigated. This includes measures such as not to travel alone; to carry out proper research about areas to be visited; to be well informed if the area is secure; not to use smart phones; not to get in the middle of protests but stay to the side; to make sure someone always knows where you are.³⁶ Visual storytellers should also be prepared for possible arrest and make sure that they know how to answer. Other measures that were suggested to improve safety protocols included making sure there is a plan around the safety of equipment and materials (including film, hard disks, memory cards, USB sticks and other recording materials), including duplicating copies and keeping them in cloud storage or in several locations.

Protection can be further improved when documentaries are made at the request—or at least, with the consent and support of—a community, and include a plan that covers protecting the community as well as the filmmaker and crew. Safety plans should firmly include any protagonists as well as their families.

Greater visibility for visual storytellers, nationally and internationally, will help with their protection. Visibility will ensure that a greater number of people know about them and either act as a deterrent for any repercussions (from the state or others), or, in an emergency situation, ensure that it is easier to gather support.

National and international networks and solidarity groups should be encouraged, developed on the basis of trusted links and individuals. This would in turn contribute to more exchanges of experiences, tools and tips for safety and security, both in Venezuela and internationally. More interaction between the group of visual storytellers and the organizations that protect human rights should also be promoted, and organizations should be encouraged to adapt protection protocols to the needs of visual storytellers.

³⁶ One of the interviewees shared the experience of the 2017 protests, which was followed by a seminar on security and how to mitigate risks during protests taught by a group of foreign journalists, and which gave the same advice.

4.5 Recommendations for donor and stakeholder action

A donor strategy to further the protection and safety of visual storytellers in Venezuela needs to take very specific account of the challenging political environment, in particular the politicization and capture by the state of cultural institutions, and be realistic about what can be achieved. Interviewees suggested the following:

- i) provide general support to strengthen the few existing human rights organizations in the country (primarily PROVEA and Foro Penal);
- ii) offer specific funding to extend resources held in organizations such as PROVEA and Foro Penal for the protection of human rights to visual storytellers;
- iii) ensure legal support for the prevention and resolution of cases of visual storytellers who face prison or other criminal sanctions, through organizations such as Foro Penal;
- iv) promote training on technology to empower visual storytellers to use the appropriate digital tools for their protection as well as for the protection of their equipment and materials, such training to be led by a group of independent documentary filmmakers possibly hosted by organizations such as Caracas Cinematographic Film Circle or Autonomous National Center of Cinematography (Centro Nacional Autónomo de Cinematografía, CNAC)—although hosting organizations would have to be chosen very carefully given the politicization mentioned above;
- v) connect independent visual storytellers with their counterparts internationally, developing a network for visual storytellers to reach out for support, share experiences and promote solidarity and group protection.

Some interviewees suggested that resources should be invested in the creation of an organization that represents the interest of visual storytellers, provide a source of support in emergency situations as well as economic, material and technological resources. However, given the political reality in Venezuela the creation of such an organization is simply not realistic at the present time.

5. The Andean region: conclusions and recommendations

Two overall conclusions can be drawn from scoping the resources available for visual storytellers in the Andean region—Colombia, Peru and Venezuela—and the threats and risks to which they are confronted. First, the risks and threats confronting visual storytellers in the three countries are very similar: they face murder, censorship, disappearance, the destruction of their equipment or work, stigmatization, legal persecution, threats of sexual violence, threats to their families and others. However, while the situation in Colombia and Peru is very serious, the situation in Venezuela is even worse: the government is overtly hostile to dissenting voices, there are no independent public institutions for the protection of visual storytellers and civil society organizations are very weak. As a result, in Venezuela, visual storytellers experience even higher risks than in Colombia and Peru. There is therefore an imminent need of support in the country to guarantee the respect of the fundamental rights of visual storytellers.

Secondly, in terms of concrete needs, very similar actions and measures were suggested in all countries:

- i) Developing networks of visual storytellers;
- ii) Providing safe spaces for visual storytellers, develop networks as secure spaces;
- iii) Promoting exchanges and links between visual storytellers and environmental and human rights defenders;
- iv) Strengthening NGOs that protect environmental and human rights defenders so they can also protect visual storytellers;
- v) Ensuring the provision of training on safety and security for visual storytellers, to be adapted to local contexts and provided by trusted individuals or organizations (including filmmakers themselves);
- vi) Improving the safety practices and protocols of visual storytellers, especially when traveling to rural areas and filming or working with communities who already have safety protocols themselves;
- vii) Understanding that female artists and those in rural communities face even greater risks than others.

The implementation of these measures needs to take into account differences from country to country. In Colombia, most visual storytellers have a good knowledge of the human rights defender mechanisms, even if they do not view themselves as human rights defenders. There is also a government-run protection mechanism for the protection of human rights defenders which could extend to the protection of visual storytellers (although the criticism of this program needs to be taken seriously, and the researcher for this study shares concerns that it is extremely bureaucratic, lacks legitimacy and so its overall effectiveness is to be questioned). In Peru, interviewees identified the threats but the human rights community did not think that visual storytellers were at a particularly high risk—reflecting the reality of the very high-risk levels for activists such as environmental defenders; and the development and implementation (albeit, slow) of the government protocol for the protection of human rights defenders needs to be considered. Finally, in Venezuela the threats are common to anyone who expresses opposition to the government. Of the three countries, the threats to visual storytellers originate from the Venezuelan government as well as other (frequently, armed) groups and are the highest in the three countries.

There is no single civil society organization that covers all three countries that could readily lead on each of these measures; a country-by-country approach is likely to be more fruitful.

Annex 2: Region and country reports - Brazil

Juliana Lopes*

1. Introduction and methodology

This country study summarizes research on safety and security resources available to visual storytellers. The purpose is to inform areas for donor action to improve existing safety mechanisms for independent journalists, filmmakers and visual storytellers who come under attack for their work. The research consists of desk research coupled with a qualitative analysis of interviews with independent journalists, filmmakers and visual storytellers with ample experience in the field, as well as representatives of organizations that provide safety mechanisms. The group interviewed constitutes a significantly representative sample in terms of topics, geography, gender and race.³⁷

Interviews were carried out by online teleconference. The main research method used was qualitative, based on semi-structured interviews and desk research. Between November 2020 and January 2021, 26 interviews were conducted with individuals and organizations (21 visual journalists and documentary filmmakers, 2 international NGOs, 3 Brazilian organizations). The independent visual journalists and documentary filmmakers that we interviewed are referred to in this study as “visual artists” for short.

All the interviews were conducted based on common questions, as well as questions adapted to each interviewee—addressing the questions asked in the Ford Foundation’s terms of reference and other relevant questions in the Brazilian context. It was agreed with interviewees that any quotations from interviews included in this report would be non-attributable. Many of interviewees expressed they would like to make their participation public and keep the conversation going.

This study is presented in 4 chapters. The first chapter introduces the Brazilian context and sketches the recent decline in respect for freedom of expression, and the increased risks for those who speak truth to power or who report on controversial issues (including environmental issues and the protection of the rights of indigenous groups). The second chapter assesses the most reported threats, individual protection strategies and risks mitigation measures that interviewees practiced in Brazil, and summarizes good practices. The third chapter identifies the main safety and security needs of visual storytellers and discusses how their needs can be best—most efficiently and most effectively—met. To this end, this chapter also examines various existing safety mechanisms that in theory could cater for their needs (such as human rights defender safety mechanisms), discusses whether in practice these do meet their needs, and if not, why. The fourth chapter highlights the main protection gaps, draws conclusions and makes recommendations for donor action to strengthen safety and security mechanisms for visual storytellers and journalists at risk.

* Juliana Lopes, Founder of Pulsar, a knowledge hub on engagement and mobilization tools for system change (<https://pulsarcom.com.br/>).

³⁷ A list of all the interviewees can be found in Annex 4.

2. Context—Freedom of Expression in Decline in Brazil

The CIVICUS Monitor rates civic space in Brazil as “obstructed,” reporting a lack of respect for civil society and government policies that pursue a “regressive, anti-rights agenda.”^{clxxvi} Rio de Janeiro’s Ombudsman has described the current political environment as “a moment of fragility for civil society.”^{clxxvii} Activists and journalists experience attacks ranging from reputational threats, lawsuits and censorship to death threats and killings.^{clxxviii} Criminalization of activists and delegitimization of journalists is an actively used strategy to demobilize civil society organizations.^{clxxix}

The regressive space for civil society is linked with a decline in democratic values. In 2016, Brazilians’ support for democracy fell by 22%. Corruption, impunity, inequality, insecurity, weakened electoral systems and the government’s apparent serving of corporate interests instead of protecting human rights values are among the main reasons for this decline. Conservative and anti-rights governments have become increasingly authoritarian, creating misinformation and smokescreen as tactics to justify their actions.^{clxxx}

Brazil has experienced the world’s highest drop in terms of respect for freedom of expression: according to the freedom of expression watchdog ARTICLE 19, the country dropped two categories in just one decade.^{clxxxi} This decline accelerated with the arrival in office of President Jair Bolsonaro in early 2019, with a drop of 18 points in just one year. According to ARTICLE 19, since 2010, 43 journalists have been killed in Brazil. Attacks intensified following the 2018 presidential campaign; and through 2019 and the first half of 2020, ARTICLE 19 reported 38 serious attacks, including two murders, four attempted murders and 32 death threats. ARTICLE 19 also reports an increase in subtler and nonphysical forms of violence and aggression, ranging from online smear campaigns to the denial of state support for the protection of press professionals—which itself becomes a form of passive aggression.^{clxxxii} The rate of violations appears to be accelerating: in the first half of 2020, at least 160 cases of violations against journalists and communicators were registered—more than in the whole of the previous year.^{clxxxiii}

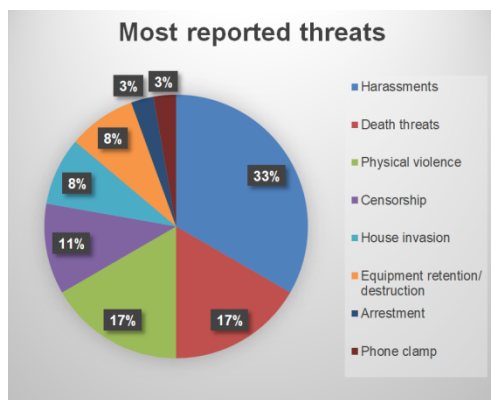
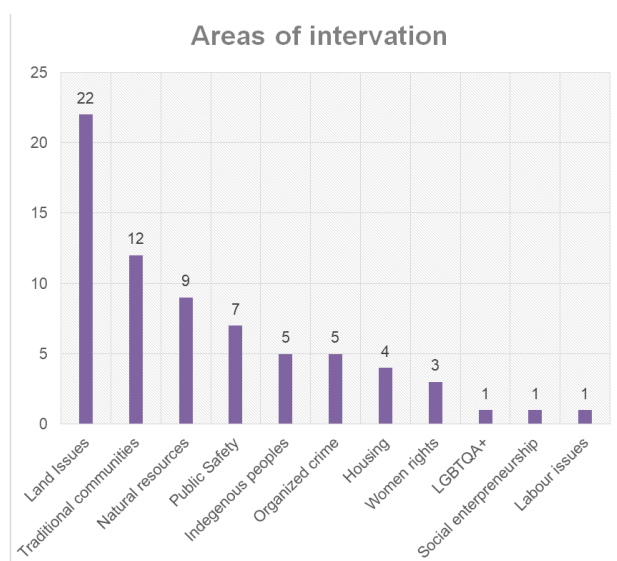
Other human rights protection organizations highlight that whereas previously, it was local officials who attacked the media, currently attacks on the media and illegitimate restrictions on freedom of expression and access to information increasingly emanate from federal government representatives and politicians. In 2020, the National Federation of Journalists (FENAJ) reported 428 attacks on journalists, more than double the previous year and the highest number of attacks since 1990, when FENAJ began collecting this type of data. These numbers include only those cases where the attack has been clearly linked with the victim’s journalism, and the actual number of attacks on journalists is far higher. FENAJ associates the rapid acceleration of cases following President Bolsonaro’s actions to discredit the media.^{clxxxiv}

3. What are the threats and protection needs?

3.1 Threats

The stakeholders interviewed for this research all worked on film and journalism projects related to social justice issues, and this was an obvious factor in the threats that they received. Under the broad umbrella of social justice and human rights, the riskiest issues to report on—those that received the highest number of threats—were land issues, followed by the rights of traditional communities, rights issues associated with the exploitation of natural resources and public safety issues (sometimes issues overlap, particularly when it comes to land rights, the rights of traditional communities, exploitation and environmental concerns).

There is a long history of social inequality in Brazil, along with racism, depletion of natural resources depletion and other structural problems. The filmmakers, journalists and documentary filmmakers interviewed for this study have worked and reported on these issues for a long time—before “social justice impact films” were recognized as a separate field. There was a general understanding among all interviewees that some level of risk is inherent in social justice-related productions: they speak truth to power and that invariably results in some sort of reaction. As result, some social justice impact filmmakers reported facing difficulties in access funding; their positioning has stigmatized them as “too critical.”



Ten of the 26 interviewees reported serious incidents related to safety and security in the course of their work, including death threats (6), physical violence (6), home invasion (3) and arrest (1). Online smear campaigns and harassment were also common, resulting in medium and long-term psychological impacts. Fear is a powerful way to intimidate and block visual storytellers as they are so vulnerable in carrying out their work. This strategy of inducing fear also manifests itself through police searches of journalists’ and filmmakers’ homes and offices and interception of their phone and internet traffic. The state authorities (including police as well as government officials) are the main perpetrators of these threats, followed by organized groups of pro-government trolls, criminal factions and land grabbers.

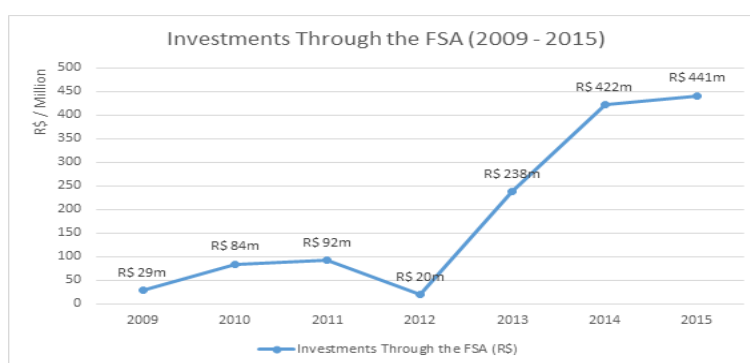
Visual storytellers also reported instances of state-imposed restrictions and censorship, including a federal government veto of audio-visual productions with LGBT themes (currently under investigation by prosecutors in Rio de Janeiro as possibly unconstitutional).^{clxxxv} Many filmmakers also expressed concern that Brazilian Copyright Law (LDA—Lei de Direitos Autorais) unduly restricts creativity and impedes their ability to use material that in other countries would fall under the “fair use” exemption to copyright. This leads to self-censorship more than court cases or prosecutions, since filmmakers and visual storytellers are reluctant to become embroiled in potentially expensive legal disputes. Interviewees also pointed out more subtle instances of indirect censorship, for example

the government's use of bureaucratic instruments and rules to stop or impede productions with which it disagrees. The case of the Marighella film was mentioned as an example of this: based on the life of the politician and guerilla fighter Carlos Marighella, the film has been successful internationally but remains unpublished in Brazil because of bureaucratic opposition from Ancine (the National Cinema Agency, Agência Nacional do Cinema). While Ancine's opposition was not technically illegal, the filmmaker (and others) maintain that its opposition is rooted in censorship.^{clxxxvi}

Interviewees mentioned a lack of financial resources as a serious underlying problem affecting their ability to mitigate risk. Financial resources are scarce for those working on social justice films, and producers work with low budgets that do not allow for full risk mitigation, restricting in turn their ability to be creative and innovate, as well as the eventual impact of the production. Financial risks can develop into physical risks or even risk to life, when a lack of funding forces filmmakers to economize on safety measures to the point of danger or force projects to be stopped. For example, two of the interviewees had to stop their filmmaking work during the Covid-19 pandemic and seek other sources of income to ensure their and their families' survival. A full 41% of interviewees named financial issues (namely, lack of finances) as an important driver of risk in and of itself.

Most social justice impact filmmakers rely on the Audio-visual Sector Fund (FSA).^{clxxxvii} This is a federal fund, and a landmark in the support of the film industry in Brazil, investing in all stages of production and all activities associated with filmmaking, including project development, production, distribution, commercialization, exhibition and infrastructure. Between 2009 and 2015, FSA invested R\$1,3Bn in Brazil's audio-visual sector.

The Audio-visual Sector Fund is one of the most important funds for the promotion of TV series, films, and similar productions. However, since Bolsonaro took over the Presidency of the Republic, the resources of this fund have not been used in accordance with the purposes set out in the law. Interviewees reported ideological threats and decision-making, as evidenced through restrictive calls for proposals, as well as through a subtler post-grant questioning of film projects. Furthermore, because of the bureaucracy associated with accessing funding and a lack of knowledge of the procedures involved, popular communicators and smaller film producers struggle to access funding.



Source: ANCINE / Superintendence of Economic Development

Finally, many of the interviewees were very aware that those portrayed in their films were very vulnerable and exposed to greater threats and risks than filmmakers themselves. They advocated for a professional code of ethics, including a commitment not to include in their films any content that could expose community members to serious risks.

3.2 Security practices and protection strategies

Protection strategies employed by filmmakers and journalists fall into two categories: those used during field work (for example, avoiding recording at night or going alone; letting someone know where you are going; not using personal cars to travel to locations) and strategies employed during other activities, for example at the launch of a film or during impact campaigns.

Most interviewees stated categorically that exhaustive research, especially in preparation for field work, is a key way to mitigate risk. Insurance, for equipment as well as for personal safety, was mentioned by many as a measure that was necessary but inaccessible due to budgetary restrictions. Similarly, legal advice was mentioned as necessary but often unaffordable.

“A film is not bigger than anyone’s life. A measure I usually take is avoiding showcasing leaderships individually. Instead, I present the arguments as collective positions of a whole group. Doing so, it is a way to protect people portrayed in films.”

—Interviewee quote

As concerns risks to protagonists, some interviewees carried out a risk assessment before and after filming or other work, with the support of a lawyer, assessing risks into different categories and implementing specific mitigation measures for each of them. Another interviewee explained that so as to avoid expose individual community members, and in particular community leaders, positions are often presented as those of the group as a whole.

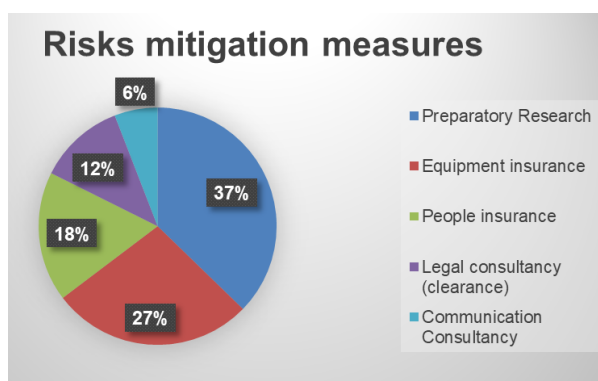
Visual storytellers usually rely on networks of civil society organizations for a variety of purposes, including supported when faced with an emergency but also to access funding or gain access to information. One of the interviewees defined this practice as building an “institutional arch” to ensure information sharing, as well as safety and security and financial sustainability. The building of these connections has also been vital to ensure that films reach remote regions, where there are no movie theaters and people are more vulnerable.

Support and practical, on-the-spot advice from community members was also important. For example, one filmmaker who was interviewed explained that while filming in a slum, gang members told them to stop. The local producer supporting the filmmaker and crew advised them to stop but not walk too fast, which could be interpreted as running, and also not too slow, as that could be provocative. The filmmaker insisted this was a good example of the need to have advice and presence on the set from someone within a community, who understand codes of behavior—something the filmmaker would and could never know. The use of individual protection equipment was not a common practice, although the Covid-19 pandemic required the taking of additional precautions including using facemasks, social distancing and employing hand and equipment hygiene procedures.

In certain specific situations, filmmakers mentioned having the support of public officials, at local as well as at federal levels. For example, one interviewee who was filming the investigation of the Mariana dam disaster in Minas Gerais (which resulted in the destruction of two villages and the deaths of 19 people) relied on the support of public officials carrying out the investigation; while in another situation, a municipality offered a filmmaker the use of officials’ cars to allow the release of a documentary that was the target of protests of ranchers.

Some interviewees mentioned the need to hire professional communications consultancy services, reflecting the threat to filmmakers posed by concerted efforts to denigrate them and their work (especially online). This is, however, only available to those with considerable financial means. A cheaper alternative, mentioned by several interviewees, is using social media networks as part of their safety strategies, for example, to report and denounce threats immediately when they are made so as to deter the aggressor.

Finally, many of the visual storytellers interviewed reported that they learned to take protection measures by making mistakes; they all said that training and capacity-building on prevention measures and protection strategies would be extremely helpful. Interviewees complained that there was no structured training and that many filmmakers learn through trial and error. One commented: ““There are agreements that nobody tells you about. But they exist. Those who are starting out have difficulty accessing this very bubble of audio-visual production. So, they make mistakes and end up more exposed. But people who are inserted in this environment know that there is a compilation of agreements and rules to try to mitigate exposure and vulnerabilities.””



Some interviewees reported that there are informal solidarity networks in which information is shared, including guidance materials, professional opportunities, as well as links with networks of defenders and civil society organizations that can support them—but this information stays within the particular bubble of the informal network, meaning that those filmmakers and journalists outside that bubble don't have access to the information.

3.3 Needs

To mitigate the threats and risks faced, and building on existing safety and security practices, interviewees expressed the following main needs:

- Structured knowledge-sharing (for example, on best practices, contact information for protection NGOs, or fellows and awards that can serve as a security umbrella);
- Training and capacity-building;
- Access to insurance (for example, for equipment, personal security and errors and omissions);
- Knowledge sharing about protection and risk mitigation measures;
- Legal consultations (for risk assessment as well as for issues such as rights clearance);
- Communications consultancy and support through public advocacy;
- Temporary relocation;
- Psychosocial counseling;
- Medical assistance.

4. Current resources for safety and security

The safety mechanisms most frequently mentioned by interviewees were human rights defenders' networks and training and prevention initiatives. The training and prevention measures listed in the previous section were an additional safety resource, along with guidance and information gleaned from manuals. Some mentioned public defender mechanisms, networks maintained by freedom of expression organizations and journalists' affiliations, while one mentioned receiving protection from the police.



4.1 The National Program for Human Rights Defenders

The National Policy for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders was created in 2007 and is operationalized through the creation of the Protection Program for Human Rights Defenders, Communicators, and Environmentalists (PPDDH: Programa de Proteção aos Defensores de Direitos Humanos, Comunicadores e Ambientalistas). In 2018, as a result of civil society lobbying, media professionals and social communicators who report on human rights or are otherwise engaged in communication activities that aim to promote and defend human rights were included in the program.

Prime among the responsibilities of this program is a duty to identify and provide protective measures to human rights defenders who are at risk because of their activities in defense of human rights. Unfortunately, the Program is able to provide only partial coverage. The Program is operational in only seven out of Brazil's twenty-six states: Minas Gerais, Bahia, Pará, Pernambuco, Rio de Janeiro, Ceará and Maranhão; and operationalization is planned but not yet implemented in Mato Grosso, Paraíba and Amazonas. In states where there is no State Program, cases are monitored by a federal technical team that is linked to the General Coordination for Witness Protection and Human Rights Defenders and to the National Secretariat for Global Protection. Even in those states where support is offered, it is incomplete: due to a lack of resources it simply cannot fully respond to the main needs highlighted in this report.

The PPDDH is limited by structural social inequality and racism (the racist origins of Brazil’s police force, designed to serve slave owners, linger on to the present day^{clxxxviii}), and delegitimized through the fact that it is often State institutions who either perpetrate human rights violations or incite pro-government trolls to delegitimize, disqualify and silence social communicators who are critical of the President and his political group. As a result, a de facto policy of censorship has been established, in violation of the state’s duty to prevent human rights violations, protect defenders and punish perpetrators. Under these circumstances, a state body for the protection of human rights defenders has little legitimacy or credibility. Moreover, the National Policy for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders is currently managed by Damares Alves, who is known as a key ally of Bolsonaro and staunch defender of his policies. In February 2021, an Ordinance was adopted creating a working group to propose changes to the National Policy consisting entirely of ministry representatives, excluding civil society.^{clxxxix} As a result of these various factors, civil society organizations argue the program is no longer trustworthy.

“When the program begins to be better structured comes the coup of 2016 and in the aftermath the government fears and Bolsonaro. We have not given up on the program, but we have taken a tactical step backwards, because we do not have the confidence to direct people to the program, since the people who manages it are close to those who practice the violations.”

- Interviewee quote

4.2 Civil society safety mechanisms

As outlined in the preceding section, while the National Policy for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders provides general guidelines for protection, implementation in practice has been incomplete and inadequate, and the mechanism lacks legitimacy, trust and credibility. Civil society has therefore had to step in and develop alternative responses for the protection of human rights defenders. Some interviewees argued that this is to be expected; saying that experience in other countries shows that however good a public National Human Rights Defense Program may look in theory, in practice it must be complemented by efforts of civil society organizations.

“Good experience of protection should combine political articulation of authorities, public advocacy programs and emergency resources for the displacement of activists.”

—Interviewee quote

Informed by many years of field experience, civil society protection programs have continued to adapt and innovate. Civil society efforts have focused on filling the gaps where the state does not offer protection, or where its protection is insufficient. While there are certain elements of protection that are cost-prohibitive for Brazilian civil society to operate—such as relocation or providing round the clock protection—there are things that civil society can do. For example, the national program envisages that a lawyer accompanies every case, but in practice this rarely ever happens. This has led civil society organizations to seek solutions and provide their own structures for legal advice and opinions.

When asked about their awareness of mechanisms for the protection of journalists or human rights defenders other than the State program, interviewees mentioned the following:³⁸

Organization	Safety mechanisms / resources	Beneficiaries
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³⁸ The fact that these mechanisms were mentioned by interviewees is significant: it indicates awareness of the programs.

Annex 2: Region and country reports: Brazil

	provided	
ABRAJI—Brazilian Association of Investigative Journalists, Tim Lopes Program https://www.abraji.org.br abraji@abraji.org.br Tel. : 11 3159-0344	- Channel of response to violations - Communication to give visibility of the violation - Legal advisory - Capacity building - Advocacy	Journalists, in the exercise of their professional functions
Vladimir Herzog Institute https://vladimirherzog.org/o-instituto/ contato@vladimirherzog.org Tel.: 11 2894-6650	- Channel of response to violations - Communication to give visibility of the violation - Legal advisory - Capacity building Presence in all 26 state capitals.	Journalists and communicators, including documentary filmmakers. The network has representatives in all 26 capital cities of Brazil.
Intervozes https://intervozes.org.br/ Email:intervozes@intervozes.org.br Tel.: 11 3877-0824	- Guidance - Capacity building	Communicators
Escola de Ativismo https://escoladeativismo.org.br/ contato@ativismo.org.br	- Guidance - Capacity building	Activists, human rights defenders
DocSP/ DocSociety https://www.docsp.com/ info@docsp.com	- Guidance - Capacity building	Visual storytellers
Justiça Global http://www.global.org.br contato@global.org.br Tel: 21 2544-2320	- Communication to give visibility of the violation - Advocacy	Human rights defenders
ARTICLE 19 https://artigo19.org/ Tel: 11 3057-0042 comunicacao@artigo19.org	- Legal assistance - Guidance - Capacity building	Communicators, Activists, freedom rights defenders

All the above organizations use specific security protocols to provide assistance: for example, only specifically trained members of staff respond to requests for help; information is received through secure channels and is kept confidential; and when in person meetings are necessary, these take place in safe places to ensure the safety of both the person at risk and the organization.

The efforts of organizations that offer protection are concentrated in the following areas:

- Monitoring and reporting of freedom of expression attacks
- Raising visibility to case of violations through notes of repudiation
- Providing legal assistance through pro-bono lawyers or public defense

One of the main problems faced by all these organizations is a lack of capacity. As described above, attacks against social communicators have increased drastically and very quickly. In the past, most attacks were driven by local issues and took place in the local environment. These attacks were serious and included death threats to broadcasters by local mayors, landowners or militia, but they were limited in number. In the last two years, these threats have risen to the national level; and they have included direct attacks by state authorities, led by the president, his family and members of his political group. Civil society was not sufficiently prepared for this rapid and violent deterioration and has been overburdened. There have been advances in the sharing of information and resources, but civil society still needs to increase its coordination efforts to create a protection network that maintains a regular infrastructure.

In addition to the problem of capacity, civil society programs cannot provide armed security and/or temporary relocation. In theory, this should be offered through the National Policy for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, but given the weaknesses of this program (described above) this is not feasible, or only to a limited extent. A targeted use of emergency funds could in theory fill in this gap, but in practice only Frontline Defenders can fill the gap temporary relocation of human rights defenders. The organization has activities in Brazil offering a Protection Grants Program that covers expenses up until €7,500 to improve the safety and security of human rights defenders and their organizations. The focus of the program is on human rights defenders, although visual storytellers whose works can be considered to defend and promote human rights can also apply. In practice, none of the visual storytellers interviewed for this study were aware of this possibility—indicating a lack of awareness.

Of the various international civil society mechanisms whose mandate extends to Brazil and who could, in theory, provide emergency assistance, for example, in the form of a grant to help with relocation, medical bills or legal fees, only two were mentioned: Reporters without Borders and Front Line Defenders.³⁹ This indicates a low level of awareness among Brazilian filmmakers and journalists of international organizations that could come to their aid.

Even when funds are available for relocation, it is still not always a practical response: for female human rights defenders, for example, leaving their family is not usually an option. This means that prevention assumes overriding importance. In particular, much more could be done to prevent digital risks: while there are guides and training opportunities in the area of digital safety, there is not enough knowledge sharing and compiling of good practices.

A number of safety and protection guides and manuals are available in Portuguese language, some provided by the organizations listed above:

- aGuia: a guia de facilitação e aprendizagem em Segurança da Informação (Escola de Ativismo)^{exc}
- Segurança Digital e Privacidade nas Redes (Security in a Box)^{exci}
- Guia de Proteção do Direito de Liberdade de Expressão durante manifestações e protestos (ARTICLE 19)^{excii}
- Guia de Proteção e Segurança para Comunicadores e Defensores de Direitos Humanos (ARTICLE 19)^{exciii}

³⁹ Both are discussed in the main body of this report.

- Guia como filmar violência policial em protestos (Witness)^{exciv}
- Manual para pessoas manifestantes (Urucum Collective)^{excv}
- The impact guide (DocSP/DocSociety)^{excvi}
- Safe + Secure (DocSP/DocSociety)^{excvii}
- Protocolo de segurança e saúde no trabalho do audiovisual (ABD / Apeci | Brazilian Association of Documentarists and Short Filmmakers of Pernambuco, and others)^{excviii}

However, awareness of these guides is often lacking.

5. Main gaps

5.1 Coordination

The shortcomings of the state protection mechanism are described above: at a time when the majority of human rights violations are committed or tolerated by state authorities, and when the Program through which it is administered is headed by a minister identified as a close ally of the president, it cannot be expected that human rights defenders targeted by the state make use of it.

With regard to safety mechanisms offered by civil society organizations, the main gaps are in capacity, coordination, structure and geographic reach (all are centralized in the main cities or urban areas). The organizations that offer safety mechanisms do share information and cooperate, but they all recognize that they are far from turning their protection efforts into a structured network. Missing elements include a secretariat role, and sharing of resources (for example, legal assistance, and communications assistance).

Improved coordination among these organizations would allow, for example, when a journalist, a documentary filmmaker or a popular communicator seeks emergency assistance, to provide for an allocation of tasks, assigning one organization as responsible for legal defense, another for giving visibility to the case, etc. This would prevent organizations from overlapping and encourage them to systematically fill the gaps that currently exist. Some efforts are being made toward this. In 2018, the Vladimir Herzog Institute, working with other protection organizations, convened the National Network for the Protection of Journalists and Communicators.^{excix} This Network has regional coordinators throughout the country, enabling it to establish contact with those that request assistance and ensuring that there is at least one lawyer, either pro bono or a public defender, accompanying the case and providing assistance to the victim. This support at the regional level is crucial in order to ensure individual accompaniment. The regional focal point has the role to provide individual accompaniment to the cases, reducing the stress on the individual concerned by providing assistance throughout. For now, requests for assistance must be lodged via email.^{cc}

5.2 Popular Communicators and Influencers

As communications technology has become more readily available, cheaper and user-friendly, audio-visual production has become less elitist and more decentralized. The profile of actors in this field has changed radically over the last 10 years (although it is noted that there is still a lot to be done to increase representation and amplify voices of disadvantaged groups in society, providing more and different world views).

While this diversification of actors is positive from the perspective of diversifying voices and narratives, it has posed a more complex challenge for safety mechanisms, requiring resources spread across the entire country. Three visual storytellers were interviewed who are members of community communication collectives based in peripheral regions⁴⁰ including favelas in Rio de Janeiro and in the Amazon territory. These groups enable actors in peripheral territories to have their voices heard, portraying their reality as witnessed by themselves and diversifying voices in the media sphere. The popular communicators interviewed for this study started in the audio-visual field through capacity building projects such as that offered by Center for the Study of Solidarity Actions of Maré, in Rio de Janeiro. Some of them were able to enter college through social scholarship programs, giving them the opportunity to further develop their skills and finding a tool in film to portray human rights violations that in most cases happen in the territories where they live.

“The problem is that this change (the popularization of audio-visual recording equipment and the rise of social communicators) is happening at a time when Brazil is going through a lot of turbulence. It has moved faster than the institutional capacity to respond to it. So, there is a gap”

— Interviewee quote

While they can document lived experiences from their communities, visual storytellers who live in the territory and communities where human rights violations happen are exposed to great risk. Most of time, they cannot rely on safety mechanisms either because information about these mechanisms does not reach them, or because protection structures (whether state or civil society) do not have a presence in their territory.

Organizations that offer protection do recognize the importance of supporting actors in the territories and communities that are most at risk, but simply lack the resources to reach out and help. There is an additional limitation in that most of the safety mechanisms described above are focused on professional journalists or human rights defenders and do not reach out to all visual storytellers and popular communicators. This leaves a large unserved population of nonprofessional social communicators and visual storytellers outside of the large urban centers (mainly, the Rio-São Paulo axis) where most civil society organizations are based.⁴¹ As one interviewee put it, this lack of security impacts on their very ability to engage in visual storytelling.

6. Areas for civil society and donor action

6.1 Improved coordination

⁴⁰ As peripheral regions we understand territories that are not at the focus of attention of State and public opinion, also referred in this document as “deep Brazil,” expression to express the remote areas of the country. In some cases, these territories are inside big metropolises, such as favelas in Rio de Janeiro, whose inhabitants’ rights are neglected.

⁴¹ Although journalists are no longer required by law to register with an approved journalists’ union or association, journalists still seek to guard their profession and there’s a degree of exclusivity attached to being a ‘card carrying’ journalists. This does also deprive those communicators who for whatever reason are not part of a union from the protection resources of that union.

It follows clearly from the research carried out for this report that existing safety and protection mechanisms struggle to serve the core group of human rights defenders and journalists for whom they are intended; they certainly do not fill the safety and protection needs of documentary and social justice impact filmmakers. This arises from a number of factors. Capacity is a huge problem; but there are also questions of distinct professional identities and affiliations. Documentaries and social impact films combine elements of human rights, journalism, as well as freedom of expression—but there is no clear affiliation with any one of these groups in particular.

“To enable coordinated efforts, a network has to have an agreed organigram of responsibilities and tasks, and a rhythm of activities. If the network does not have these elements, it becomes only a field of political articulation, which does not necessarily work together.”

—Interviewee quote

Visual storytellers interviewed for this research reported feeling helpless in an emergency, not knowing who to approach for help. Interviewees reported asking for assistance from organizations that operate safety mechanisms, such as journalists’ union offices located in the territory, but being refused either because they were not considered to be journalists or because they could not clearly prove that the risk or threat that they were exposed to related to their work and their exercise of the right to freedom of expression. Visual storytellers living in rural communities reported feeling even more vulnerable and expressed a need for support networks from outside their communities that can offer them protection and advocate for their rights and interests. As one interviewee stated: “A structure of key emergency responders and mobilizers could give visibility to violations of the rights of visual storytellers quickly, once it becomes clear that a denunciation requires urgent action. We cannot be on that front line, as we live in the territory where the violation happens; we are a very fragile link.”

The gap could be addressed through a well-structured protection network. The foundations of such a network already exist with the National Network of Protection for Journalists and Communicators, created in 2018. Further support is required to strengthen infrastructure such as an executive secretariat and establish a pool of shared services of consultancies (including legal, technological and communications), technology and a common platform or app through which requests for assistance can be made. According to the organizations that provide safety mechanisms, structuring such a network depends on an engaged funder. Once built, the structure could enable safety mechanisms to scale up and cover more areas in the national territory. This could also provide an impetus to increase the capacity of current safety mechanisms to enhance their response to emergency situations suffered by journalists, social communicators and documentary filmmakers.

Donors could also support visual storytellers to build more structured partnerships with organizations that work on social justice and human rights. This is also important from the perspective of distribution and impact: strong links with social justice organizations are essential to ensure that films and projects reach the right audience and generate debate.

6.2 Sharing good practices

The sharing of knowledge and good practices is essential. Donors could support the compilation of good practices as a way to address the capacity building gap on risk mitigation. This could include the development of an ethics code for filmmakers working on social justice and human rights issues,

extending to issues such as the ethical responsibilities of filmmakers toward protagonists and the communities in which they film. Knowledge sharing should be linked to impact as well; interviewees indicated that research about examples of how filmmaking can be used as a tool to achieve social justice would be very valuable.

6.3 Comprehensive funding including for risk mitigation

The current domestic funding model for film production is in crisis, and as a result social justice impact movies rely now more than ever on international funding and private sponsorship. Filmmakers interviewed for this study expressed a concern that the film industry as a whole could go into decline because of the financial uncertainty. Insofar as this will impact on social justice films, this should be a focus area for donor action. As outlined above, the financial instability clearly impacts on the ability of filmmakers to invest in safety, for themselves and their protagonists.

As part of film funding, donors should consider providing funding for key services that are currently prohibitively expensive for filmmakers, such as Legal Advisory-Clearance and insurance (for equipment, personal safety, and errors and omissions). This would give more security and better conditions for visual storytellers to keep going with their work with fewer restrictions to their creativity, innovation and questioning power.

The increased representation of marginalized communities and the emergence of popular communicators represent a big opportunity to address structural social problems in the country, and donors could step in specifically with funding for smaller and grassroots productions. Recommendations from the interviewees include the creation of a fund for popular communicators in Brazil, supporting this important but fledgling field across the country. This would clearly fill a gap as there is otherwise very little funding available for this. Some regranting is taking place to support popular communication collectives during the Covid-19 pandemic. The freedom of expression organization ARTICLE 19, which has a presence in the country, ran a funding campaign in 2020 as a result of which 20 popular communication collectives were supported with grants of R\$12.000,00 (Approx. 2,400 USD) each. This is a small but significant and impactful way of funding; networks of support and care for social communicators are a great source of strength in the face of growing attacks on them and violations of their rights. Donor support would strengthen the ability of organizations such as ARTICLE 19 to provide such funding over a longer period of time, maintaining the existing collective and even encouraging new ones.

6.4 Advocacy for the adoption of the fair use principle

The Fair Use principle contemplates the right, in some circumstances, to quote copyrighted material without asking permission or paying for it. It stops copyright laws being used for censorship purposes and is an important enabling factor for journalism and filmmaking: filmmakers and journalists can rely on it when the value to the public of what you are saying outweighs the cost to the private owner of the copyright.^{cci} As such as, the principle is recognized in many countries, including the US and many European countries. By contrast, Brazilian law only recognizes a limited exception allowing “small excerpts” of copyrighted works to be used under strict conditions, leading most authors and filmmakers to self-censor and shy away from circumstances where they might need to rely on it.^{ccii}

Interviewees pointed out that advocacy for adoption of the fair use principle could find some legal basis in established jurisprudence from Brazil's Supreme Court.⁴²

7. Conclusions

Social impact movies are more necessary than ever as a counterforce to the current escalation of authoritarianism and attacks on human rights in Brazil. Supporting films that give voice and visibility to marginalized people is crucial to changing mindsets and contributes to a public discourse and decision-making that is based on more diverse world views. This will enhance society's ability to build effective solutions to the global challenges it is faced with and mobilize people around collective goals, driving efforts toward a more fair and sustainable future.

Yet, while the need for social impact movies is high, the research and interviews carried out for this report painted a worrying picture in terms of the safety and security of visual storytellers in Brazil, and funding for social impact films in Brazil in general. Faced with multiple threats, the re-emergence of an authoritarian regime as well as the implications of the Covid-19 pandemic, filmmakers need support. Primary needs are in robust funding, the building of solidarity networks and access to functioning safety resources across all parts of the country.

"Social impact movies give a voice to those in society who are threatened. Encouraging diverse narratives is fundamental to social recognition and brings about a shift in public perceptions, transforming their perceptions and mitigating violence."

—Interviewee quote

The needs of social communicators—journalists, filmmakers and visual storytellers outside of the mainstream—are particularly overlooked. This is a structural problem that has repercussions in terms of safety and security. As one interviewee put it: "Despite the popularization of audio-visual recording technology, this remains an elitist activity and the audio-visual industry is a closed space that is difficult to enter. Those who occupy this space are the ones who have accessed the best universities. If you do not change these structures, you will not be able to guarantee that those who are on the margins have the security to produce relevant content."

Drawing on the findings of the research and interviews conducted for this report, the main recommendations for donor action are:

- Supporting production funding, including for small and medium-sized production houses or individual filmmakers and visual storytellers and including funding for safety measures;
- Creating a fund for financial support to popular communicators who cannot currently access funding for filmmakers, including funding for safety measures;
- Supporting for solidarity networks among filmmakers and visual storytellers, allowing for the exchange of experiences, contacts, ideas, funding leads and good practices as well as emergency advocacy and signposting support in emergency situations;
- Strengthening networks aimed at the protection of human rights defenders, journalists and filmmakers, focused on improving coordination between existing mechanisms;
- Training and capacity building in safety and security practices;

⁴² In a 2015 decision the Supreme Court removed the requirement of prior authorization for biographies. Reasoning similar to that used by the Rapporteur in this decision could be applied to argue for the fair use principle:

<https://stf.jusbrasil.com.br/noticias/196993447/stf-afasta-exigencia-previa-de-autorizacao-para-biografias>

Annex 2: Region and country reports: Brazil

- Supporting advocacy for the reform of unduly restrictive copyright laws;
- Providing affordable access to, or pooled funding for, essential services including legal advisory and insurance covering equipment, people and E&O;
- Building bridges to international markets and funding, as well as human rights protection organizations.

Organizations that could take these recommendations forward, if provided funding, include Instituto Vladimir Herzog; ARTICLE 19; DocSP; and the Brazilian Association of Investigative Journalists, ABRAJI (Associação Brasileira de Jornalismo Investigativo).

Annex 3: Region and country reports—El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico

Agnieszka Raczynska *

1. Introduction and methodology

Documentary film has increasingly become a tool to raise awareness about and give visibility to social issues that otherwise would remain silenced. Some of the interviewees in this report see themselves as activists, and they identify a link between their work and the path to access to justice for victims of human rights abuses. As one of the interviewees stated, documentaries are a form of artistic expression to defend human rights. Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), United Nations agencies and civil society actors are increasingly interested in making documentary films in conjunction with their programs. On many occasions, the documentaries and material produced by each film project form a way of reparation for the victims of human rights abuses.

The film industry in Mexico has a long history of documentary productions. On the other hand, in the other Central American countries in this study, the film industry is still in its early stages and is poorly developed resulting from the lack of funding and appropriate legislation. Despite the many limitations, even in these countries there has been significant growth in recent years, and the documentary community is growing and impacting social change.

An increasing number of documentaries are produced that expose human suffering and human rights violations, and their impact grows. Documentary filmmakers themselves become more frequent targets of censorship, regressive public policies or threats. One of the common elements of the current political context in the four countries analyzed for this report is the shrinking of civil space and the censorship and criminalization of the current government opposition and critics. As filmmakers threaten state as well as nonstate actors by revealing their role in human rights abuses, they too become a target of this discourse and repressive policies.

This report is the result of research and interviews with filmmakers, CSOs and other stakeholders conducted in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico. It summarizes outcomes from the interviews, focused on the particular needs and current challenges faced by documentary filmmakers and visual artists, and also reports best practices, experiences, and recommendations they envision to improve their safety. The study was based on 23 semi-structured interviews that included contemporary, independent filmmakers of social justice documentary films, some of them also working as journalists, photojournalists or videographers. National and international civil society organizations (CSOs) were included as a source of information for available resources and efforts on prevention or protection. Officials from relevant government institutions in Mexico (in particular, the national mechanism for the protection of human rights defenders and journalists) were also interviewed.

* Agnieszka Raczynska is a human rights specialist and consultant to nonprofits and funders on issues related to Central America and Mexico: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/agnieszka-raczynska-24557a172/>.

A guide for each interview was designed allowing for the collection of qualitative data that later was analyzed and incorporated in the report. The interviews took place between October and December 2020 and were recorded and transcribed with the interviewees' permission.^{cciii}

2. Common challenges across the region

2.1 Issues, risks, and safety and security needs

Filmmakers and visual artists across the region face a number of common challenges. A number of them expressed the point of view that issues of risk and protection cannot be seen in isolation. Storytellers point to overall atmosphere of violence and public insecurity that characterizes the region.

2.2 Context and issues worked on

One of the most shared concerns among filmmakers from the four countries and the CSOs interviewed for this report is the negative official narrative against anyone criticizing the government. Interviewees offered examples of aggressive official discourse and derisive statements by politicians and government officials, especially against CSOs and journalists in each country, that also affects independent documentary makers.

In Central America fear has resulted in many occasions of self-censorship. Filmmakers and journalists interviewed stated that some are afraid to report on sensitive issues that could produce a backlash from government officials against them or the subjects. Some expressed concern about shrinking of space for critical and investigative reporting and participation of civil society in public debate.

While the particular social issues each visual artist interviewed for this report works on may vary, their documentaries frequently address the following themes: enforced disappearances, the right to land and territory of indigenous and non-indigenous communities and natural resources, gender-based violence, community leaders at risk, migration, militarization, corruption, access to justice, forced internal displacement and organized crime. Additionally, documentary filmmakers in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador have produced films on the dynamics and violence of gangs and the historical memory linked to the right to truth and justice related to the internal armed conflict and genocides.

The current health crisis resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic added to the many challenges faced by documentary filmmakers and journalists in Central America. Fact-checking fake news and government corruption are some of the new elements of the current context being covered or being investigated and documented.

2.3 Risks, risk management and protection needs

The risks that filmmakers and journalists are exposed to vary for each project and depend on the political and social context of the issues covered, and the interests and powerful actors they uncover. Those filmmakers who also worked as journalists pointed to some important differences in ways of working between the two professions, resulting in different risk profiles. At a basic level, journalists

can do their work alone, and unlike journalists, documentary filmmakers take the safety of the protagonists of their films into account far more deeply, particularly when they are identifiable (unlike journalists, for whom it is easier to keep the sources anonymous). Those in employment of a large company—whether a media house or a production company—usually also have the resources of that company to draw on, and this is more often the case for journalists than for filmmakers (particularly independent documentary filmmakers). Interviewees also opined that journalists are more risk-aware when covering a story.

But there were many other differences between the two professions that affect the risk profile. While generally journalists do not need images to support their investigative piece, documentary makers strongly rely on visual material. Often this means shooting in hostile contexts, filming interviews of witnesses of abuses or perpetrators or working in rural communities with little access to communications services (including mobile and internet access) or public transport. The biggest risks for journalists are in covering protests and natural disasters or in investigating corruption. The risk for documentary filmmakers is frequently linked to the particular factors and context inherent in shooting the film in a hostile or violent environment.

Furthermore, filmmakers often have to spend a long time with the subjects or in a community due to their project requirements or going back several times to the same location. Filmmakers and videographers also use expensive equipment which is difficult to hide from the public. The transportation of this expensive equipment against a backdrop of violence, crime and public insecurity in all four countries makes their work even more complicated. This increases their vulnerability, making them a target for robbery or assault: filmmakers mentioned robbery as one of the most common concerns they faced. Travel for female filmmakers, videographers and journalists was mentioned during interviews as especially challenging.

Most filmmakers and visual journalists interviewed for this report did not report experiencing risks directly related to the content of their films or videos, but those who did faced serious threats: one, a photojournalist, is currently out of his country because of death threats; another was targeted with hate messages on social media because of his latest film; and a third mentioned surveillance being used by state actors to monitor journalists and documentary makers in his country. As a result, all are very aware of the risks of filming in hostile contexts.

Some interviewees mentioned that usually journalists are more aware of the risks of challenging powerful actors than documentary filmmakers. Some CSOs interviewed for this report mentioned that generally, independent filmmakers lack familiarity with procedures like risk assessment or safety protocols. Despite this lack of knowledge, several filmmakers, especially those based in Mexico, mentioned having adopted the practice of conducting risk analysis and mapping exercises before starting a project. The methodologies used vary depending on each documentary maker and their crew's knowledge, and they are generally carried out intuitively without a specific method.

On the other hand, one of the interviewees' experience was that while some filmmakers include a contingency fund for eventual emergencies during shooting, journalists usually do not have these emergency measures in their planning for a project. As mentioned below, the provision of emergency funds is linked to the access to funds and varies between independent artists or journalists and those working for commercial production companies.

Most interviewees thought that documentary filmmakers from rural areas, indigenous communities and women are more vulnerable than male filmmakers and those living in large cities. Gender-based violence that women face in each country also impacts the film industry directly. Attacks against women filmmakers often take gender-specific forms, including gendered verbal abuse based on sex, sexual harassment and discrimination.

Some interviewees thought that it is the protagonists of documentary films who are most exposed to threats. They are negatively affected by the visibility that they have in films, which is particularly highlighted at the launch of a film and throughout the “impact campaign.” Interviewees also mentioned the enormous reach that videos get through social media. This brings greater impact—but it also significantly increases the level of risk for protagonists. These interviewees were critical of the fact that launch and impact campaigns are generally focused on the commercial aspect of the film and fail to consider the safety of the filmmakers or of the film’s protagonists. At the same time, interviewees also acknowledged that in some cases, the visibility gained by protagonists can be very beneficial and afford them a level of protection: visibility often brings the public’s attention to an issue that otherwise would be “buried” or forgotten. There is no one-size-fits-all solution, but for each film there should a careful analysis of the safety and protection needs of filmmakers as well as protagonists during launch and impact campaigns (as well as at all other stages of production).

Digital security is a common concern among all the interviewees, and is directly related to the impact value of the visual and audio material that they have collected: many collect visual evidence of human rights abuses as well as victim testimony that identifies perpetrators or uncovers the role of powerful actors. Traveling and transport of reels and audio material containing such evidence is very challenging. Interviewees had several practices to meet this challenge: several mentioned encryption; some mentioned cloud storage; a few mentioned keeping materials in a safe. Some interviewees said they did not take any measures to mitigate digital risks. There was a similar range of practices as concerns secure communications: some said they use secure services such as Signal or Telegram, some had only very basic security protocols and some didn’t use any secure means of communication at all.

Some interviewees mentioned that filmmakers who work with the support of a production company have often access to contacts and information, unlike those working independently self-sponsoring their films. Filmmakers working independently usually do not have access to support in case of an emergency and rely on their personal connections and knowledge. On the other hand, those documentary makers who have been hired by civil society organizations to carry out documentary or video projects tell opposite stories: on the one hand, Amnesty International and ARTICLE 19 implement and demand compliance with protocols to prevent risks and safety measures. On the other hand, some interviewees mentioned that civil society organizations they have worked for have no concern about how the filming will be done and do not offer or request safety protocols.

While the interviewees identified serious risks, as outlined in the previous paragraphs, not enough attention is paid to risk management and the kind of resources required to mitigate risks. All interviewees agreed that there is a lack of spaces in their countries where documentary filmmakers and audio-visual artists can talk about security issues. While Mexico has developed more

collaborative spaces than El Salvador, Guatemala or Honduras, issues like risks, prevention and protection, have not been part of the discussion during meetings or seminars.

Furthermore, while several governmental and civil society driven mechanisms have been developed to protect activists and journalists at risk in the region, none of them are designed to include filmmakers or artists in their scheme. Interviewees also roundly criticized the governmental efforts to protect human rights defenders and journalists in the countries where they have been instituted.

Several interviewees also criticized the existing training programs provided by international organizations, saying that they are not adapted to the local context or their specific needs. Many of these workshops are organized overseas and there are many barriers to participation: although there are scholarships available for journalists and filmmakers to attend, they are often in English (which many don't sufficiently master) and are held in countries for which they need a visa to travel. The duration of these workshops is another barrier to participation: not everyone can travel for one week to another place, even in the same country.

Finally, while much of the media has moved toward remote work, going out into the field is still essential. Some interviewees expressed that the current health crisis related to Covid-19 has also impacted their safety. The situation in each country is changing rapidly, and the risk profile for countries, regions or towns and cities can change drastically and very rapidly. Some commented that the measures they have taken to prevent getting infected by the virus while filming or reporting are part of the expenses they finance out of their personal budget and that there are no efforts put in place by the government to prevent the health risks they might face.

2.4 Labor conditions and employment in a project-based industry

All interviewees agreed that the precarious nature of work in the independent film industry and investigative journalism is a major concern, impacting safety in several ways. Filmmakers and other film workers face remarkably similar working conditions in each of the four countries studied. In general, filmmakers do not have a steady income. Very few productions include social security or benefits for those who work in production; almost all of them are freelancers working from project to project. The experience of some interviewees is that only a small number of documentary directors and producers are paid through their entire film production cycle. Some interviewees recognized that the precarious work in the independent film industry results in greater vulnerability. During the Covid-19 crisis, this has worsened: no government has protected the employment rights of film industry workers and unemployment has increased.

Several interviewees mentioned that financial uncertainties around a project lead to them prioritizing direct costs over protection measures. This particularly impacts on independent productions, which are often made on a shoestring budget. Interviewees mentioned using their own mobile phones for communications, sometimes without sufficient cell phone coverage; using their own vehicles to transport the crew and equipment, sometimes without adequate insurance or with the vehicle not being in a good condition; staying in cheap hotels with poor security—all practices that contribute to greater risk. Similarly, filmmakers who are on a deadline push to conclude projects and take risks to do so, rushing to film or conduct interviews without adequate risk assessments and safety precautions.

For example, one interviewee mentioned that a tight deadline and lack of funds to make shorter trips caused him to venture out to take images in areas of intense conflict, with a high presence of organized crime groups, without any protection.

2.5 Mental health and emotional well-being

All interviewees agreed on the relevance of emotional and mental health and the need for self-care. As some pointed out, any initiative related to safety should have a holistic approach and focus not only on the filmmaker but also include the filming and post-production crew. If the emotional and mental health is not included in the safety plan, the heavy workload and high level of stress could mean unnecessary risks.

At the same time, some interviewees recognized the resistance within the film community to openly discuss the emotional impacts of witnessing abuses, collecting testimonies of people who are traumatized, or other difficulties related their work or personal life.

On occasion, support has been offered to the film crew after a specific safety incident but not as a preventive measure.

3. El Salvador

3.1 Safety and security needs

El Salvador has one of the world's highest homicide rates as gang violence has become widespread in the country.^{cciv} Gangs exercise territorial control and engage in extortion and the expropriation of property. They are known for killing and disappearing those who resist them. El Salvador also has a history of civil unrest and deeply rooted social inequalities. According to the human rights organization Cristosal, in 2018 an estimated 320,000 people in Central America's Northern Triangle were forced to flee their homes because of violence.^{ccv} This complex social, economic and political context has defined the documentary cinema: documentary filmmakers frequently address El Salvador's civil war, gang violence and migration in their films.

Filmmakers and journalists cannot escape from the violence that permeates communities and neighborhoods across El Salvador. The brutal murder in September 2009 of Christian Poveda, producer and director of the documentary *La Vida Loca* which documented gang life in the country,^{ccvi} is often used as a reference to illustrate the boundaries filmmakers face. For filmmakers the most common threats are related to filming in gang-controlled areas and exposing gang life or dynamics, exposing or criticizing the current government, and the lack of funding and labor precariousness. Labor conditions have been worsening during the current health crisis from Covid-19.

The sense of insecurity and even hostility has been exacerbated under the regime of President Nayib Bukele, who took office in June 2019 and who routinely criticizes and delegitimizes the media and journalists that denounce wrongdoing by his administration. According to the Committee to Protect

Journalists (CPJ),^{ccvii} threats against journalists who work for independent organizations like online news site *El Faro*^{ccviii} are common and on the rise. Journalists from various media outlets have also denounced surveillance, harassment by the Presidential press staff and smear campaigns against them that have in turn led to threats.^{ccix}

3.2 Existing resources for safety and security

There are no public policies or official mechanisms to protect filmmakers or journalists in El Salvador, and the interviewees expressed their lack of trust in the current government's ability or even willingness to protect them. Although the Attorney's General Office operates a program to protect civilians, including members of the police force threatened by gangs or witnesses and former members of organized crime groups, none of this is meant to protect journalists or visual storytellers.

Civil society in El Salvador lacks any capacity to support filmmakers or journalists. The only resource mentioned by the interviewees available to journalists is a training program developed by Riesgo Cruzado^{ccx} in collaboration with Hostile Environment and First Aid Training (HEFAT) program developed by the International Women's Media Foundation.^{ccxi}

As a result of the lack of resources available to them, filmmakers have developed their own strategies. These have included collaborating with the police or direct contact with gang leaders to obtain permission to film in their territory or include stories related to their gang members. Sometimes the collaboration with the police is counterproductive and could limit the possibility of getting permission from the gangs. Most of the time, filmmakers get in touch with gang members without any protection. Obvious risks are involved with all these practices; the murder of Christian Poveda stands as testimony of this. Another strategy often used by filmmakers in El Salvador as a protection measure is to premier their films at festivals abroad to gain visibility. One filmmaker commented that, "a director who is known at an international level, is harder to be "touched."

3.3 Connecting the dots: (how) are stakeholders connected?

In general terms, El Salvador's film industry can only be described as precarious. There are no film schools, and the circle of filmmakers is small and scattered. There are no spaces for Salvadoran filmmakers and other visual artists to meet and exchange information. Security threats are only discussed informally among filmmakers, usually at social gatherings.

Until recently, the circle of filmmakers was highly elitist. It included only those who had studied abroad and did not exceed more than ten people in the whole country. This small group recently expanded thanks to the FIXES contest, organized by Salvadorian filmmaker Andre Gutfreund^{ccxii} in collaboration with the Ministry of Economy. Gutfreund was identified by some interviewees as a leader within the film community in the country with the ability to summon others to collaborate.^{ccxiii} There is a Salvadoran Cinema Association (ACINE), but it is currently inactive; some interviewees mentioned the Centro Cultural España as a space and institution that supports screening of independent films; and the San Salvador Film Festival.

A common concern among the interviewees is the decrease of funds available and even the withdrawal of some international donors from El Salvador. In general, funds made available by international foundation for documentaries are small and often filmmakers access funds labelled for social projects and not films.

Journalists are slightly better organized and connected: El Faro, for example, is well-networked internationally and at the national level, journalists are connected through the Journalists' Association of El Salvador (APES), an active independent journalists' association.

3.4 Opportunities to improve protection

Given the low general awareness of safety practices and the high risks faced by all filmmakers, there is an urgent need for appropriate training adapted to the Salvadorian context. Some interviewees insisted on tailoring existing trainings offered by international organizations. Workshops and meetings where filmmakers can learn from their peers and exchange experiences were also seen as an opportunity to enhance their safety and prevent risk.

Investing in a more coherent community of filmmakers to discuss common strategies and to share information was also mentioned as an opportunity to strengthen security. Reactivating ACINE would be a way some envision to create a space for collaboration between filmmakers. Some identified the need for developing a regional network. Interviewees also suggested developing support groups to talk about the emotional impact of their work and work-related mental health issues.

One of the interviewees saw an opportunity in developing an advocacy strategy to advance a proposal for legislation to propel cultural activities and cinematography in El Salvador. Such legislation could include a specific protection clause for visual storytellers; a proposal for this was drawn up by ACINE in 2019.

It was suggested that more could be done to deepen the relationship between filmmakers and foundations, going beyond funding. For example, foundations and organizations that fund documentary projects could adopt a model of offering training, sharing contacts, facilitating convenings and providing emergency funding as and when required (for example, for temporary relocation). Some foundations already do some of this; and some interviewees thought that the way the Ford Foundation works to support human rights organizations, especially through its BUILD network, could be replicated in the context of film funding. It should be noted that this requires quite a strong relationship of trust between foundations and documentary filmmakers, and filmmakers indicated that this is not currently always the case. For example, filmmakers criticized some funders for lacking the flexibility to allow changes in documentary projects when needed, particularly when changes are necessary for safety reasons. A recommendation was that good funding practices in this regard should be shared among foundations and other donors and film funders.

A specific recommendation to the Ford Foundation was to organize a seminar bringing together documentary filmmakers, civil society and academia from across El Salvador and Central America to analyze their countries' current social and political context. Since Ford Foundation is a trusted funder for civil society as well as for many filmmakers and there are many common challenges across the

region, such a convening would allow the group to share information, explore opportunities, and explore common strategies.

4. Guatemala

4.1 Safety and security needs

A regressive agenda that limits the freedom of association and citizen participation has been advancing in Guatemala. Particularly noteworthy is the recently approved Law on Nongovernmental Organizations that increases government control over civil society organizations operating in the country.^{ccxiv} Threats and violence against human rights defenders and journalists are a major concern, and gang-related violence and economic inequality are an important factor that propels displacement and migration. Independent media and community radio are under constant attack because of their strong influence on public opinion, especially locally.

There are many hostile regions in the country; the risks increase in places with high levels of social conflict. Independent filmmakers working or living in rural areas—many of whom are activists themselves, defending their land and territory, often in opposition to extractive projects—can face the same risk as the community they are working with. The risks are especially high where hydroelectric and mining projects are being developed.

The interviewees agreed that working on truth, justice and historical memory related to the internal armed conflict are issues that put journalists and documentary filmmakers at risk. Smear campaigns by conservative media and on social media against journalists are common and, in some cases, they have faced censorship and even criminal punishment. Documentaries produced in Guatemala also include issues related to gang-related violence, gender-based violence and women's rights and violence against the LGBTIQI community.

One of the interviewees pointed out that women filmmakers in Guatemala face higher risks than men. They challenge the status quo and stereotypes and face systemic violence that are still present in Guatemalan society. Sexist attitudes are very much prevalent throughout society, embedded in a culture of machismo thinking. Women filmmakers often receive misogynistic messages on social media as well as in person; are advised to keep silent or “go to the kitchen;” or they are asked if their projects are supported by a male producer or director. Opportunities are scarce for women filmmakers. In terms of safety, women face a higher risk of being assaulted, kidnapped or raped. It is very risky for them to film at night or in isolated places or areas. Many filmmakers are accompanied by men as a result. Indigenous women filmmakers or journalists are doubly targeted, for being female as well as for belonging to an indigenous group.

The perpetrators of threats against documentary filmmakers in Guatemala include governmental as well as nongovernmental actors, including gangs and private companies. One of the interviewees identified the ultra right-wing group *Fundación contra el Terrorismo* as responsible for many incidents of harassment against those labelled as communists or leftists, including some journalists and independent filmmakers.

4.2 Existing resources for safety and security

There are no government efforts or public policies aimed at protecting filmmakers, visual artists nor any other group of visual storytellers in Guatemala.

There have been several separate governmental efforts to protect human rights defenders and journalists, but a holistic public policy for the protection of human rights is lacking and the individual efforts and institutions that have been created have either been abandoned, or are criticized for their ineffectiveness by national and international organizations. For example, the CenterCenter for Analysis of Attacks against Human Rights Defenders in Guatemala (Instancia de Análisis de Ataques Contra Defensores de Derechos Humanos en Guatemala), created in 2008 to establish and analyze patterns of attacks on human rights defenders and provide recommendations for investigations, is no longer functioning. The more recently established Presidential Commission for Peace and Human Rights (COPADEH) and Defensoría de las Personas Defensoras de Derechos Humanos y Periodistas have been criticized by civil society for being ineffective,^{ccxv} and lack legitimacy given the pervasive negative rhetoric from the government and public figures against human rights defenders.

The civil society organizations that offer support for human rights defenders, activists and journalists, Protection International Mesoamerica and Unidad de Protección a Defensoras y Defensores de Derechos Humanos de Guatemala (UDEFEFEGUA), are often overwhelmed by the workload. UDEFEFEGUA has supported some filmmakers and journalists at risk by providing materials and resources for risk analysis and the development of protective measures.^{ccxvi} This included helping organizations and journalists to develop safety and security plans for their offices and staff, minimizing the risk of attacks, as well as providing mental health support to help journalists cope with anxiety and trauma related to threats. It runs workshops and has developed several handbooks and materials on risk prevention and protection, which are part of the materials publicized by Peace Brigades International and Protection International. UDEFEFEGUA also offers legal aid and advocates for the government and the international aid community to provide better protection for human rights defenders and journalists. The organization has a good relationship with independent filmmakers through the film festival that it organizes.

In addition, Protection International Mesoamerica—an international CSO with a team working in Guatemala since 2008^{ccxvii}—has developed a series of resources and trainings for human rights defenders.

The nonprofit human rights media company SkyLight has worked in Guatemala since 1982.^{ccxviii} SkyLight has developed a collaborative space for independent filmmakers and activists called SolidariLabs. More about this initiative is mentioned below.

4.3 Connecting the dots: (how) are stakeholders connected?

According to the interviewees, there are no homegrown, all-encompassing networks or formal associations for independent filmmakers in Guatemala. Interviewees expressed the need to create a network where they can share their needs and experiences and exchange resources and materials, including prevention and protection protocols. There are several film schools in Guatemala, such as

the Guatemalan Academy of Arts and Cinematography (Academia Guatemalteca de Artes y Ciencias Cinematográficas).^{ccxix} There is also the Guatemalan Association of Audiovisual and Cinematography (Asociación Guatemalteca del Audiovisual y la Cinematografía, AGACINE),^{ccxx} but, one of the interviewees described, none of these institutions have served as a space of convening for filmmakers or visual artists.

Networks have however formed around a few initiatives. The strongest effort in terms of connecting filmmakers and other activists is the SolidariLabs program, run by Skylight. It is “designed to foster regional cohorts of media makers, artists, movement actors and human rights organizations to collaboratively create enduring media ecosystems that advance a shared mission, whether it be to defend indigenous or women’s rights, battle extractive industries or promote transitional justice.” SolidariLabs Guatemala was a space where human rights activists and audiovisual and documentary makers from different countries in the region connected and shared experiences. SolidariLabs have been supported by various donors, including the Ford Foundation as well as Oak Foundation’s Issues Affecting Women’s Program through which they have been also working with women through a series of workshops. Its VIVX initiative (Virtual International Volunteers Xchange) brings together the SolidariLabs network and experts on protection, and facilitates access to assessment when needed.^{ccxxi}

In addition, there are several independent film festivals organized by Guatemalan CSOs. These festivals are known as meeting spaces for independent filmmakers, visual artists and activists. UDEFEGUA organizes the Muestra de Cine Internacional Memoria, Verdad y Justicia (International Film Exhibition on Memory, Truth and Justice),^{ccxxii} a space for independent filmmakers and human rights organizations. A similar initiative is Festivales Solidarios (Solidarity Festivals).^{ccxxiii}

4.4 Opportunities to improve protection

It was further suggested to conduct a full mapping of documentary filmmakers and filmmakers’ associations/organizations, including a survey capturing their experiences, knowledge and awareness of safety issues. Such a mapping would provide a baseline from which to design a protection mechanism based on the specific needs of documentary filmmakers. Such mapping should also consider the current capacity of civil society protection mechanisms (for example, UDEFEGUA indicated that for them to be able to provide legal support to more human rights defenders and artists, they would need to strengthen their legal team).

Training was seen as a clear priority. Many of the new generation of filmmakers in Guatemala are not trained and make their films by intuition, without any resources or formal guidance. Training for this new generation of self-taught independent filmmakers would be welcome and should include risk assessment and mitigation as part of the development of a film project. Digital security was mentioned as a specific (though by no means the only) area of need. It was suggested that such trainings should include people from the film industry and civil society organizations. Potential conveners or facilitators of trainings could include UDEFEGUA, perhaps in collaboration with Skylight or AGACINE.

Another area where improvement was needed is where filmmakers work with civil society organizations. In some cases, CSOs hire documentary filmmakers to produce videos or films. One interviewee's experience with this type of contract is that the CSOs do not always provide assessment or support regarding prevention or protection measures for filmmakers and their crew, or consider protocols for filmmakers or videographers as part of the development of their film projects. There are examples of good practice as well; Amnesty International's protocols were praised.⁴³

Artists that have international recognition are less likely to face harassment in Guatemala, and some interviewees identified this as an opportunity to improve safety for more filmmakers. Documentary filmmakers could develop a strategy to release their films abroad, at international festivals, before premiering them in Guatemala, particularly for projects that are likely to be controversial domestically. A recommendation was made to establish funds to support the participation of independent filmmakers at film festivals, as part of a strategy to gain international visibility recognition, and thus contribute to their safety.

5. Honduras

5.1 Safety and security needs

The political and social context in Honduras is challenging and complex in many ways. National and international organizations have widely denounced the threats and killings of community leaders, activists, and human rights defenders. Reporters without Borders ranked Honduras 148 out of 180 most dangerous countries for journalists in their 2020 World Press Freedom Index.^{ccxiv} Repression against journalists in Honduras during coverage of social protests, and in particular photojournalists, is constant.

In this landscape, the work of filmmakers is also challenging. Fear of censorship and self-censorship are the most common concerns among the interviewees.

Honduran cinema has gone through different stages. Between the 1970s and the 1990s, there was government support for filmmaking and storytelling; but, since 2000 there has been increased censorship of particular issues. This has limited the ability of filmmakers to innovate and to tell stories about the current situation in Honduras. There is however no tradition or policy of investing in documentary filmmaking (or in art in general) and there is no tradition of watching documentary cinema. Documentaries stream on cable or platforms such as Netflix. The widespread fear and lack of access to tools and resources that could decrease risk or offer protection are among the most common challenges mentioned by interviewees. Many don't know how to address these issues and instead self-censor, choosing not to produce films on topics that are likely to be controversial. Furthermore, according to interviewees no one in Honduras has the resources to protect the subjects of their films.

⁴³ The protocols cover filmmakers as well as their crew. The detail of the protocols is confidential; they include specific indications and steps to keep people safe in a specific situation or context; phone numbers of people to call in case of emergency; a list of what to do or not to do in an emergency; emergency routes and maps; and logistics including names of hotels where people will stay, dates and hours of departures, etc.

Criminal gangs were mentioned as are the most common actor posing a risk to film productions. People who live in areas where these groups operate live in daily fear and are afraid to tell their stories. Even if the stories that filmmakers want to tell are not related to gangs, the fear of being threatened by a gang always surfaces and is part of Hondurans' everyday lives. Public insecurity in general is an ever-present threat to journalists and filmmakers, leading in particular to a fear of being robbed. Mitigating strategies include hiding expensive equipment, or only bringing some equipment, or traveling in older or smaller cars.

It was also mentioned that women filmmakers face heightened risks and barriers. The film industry in Honduras is male-dominated, and women filmmakers face discrimination and misogyny, among other cultural challenges. Women are generally not encouraged and do not dare to tell stories and make films independently. Moreover, as in other countries in the region, women filmmakers face a heightened risk of being assaulted, kidnapped or raped. By way of mitigating these risks, many female filmmakers and journalists are in the habit of asking a male colleague to accompany them during filming; they also use men in their film crew to talk to male community leaders or gang leaders.

On January 30, 2019, the Honduran National Congress approved the Cinematography Law. Amongst other things, this created the Cinematographic Council, the National Council of the Cinematographic Industry, tax incentives, and funding for filmmaking. One of the interviewees commented that the law was sent to Congress without any consultation with the filmmaking community. There is fear that, although it should promote local production and facilitate the purchase and entry of production equipment, the law will serve as means for more censorship and restriction: the Council that has been appointed under the law has been stacked with political appointees and there is a fear that financing and other assistance will be available only to politically approved projects.

5.2 Connecting the dots: (how) are stakeholders connected?

The filmmakers and journalists in Honduras are poorly connected and work mostly in isolation. There are however some initiatives that aim to better connect them. The Asociación de Cineastas de Honduras, “Linterna Mágica,”^{ccxxv} is a small network of Honduran filmmakers mentioned by one of the interviewees as a space of collaboration. The Colectiva de Cineastas Hondureñas (Collective of Honduran Women Filmmakers, CCH)^{ccxxvi} is a network created in response to the lack of women in the independent film world in Honduras and to generate a space for women to produce films and tell stories. CCH trains new filmmakers, supports and promotes films made by women. It is being funded by the Central American Women’s Fund^{ccxxvii} and Centro Cultural España.^{ccxxviii} CCH organizes El Sueño de Alicia,^{ccxxix} an exhibition of films directed by women. A space for dialogue and reflection accompanies each cycle. The network provides a safe space for women to talk about their ideas and projects, to “feel free to tell their stories.” CCH aims to “empower women for storytelling.”

There are limited links between these circles of filmmakers and human rights defenders groups and civil society protection mechanisms. The Colectiva de Cineastas Hondureñas mentioned a link with UN Women through the Spotlight Initiative;^{ccxxx} and El Sueño de Alicia has the support of Oxfam Honduras. CCH is connected with other groups in the region through IMCINE’s program supporting independent filmmakers working on issues related to the indigenous communities and community

cinema in Mexico and Central America (discussed in the chapter on Mexico, below). This program includes trainings run by ARTICLE 19, but it is accessible only to those who are part of IMCINE's program and funding.

There is also a Film Festival organized by the newspaper *El Heraldo*—the Festival Internacional de Cortometrajes—identified by one of the interviewees as a more commercial film-oriented exhibition.

There are no film schools in Honduras, and there are no current public funds available for filmmaking.

5.3 Existing resources for safety and security

A Mechanism for the Protection of Journalists, Human Rights Defenders and Operators of Justice was set up in 2015 in Honduras.^{ccxxxi} Some interviewees consider that the Mechanism lacks trust from the journalistic and human rights community. It is not an option they would consider for safeguards in case of an emergency. They are not aware of any filmmakers or visual artists under the protection of the Mechanism. A journalist association exists (the Colegio de Periodistas de Honduras) but interviewees did not see this as effectively protecting independent journalists and media.^{ccxxxii}

The organization C-LIBRE (Comité para la Libre Expresión)^{ccxxxiii} has developed the Red de Alertas y Protección a Periodistas y Comunicadores Sociales de Honduras (RAPCOS)^{ccxxxiv} aimed to promote preventive and protection measures for communicators and journalists. This is the only tool for journalists developed by civil society in Honduras identified during the drafting of this report. The only other mechanism mentioned was the support provided by the UK-based organization, Rory Peck Trust, which provides trainings and support for freelance journalists. The RPT offers support through their Safety Clinics, which “offer one-to-one consultations for freelance journalists and are held as part of industry events and forums throughout the year;” but interviewees mentioned the need for programs such as this to be adapted to local contexts and the experiences of Honduran journalists.

5.4 Opportunities to improve protection

As in the case of other Central American countries a frequently used strategy is to exhibit the documentaries at international festivals to gain visibility and recognition.

Interviewees agreed that, in general, there is a lack of knowledge about preventive and safety protocols in Honduras. Safety measures are usually implemented intuitively. The interviewees also agreed that a network of communicators and filmmakers should be created with a capacity to respond in case of an emergency, and as a space to exchange information and solidarity. A specific fund for emergency response was also mentioned as a badly needed resource for filmmakers in Honduras.

Interviewees identified training and access to funding as some of the priorities. Interviewees also agreed that sharing existing resources and solidarity networks are needed and would benefit the independent filmmaker's community. Training and workshops on security, and specific workshops on psychosocial well-being and self-care were also identified as being necessary.

6. Mexico

6.1 Safety and security needs

Mexico is ranked among the most violent countries in the world. In 2020, more than 34,000 homicide victims were reported.^{ccxxxv} Mexico is also one of the most dangerous countries for journalism in Latin America. According to the freedom of expression watchdog organization ARTICLE 19, throughout 2020, respect for the right to freedom of expression has been worsening. President Andrés Manuel López Obrador berates and delegitimizes anyone that criticizes its policies and has brought in sweeping cuts as well as a policy of austerity. To add to this all, rural communities face major insecurity as a result of territorial disputes between organized crime groups.

Although the interviewees did not identify documentary filmmakers as a group at particularly high risk (in a country with such high levels of violence, in some sense everyone is at risk), they recognized the challenges of violence and impunity and the impact on filmmakers of recent regressions in public support for culture and the arts. According to several interviewees, the federal government sees documentary filmmaking as a threat. While in the past, filmmakers received some institutional support (whether through funding or otherwise), which functioned as a form of security, the opposite is now true: government rhetoric paints activists, independent journalists—including independent filmmakers—as public enemies.^{ccxxxvi}

According to several interviewees, until recently, Mexico's film industry was spared censorship and harassment. Over the last two decades, Mexico's film industry witnessed growth, propelled by the support of two government funds, Fondo para la Producción Cinematográfica de Calidad (Fund for Quality Film Production—Forprocine) and the Fondo de Inversión y Estímulos al Cine (Investment Fund and Film Incentives—Fidecine), part of the Mexican Institute of Cinematography (IMCINE).^{ccxxxvii} The Mexican government also offered a fiscal stimulus known as Eficine (Estímulo fiscal para el Cine),^{ccxxxviii} which allows individuals and companies to invest in productions and receive a tax incentive. Foprocine has been particularly important in funding low-budget, experimental projects—often first works—that would likely never be made otherwise.

Now, however, its rich tradition of storytelling is facing a big challenge as crucial public funding mechanisms are removed. Foprocine and Fidecine have merged and been replaced by a new fund, Focine. Overall funding has been reduced by nearly one third, and interviewees expressed a concern that this would result in Foprocine's longtime support for smaller, auteur-driven and often first-time work to be overshadowed by more mainstream projects that were previously funded under Fidecine's mandate. Additionally, as one of the interviewees pointed out, funding for film festivals has also been drastically reduced—by 70% in the past few years. A number of additional federal measures have impacted on CSOs including film festivals, including fiscal regulations, anti-corruption rules, and anti-money laundering legislation.

Interviewees stated that the government has made clear that filmmaking and culture, and art in general, are not among its priorities. The dissolution of public trust is seen by the interviewees as censorship as it affects independent cinema and it impacts freedom of expression. At the same time,

public budget cuts limit the opportunity to create and maintain jobs in the film industry. In the opinion of one interviewee, new productions will increasingly depend on private initiative, and it might be complicated to make films that touch on social issues. The public cinema archives might also be negatively affected by the public budget cuts.

Even more than physical danger or risks, interviewees mentioned insecurity of employment and the lack of a stable financial income as the primary concern for independent documentary filmmakers. Most filmmakers work without job stability, and the public funds for the projects are not enough for the salaries and benefits, security measures such as insurance or digital security. This impacted on safety and security because of the ensuing lack of resources, and the resulting impossibility to invest in protective resources. Emotional and mental health is also a serious concern, but is not openly addressed among independent filmmakers. Male documentary filmmakers in particular do not want to talk about the emotional impact of working with human rights issues or victims of human rights abuses, despite the secondary trauma to which they are exposed.

Interviewees also mentioned strong direct and indirect gender discrimination in the Mexican film industry, manifesting itself in sexual harassment as well as wage inequality. Women filmmakers and independent filmmakers from rural communities face even greater risks, in terms of the risk of violence as well as because of the backlash and resistance they experience from within often conservative communities who refuse to accept women as documentary makers, journalists, and human rights defenders. They also struggle financially: they are not very well-connected and have little access to financial resources. As a result, they are often forced to self-finance or, more likely, have other jobs while also developing their films. They often depend on initiatives like *Ambulante Mas Alla* or public funds to develop their projects or exhibit their films, but in this they face resistance from local groups linked to larger organized crime organizations, large companies and their local security services, and local authorities (often corrupt).

6.2 Connecting the dots: (how) are stakeholders connected?

There are various groupings of filmmakers in Mexico. One of them is the group of former students of *Ambulante Mas Allá* (*Ambulante Beyond*),^{ccxxxix} a program that trains new filmmakers from across Mexico and Central America who have limited access to tools and resources. Another virtual group of independent filmmakers, journalists and activists from Mexico and Central America was created after *Good Pitch Mexico*.^{ccxli} The attack on the country's cultural fiber has catalyzed a group of Mexican filmmakers into resistance, protesting through social media and hosting virtual meetings to discuss their response. A WhatsApp group has been created as a means of communication and collective organization. In addition to this effort, there are other informal communication and exchange groups that were mentioned during interviewees, operating mainly through WhatsApp. This included a WhatsApp group of rural filmmakers and communicators created in order to connect and exchange information and ideas about resources and funding.

It is worth mentioning that there are several initiatives in Mexico to promote community cinema. In addition to *Ambulante Mas Alla*, one of the interviewees mentioned the *Campamento Audiovisual Itinerante* (*Itinerant Audiovisual Camp*).^{ccxli} This is an initiative that serves as a professional and creative platform for aspiring indigenous filmmakers, including through a series of workshops and masterclasses.

Finally, La Sandía Digital is a feminist organization with vast experience making documentary cinema with social and human rights perspective.^{ccxliii} La Sandía Digital also organizes storytelling workshops and collaborative initiatives with rural communities and aspiring young filmmakers and audiovisual artists.

But despite these initiatives, one of the interviewees pointed out that many independent documentary filmmakers in Mexico continue to work in isolation from each other, even criticizing those who participate in dialogue and exchanges and who have access to civil society support or public authorities as a privileged group; in his own words, “sort of an elite.”

In the last 15 years, Mexico has seen significant production and exhibition of documentary films with social themes, and the emergence of a solid arthouse festival circuit dedicated to these films. This trend has been propelled through initiatives such as *Ambulante Gira de Documentales*^{ccxliv} and *DocsMX*.^{ccxlv} Each year, in collaboration with Cinépolis, and the Morelia International Film Fest, *Ambulante* organizes an international film festival that tours Mexico for two months. *Ambulante* offers screenings, workshops, meetings with filmmakers, seminars, industry panels, documentary theater, drive-in screenings, and grants for filmmakers. *Ambulante* is currently the largest documentary festival in Mexico. *DocsMX* is a documentary film platform and annual film festival that also runs several training programs. In its own words, it aims to “accompany the creation of new filmmakers and documentary makers and to promote the creation and development of documentary projects in Mexico and Latin America.”

The Covid-19 pandemic has forced both organizations to create virtual spaces, which have resulted in greater participation and exchange of information among filmmakers and the public. The Morelia International Film Festival^{ccxlv} and Guadalajara Festival^{ccxlvii} were also mentioned as opportunities for exchange of information and collaboration among filmmakers of all backgrounds and people from the media industry.

Although festivals and exhibitions occur at a specific moment in time, several interviewees commented that they could provide adequate spaces for meeting and dialogue on security and protection. One interviewee recommended exploring an alliance with the Academia Mexicana de Artes y Ciencias Cinematográficas (Mexican Academy of the Arts and Cinematographic Science—AMACC)^{ccxlviii} in order to seek a more permanent space for collaboration among Mexican documentary makers and other visual artists.

A best practice mentioned during interviewees is *Periodistas de a Pie*, an organization of journalists which serves as a space to connect journalists and which has been also working on protection and risk prevention.^{ccxlviii} *Periodistas de a Pie* provides training, network-building and capacity-building, with the primary purpose of promoting the creation of high-quality journalistic products. Active since 2007, it has developed a handbook for self-protection for journalists with the support of the Instituto Mexicano de Derechos Humanos y Democracia—a Mexican NGO—and has also organized workshops for journalists on prevention and protection, and digital security.

Finally, the National Network of Women Human Rights Defenders (*Red Nacional de Defensoras de Derechos Humanos*) has been created specifically to provide support for women human rights

defenders and journalists facing risks because of their work.^{ccxlix} The Network was founded ten years ago and has 300 members. It has two working groups: Self-Care and Safety and Urgent Action. The Network activates a safety protocol and urgent action at its members' request and has organized workshops, talks, and meetings on security with gender and feminist perspective for its members. The Network also owns a safety house for its members.

6.3 Existing resources for safety and security

Mechanism to Protect Human Rights Defenders and Journalists and other government initiatives

In 2012, the Mexican government established the Mechanism to Protect Human Rights Defenders and Journalists (the Protection Mechanism),^{cccl} an institution that currently provides support and protective measures for more than a thousand users.^{cccli} Currently, there are photojournalists under the protection of the Mechanism; in 2013, two filmmakers were admitted to the Protection Mechanism in 2013 after receiving death threats. Currently there are no filmmakers or other visual storytellers under the protection of the Mechanism.

A government official who works for the Protection Mechanism was interviewed for this report and expressed willingness to approach filmmakers at risk. However, the interviewee also stated that the current budget of the Protection Mechanism is insufficient to develop specific initiatives for this group. If filmmakers were considered part of the Protection Mechanism, the staff that evaluates applications would need to undergo training to understand the linkage between filmmaking, freedom of expression and human rights generally. This would avoid filmmakers being immediately rejected. Training on the specific type of work and needs of visual storytellers such as documentary filmmakers would also be needed.

In theory, the prevention department of the Protection Mechanism has a mandate to develop policy recommendations on issues of safety and protection of journalists and human rights defenders. In practice, however, the representative who was interviewed stated that the mechanism does not have the capacity to do so. As a result, the only ones advocating for changes in public policy are civil society organizations and journalists themselves.

In 2020, the public trust that funded the Protection Mechanism was eliminated, resulting in financial uncertainty about how the Protection Mechanism can continue to be operated.

Several interviewees commented positively on IMCINE's initiative to provide security workshops to independent documentary filmmakers who are part of its funding program. IMCINE has requested the support of ARTICLE 19 with this and is offering workshops to documentary makers from Mexico as well as elsewhere in Central America. The workshops include practical exercises and expert participation, including a psychologist who shares strategies to detect panic, stress, anxiety and depression. One interviewee considered that the current leadership of IMCINE is more sensitive to prevention and safety of young independent filmmakers, especially those working in rural areas and on low budget productions. This could be an opportunity to influence this institution to create spaces for dialogue on security issues (physical and emotional) and risk analysis.

Finally, some interviewees mentioned the strategy of requesting support from federal and state authorities. On some occasions, this has meant having a physical accompaniment from the police during shooting or trips to remote or hostile locations. This strategy varies from case to case and is not always possible, particularly in scenarios where public authorities have been identified as perpetrators of human rights abuses. One interviewee stated that municipal authorities in her community are behind attacks against journalists and activists in the region.

Civil society organizations working on protection

There have been civil society efforts and initiatives in Mexico for nearly ten years to prevent risk and increase the protection of human rights defenders and journalists. Mexican filmmakers build connections more frequently with civil society organizations in two directions: to gain access to individuals and communities who have suffered human rights abuses, and as a source of access to information and contextual analysis. Often civil society organizations are the link between indigenous or rural communities, and journalists and filmmakers.

During interviews, specific partnerships between filmmakers and CSOs were mentioned, involving organizations such as ARTICLE 19,^{cclii} Brigadas Internacionales de Paz (PBI),^{ccliii} Amnesty International Mexico, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR). One of these partnerships, Social TIC^{ccliv} was specifically aimed at improving digital security. International organizations such as Protection International, Front Line Defenders and other Mexican civil society organizations such as Comité Cerezo,^{cclv} Servicios y Asesoría para la Paz (SERAPAZ),^{cclvi} la Red Nacional de Defensoras de Derechos Humanos,^{cclvii} and Propuesta Cívica,^{cclviii} among others, have also developed safety programs for human rights defenders and journalists in Mexico.

ARTICLE 19—a civil society organization focused on freedom of expression and access to information—has gained experience working with filmmakers and their crews in two respects: pre-production risk analysis and development of security protocols, and monitoring during filming. The organization has developed a series of resources for journalists including visual journalists that can be accessed on their website.^{cclix} However, ARTICLE 19 acknowledged that their work is dependent on funding, and that currently they lack the capacity to support individual filmmakers and offer assessments tailored to their specific context and needs. Likewise, although ARTICLE 19 operates an emergency fund for protection measures for journalists, it lacks the resources it would need to open this up to filmmakers.

Other organizations have also made available information and other resources on safety and protection. PBI Mexico have developed a dedicated website,^{cclx} including a map of civil society organizations that offer workshops assessment; Aluna Acompañamiento Psicosocial^{cclxi} provides risk analysis for human rights defenders, including on psychosocial well-being; and IDHEAS—a civil society organization working on disappearances^{cclxii}—was mentioned by one of the interviewees as having provided a risk assessment for a documentary film projects in which they collaborated.

In relation to efforts to prevent violence against women #YaEsHora^{cclxiii} was mentioned by one of the interviewees as an initiative currently working on developing policies on gender inclusion and institutional transformation. It is a project led by a group of women communicators seeking to propel women participation and involvement and work on a gender agenda within the industry. #YaEsHora

has developed the Protocol for Prevention and Action against Sexual and Labor Harassment and Harassment Behaviors and Other Types of Violence and Discrimination,^{cclxiv} posing three central demands: 1. Zero tolerance for gender violence; 2. Gender parity in the workplace; and 3. More stories told from a female perspective. Eight production companies have adopted the Protocol. #YaEsHora's first call to action was to invite all Mexican women who work in film and television to register on its website, and by doing so creating and strengthening a sense of community and support among all women creators. In the future, the group aims to host panels and workshops to continue bringing awareness to the issues facing their base.

Finally, one interviewee shared her experience as part of the Fellowship at the House of Ayni,^{cclxv} a space for training and well-being of human rights defenders and civil society organizations. The Fellowship also includes emotional protection and mental health as part of healing for those who face violence and work for social justice.

While the above adds up to quite a few initiatives working on safety and security, it must be pointed out that all operate on a shoestring (and some on no budget at all) and are nowhere near sufficient to meet the need that exists.

6.4 Opportunities to improve protection

The interviewees identified several areas of opportunity for the Mexican film community to improve their safety. Digital security and improving mental and emotional health were frequently mentioned as priorities; along with the need to eradicate gender discrimination and improve the overall socio-economic and employment conditions of filmmakers and others in the industry.

Specific suggestions were also mentioned, such as designing and distributing a series of prevention and protection tools and resources based on the experiences and needs of documentary filmmakers, and adapted to the Mexican context. Working on resources or training on designing impact campaigns that encompass risk analysis and prevention is also needed.

Several interviewees mentioned the need to strengthen the current networks and collaborative spaces. A specific suggestion was made to enhance the capacity of the network of filmmakers that has sprung up in response to the current regressive public policies. Also, a suggestion was made to propel collaborations between filmmakers and CSOs, in general as well as specifically on issues of safety and protection.

7. Recommendations and suggestions

Several recommendations and suggestions for funding and donor action emerged from the interviews and research that was conducted for this study. Interviewees pointed out the overall climate of violence across the region (the countries studied have a very high murder rates in general), coupled with increasingly negative rhetoric against human rights activists and independent journalists. Although filmmakers and artists were not seen as at particularly high risk, they were seen as falling in a similar risk category as journalists, especially when the projects they work on concern social justice

issues. Many filmmakers also pointed out the precarious financial nature of their work—often they go from project to project, none of them ever well-funded—and the impact that this has on their ability to invest in security. Many are self-taught and as a result there are large gaps in knowledge and awareness. Film and arts funders could do far more on all these issues, beyond providing project funding, particularly given that some of them fund human rights and environmental activism as well as film and potentially have a wealth of knowledge, experience and connections. The following recommendations emerged from across the interviews:

- Approach safety from a holistic perspective: Any initiative led by the Ford Foundation should include a holistic approach to safety, expanding it beyond just the physical and individual protection. All efforts should consider the specific social and political context and develop a realistic approach that is both gender-sensitive and intersectional.
- For each country, an in-depth mapping should be conducted of the specific protection and security experiences of all documentary filmmakers as well as of other film industry professionals.⁴⁴ Based on this diagnosis, meetings could be convened to identify needs and possible articulations and design protection mechanisms based. In Guatemala, UDEFEGUA expressed willingness to work on such an initiative if financial resources are available.
- Fostering a culture of inclusion in the film industry and preventing discrimination and harassment against women filmmakers is key to enhancing their safety. Some interviewees made specific recommendations on this regard and suggested exploring best practices available among CSOs and feminist groups. Funders should include policies and clauses on grantees' responsibility to prevent gender violence in grants, as well as provide specific funds to support women filmmakers' projects.
- There is a need for specific research on improving the situation of women in documentary filmmaking. This would allow for more learning about how women are faring in the independent film industry and documentary making, specifically in each country and the obstacles they still face. It could also allow powerful insights to be gained into ways to increase the participation of women, build a gender-based and feminist approach to security, and provide support tailored to the needs of women in each country.
- Robust funding for film makers as well as specific projects: Interviewees all agreed that safety and security were important aspects of their work but that their limited funding constrained them from putting in place robust measures. Safety funding could be built into all grants provided; funders could also consider creating a Support Fund for filmmakers, journalists, and human rights defenders that could be accessed in an emergency and allow for immediate safety measures.
- There is a need to propel cross-sectoral connections and boost networks and spaces for collaboration, dialogue, exchanging of experiences and discussions around safety in each

⁴⁴ Such an in-depth, country by country mapping was beyond the scope of this study.

country. There needs to be far more frequent dialogue between documentary filmmakers and civil society organizations. Ford Foundation, with funding activities in both communities, should play an active role in engendering this. One suggestion was to conduct an in-depth review on which of the Ford Foundation's current grantees can support documentary filmmakers, and to then propel these connections through collaborative spaces. These initiatives should include the new generation of filmmakers as well as independent filmmakers from rural communities. A specific space for women filmmakers to discuss their experiences and needs was also mentioned. A practical step in this strategy should be a seminar bringing together documentary filmmakers, civil society and academia from across El Salvador and Central America to analyze their countries' current social and political context. There are many common challenges across the region, and such a convening would allow the group to share information, and explore opportunities and common strategies.

- Donors should go beyond providing financial support. Given their funding of several groups, including activists as well as artists and filmmakers, interviewees pointed out that they should share contacts of CSOs and experts that work on protection for assessments or workshops, provide access to tools and materials, encourage and facilitate cross-sectoral workshops, convenings and other learning opportunities, and generally share and promote good practices.
- More support is needed for independent film festivals, encouraging them to provide spaces for discussion and workshops, seminars, and other activities focused on protection.
- Facilitate access to resources and training: One of the needs and recommendations most mentioned in the interviews was training on protection, including digital security (for communications as well as the storage of material) and workshops designed specifically for women (including workshops and dialogues on gender-based violence and the exchange of best practices among the film community). Civil society organizations already active in the area of protection could be funded to offer guidance on protection and tailor their methodologies to filmmakers' specific needs and contexts.
- Specific resources that are needed include:
 - A handbook on prevention and protection strategies, based on information obtained from documentary makers, adapted to the local context in each of the countries concerned, and including the needs of filmmakers living in rural areas.
 - Templates for risk and safety protocols covering filmmakers and their crew as well as protagonists, taking into account the specific needs, context and available resources in each country.

Endnotes

ⁱ The work of photojournalists Shahidul Alam was given as an example:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shahidul_Alam

ⁱⁱ The Belarus Free Theatre group is a good example of this: <https://www.belarusfreetheatre.com/about/>.

ⁱⁱⁱ See <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/CulturalRights/Pages/CulturalRightsDefenders.aspx>. In 2020, the UN Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights issued a report specifically on cultural rights defenders, to raise awareness about their work and to increase the attention and assistance they receive: Report of 20 January 2021, <https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/43/50>.

^{iv} E.g. Berch Berberoglu (ed.), *The Global Rise of Authoritarianism in the 21st Century*, Routledge 2021; Lee Morgenbesser, *The Rise of Sophisticated Authoritarianism in Southeast Asia*, Cambridge Elements 2020; Pippa Norris, Ronald Inglehart, *Cultural Backlash: Trump, Brexit, and Authoritarian Populism*, Cambridge University Press 2019

^v Economist Intelligence Unit, *Democracy Index 2020: In sickness and in health?*:

<https://www.eiu.com/n/campaigns/democracy-index-2020/>

^{vi} See, for example, the Committee to Protect Journalists' Attacks on the Press in 2020: <https://cpj.org/attacks-on-press-2020-journalists-killed-jailed/>; Reporters without Borders' 2020 World Press Freedom Index:

<https://rsf.org/en/ranking>; ARTICLE 19's World Freedom of Expression Rankings 2019-2020:

<https://www.article19.org/gxr2020/>; Freemuse's The State of Artistic Freedom 2020:

<https://freemuse.org/news/the-state-of-artistic-freedom-2020/>

^{vii} António Guterres, *The world faces a pandemic of human rights abuses in the wake of Covid-19*, 22 February 2021: <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2021/feb/22/world-faces-pandemic-human-rights-abuses-covid-19-antonio-guterres>. See also, Human Rights Watch, *Covid-19 Pandemic Sparked Year of Rights Crises*, 4 March 2021:

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/03/04/covid-19-pandemic-sparked-year-rights-crises>; Amnesty International, *Covid-19 hits those shackled by oppression hardest thanks to decades of inequalities, neglect and abuse*, 7 April 2021:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2021/04/annual-report-covid19-decades-of-oppression-inequality-abuse/>

^{viii} Explored in, for example, Open Democracy, *Why do authoritarian regimes love elections?*

<https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/north-africa-west-asia/why-do-authoritarian-regimes-love-elections/>

^{ix} See, for example, the Committee to Protect Journalists' Attacks on the Press in 2020: <https://cpj.org/attacks-on-press-2020-journalists-killed-jailed/>; Reporters without Borders' 2020 World Press Freedom Index:

<https://rsf.org/en/ranking>; ARTICLE 19's World Freedom of Expression Rankings 2019-2020:

<https://www.article19.org/gxr2020/>; Freemuse's The State of Artistic Freedom 2020:

<https://freemuse.org/news/the-state-of-artistic-freedom-2020/>.

^x Freemuse, *The State of Artistic Freedom*, 25 February 2021: <https://freemuse.org/news/the-state-of-artistic-freedom-2021/>

^{xi} See <https://cpj.org/data/> for the research carried out by CPJ. For a close analysis of CPJ's and other press freedom groups' figures, see N. Dad, S. Khan, *Threats against journalists*, 2020:

https://www.international.gc.ca/campaign-campagne/media_freedom-liberte_presse-2020/policy_paper-documents_orientation-journalists-journalistes.aspx?lang=eng

^{xii} As reported by interviewees for this Study, and documented in reports such as Reporters without Borders' *A Hostile Climate for Environmental Journalists*, 2015

(https://rsf.org/sites/default/files/rapport_environnement_en.pdf), and *The Bête Noire of Organized Crime*, 2018 (https://rsf.org/sites/default/files/en_rapport_mafia_web_0.pdf)

^{xiii} For example, the Guardian, *Mexican photojournalist killed after taking photos of bodies along a road*, 11 December 2020: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/dec/11/mexico-journalists-killed-jaime-castano-zacarias>; BBC, *Mexican journalist killed as he investigated human remains*, 10 November 2020:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-54888103>; Telegraph, *'Narcos' filmmaker shot dead scouting for locations in rural Mexico*, 17 September 2017:

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- ^{xv} As reported by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime: <https://dataunodc.un.org/crime/intentional-homicide-victims>
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- ^{xxxii} See, for example, Big Boys Gone Bananas, a documentary about the response of the food company Dole to the filmmaker’s previous documentary about Dole, Bananas! (<https://www.bigboysgonebananas.com/>); and the follow up to a documentary about the gas industry, The Sky is Pink: <https://thoughtmaybe.com/the-sky-is-pink/>.
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- ^{xxxiv} See for example, the New Statesman, China’s Paid Trolls: Meet the 50-Cent Party, 17 October 2012: <https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/politics/2012/10/china%E2%80%99s-paid-trolls-meet-50-cent-party>
- ^{xxxv} A 2017 Oxford study found that governments spent millions: S. Bradshaw, P. Howard, Troops, Trolls and Troublemakers: A Global Inventory of Organized Social Media Manipulation, 2017: <https://demtech.oii.ox.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/89/2017/07/Troops-Trolls-and-Troublemakers.pdf>
- ^{xxxvi} Rory Peck Trust, Social Media: Trolling and Doxxing: <https://rorypecktrust.org/freelance-resources/digital-security/social-media-trolling-and-doxxing/>
- ^{xxxvii} RSF, Online Harassment of Journalists: Attack of the Trolls, 2018: https://rsf.org/sites/default/files/rsf_report_on_online_harassment.pdf
- ^{xxxviii} Daphne Caruana Galizia: ‘Malta has made me a scapegoat’, the Guardian, 17 April 2018: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/apr/17/daphne-caruana-galizia-malta-has-made-me-a-scapegoat>. See also Finnish journalist, Jessika Aro’s account: Jessikka Aro: Finn jailed over pro-Russia hate campaign against journalist, BBC, 18 October 2018: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-45902496>
- ^{xxxix} Reported in UNESCO/ICFJ, The Chilling: Global trends in online violence against women journalists, April 2021, p. 25: <https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/the-chilling.pdf>
- ^{xl} K. Nazish, We must address the war on women journalists, online and offline, 25 February 2021: <https://digitalcontentnext.org/blog/2021/02/25/we-must-address-the-war-on-women-journalists-online-and-offline/>. See also the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media’s 2016 report, New Challenges to Freedom of Expression: Countering Online Abuse of Female Journalists: <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/c/3/220411.pdf>
- ^{xli} UNESCO/ICFJ, The Chilling: Global trends in online violence against women journalists, April 2021: <https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/the-chilling.pdf>
- ^{xlii} See for example, Trolls Continue To Be A Problem On Social Media, Forbes 4 June 2020: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/petersuciu/2020/06/04/trolls-continue-to-be-a-problem-on-social-media/>; Social media giants must tackle trolls or face charges—poll, the Guardian, April 2020: <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2020/apr/04/social-media-giants-must-tackle-trolls-or-face-charges-poll>
- ^{xliiii} UNESCO/ICFJ, The Chilling: Global trends in online violence against women journalists, April 2021: <https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/the-chilling.pdf>
- ^{xliiii} Poynter, Estimates of Covid-19’s impact on journalism fail to count freelancers, whose livelihoods have vanished overnight, 25 April 2021: <https://www.poynter.org/business-work/2020/estimates-of-covid-19s-impact-on-journalism-fail-to-count-freelancers-whose-livelihoods-have-vanished-overnight/>
- ^{xliiii} As told, for example, by the Executive Director of the Rory Peck Trust who has related the experience of her organization and the Covid-19 emergency grants that they have made: <https://rorypecktrust.org/news/covid-19-one-year-on/>. Similar grants have been made by artists organizations, such as Lebanon-based Culture Resource Center, Al-Mawred Al-Thaqafy: <https://mawred.org/grants-opportunities/artistic-creativity/>
- ^{xliiii} As described above.
- ^{xliiii} See for example Doc Society, Field of Vision, Sundance Institute’s Independent Documentary Filming in the Time of Corona (2nd edition, August 2020): https://docs.google.com/document/d/13t1eGGfcXAWwrgt6_PTWGr3hPzsEbVlv1SKYwLu3hPk/edit; Thomson Reuters Foundation, The impact of Covid-19 on journalism in Emerging Economies and the Global South: <http://www.trust.org/documents/covid-report.pdf>. Several others are collected at <https://collab.sundance.org/resources-we-love/COVID>.

Filming in the Time of Corona, August 2020:

^{xlviii} R. Clay, Journalists as vicarious first responders, American Psychological Association, 17 April 2020: <https://www.apa.org/topics/covid-19/journalists-first-responders>

^{xlix} Dart Center, Covering Trauma: Impact on Journalists, 1 July 2015: <https://dartcenter.org/content/covering-trauma-impact-on-journalists>; The Journalists' Resource, How journalists' jobs affect their mental health: A research roundup, 30 July 2019: <https://journalistsresource.org/environment/job-stress-journalists-health-research/>

^l Dart Center, Occupational Distress in Factual TV, 15 October 2019: <https://dartcenter.org/resources/occupational-distress-factual-tv>

^{li} The Journalists' Resource, How journalists' jobs affect their mental health: A research roundup, 30 July 2019: <https://journalistsresource.org/environment/job-stress-journalists-health-research/>

^{lii} Interview on file with lead author.

^{liii} Council of Europe Platform to promote the protection of journalism and safety of journalists, Investigative Journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia Killed by Car Bomb: <https://go.coe.int/nrli0>

^{liv} CNN, How a hacked phone may have led killers to Khashoggi, 20 January 2019: <https://edition.cnn.com/2019/01/12/middleeast/khashoggi-phone-malware-intl/index.html>

^{lv} The Journalists in Distress Network and the Media Freedom Rapid Response networks, described in greater detail below, are good examples of this kind of coordination across different journalists' assistance organizations (both are described at <https://www.freepressunlimited.org/en/safety-for-journalists/emergency-support>).

^{lvi} See, for example, Doc Society's Safe and Secure Guide: <https://safeandsecure.film/subject-security>

^{lvii} Interview on file with author.

^{lviii} For example, Human Rights Watch: Egypt: Escalating Reprisals, Arrests of Critics' Families, 19 February 2021: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/02/19/egypt-escalating-reprisals-arrests-critics-families>; Tajikistan: Dissident's Family Interrogated, Threatened, 4 December 2020:

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/12/04/tajikistan-dissidents-family-interrogated-threatened>; Freemuse, Azerbaijan: Rapper's family detained over music video, 23 February 2017:

<https://freemuse.org/news/azerbaijan-rappers-family-detained-over-music-video/>; A. Feinstein, The Psychological Well-being of Iranian Journalists: A Descriptive Study, Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine Open, December 2016: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/2054270416675560>

^{lix} <https://safeandsecure.film/>, available in English, Spanish and Portuguese.

^{lx} See <https://rorypecktrust.org/freelance-resources/safety-and-risk-assessment/> and <https://cpj.org/2018/09/basic-preparedness-risk-assessment/>.

^{lxi} As indicated by some interviewees. See also civil society and academic discourse, for example: Just Security, Pandemic Consequences: The Acceleration of Confrontational Politics, 17 December 2020:

<https://www.justsecurity.org/73905/pandemic-consequences-the-acceleration-of-confrontational-politics/>; and, specific to a country like Indonesia that was until recently perceived to be on a pro-democracy path, Brookings, Generals gaining ground: Civil-military relations and democracy in Indonesia, 22 January 2021: <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/generals-gaining-ground-civil-military-relations-and-democracy-in-indonesia/>.

^{lxii} Interview on file with lead author.

^{lxiii} <https://safeandsecure.film/>

^{lxiv} <https://safeandsecure.film/static/core/files/S+S-HostileProtocol-Oct19.pdf>

^{lxv} See <https://www.acosalliance.org/resources>

^{lxvi} <https://artistsatriskconnection.org/guide>

^{lxvii} The country annexes to this study list various country-specific materials; in addition, there are a lot of legal guides that explain US law (a number are listed here: <https://cmsimpact.org/resource/dangerous-documentaries-resources-for-filmmakers-2/>).

^{lxviii} <https://www.irex.org/resource/safe-basic-training-curriculum-media-practitioners-and-social-communicators>

^{lxix} <https://dartcenter.org/programs/training>. Dart also organises retreats, which are free but space for which is very limited: see, for example, <https://dartcenter.org/events/2019/07/dart-center-europe-retreat-2019>.

^{lxx} <https://risctraining.org/>

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- lxxi <https://rorypecktrust.org/freelance-assistance/>
- lxxii <https://www.icfr.international/about-us/>
- lxxiii Interview on file with main author.
- lxxiv As will be discussed, some of the organizations in the JID network also provide emergency support to activists.
- lxxv <https://artistsatriskconnection.org/guide>
- lxxvi <https://freemuse.org/artist-assistance/>
- lxxvii See <https://artistsatriskconnection.org/about-arc> for further information.
- lxxviii Formally registered as Fondation Internationale pour les Défenseurs des Droits de L'Homme.
- lxxix See <https://www.elaw.org/defenderscoalition>
- lxxx For a report on the project, see <https://www.universal-rights.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Report-Pilot-project-in-Colombia-v2.pdf>
- lxxxi See <https://www.greengrants.org/edc/>. Founding donors include the Cold Mountain Fund, the Overbrook Foundation, Wallace Global Fund, and the Mott Foundation.
- lxxxii As reported at <https://aristeguinoticias.com/3103/mexico/se-lanza-amlo-contra-articulo-19-enterate/>
- lxxxiii See the country annexes for more detail on the work of these organizations.
- lxxxiv Urgent Action Fund - Africa for Women's Human Rights (<https://www.uaf-africa.org/what-we-do/rapid-response-grantmaking/>); Urgent Action Fund for Women - Latin America and the Caribbean (<https://fondoaccionurgente.org.co/en/>); Urgent Action Fund for Women, Asia Pacific (<https://www.uafanp.org/>).
- lxxxv Interview on file with lead author. See also <https://www.uaf-africa.org/>
- lxxxvi See <https://youngfeministfund.org/resourcing-young-feminists/>
- lxxxvii See <https://www.mamacash.org/en/our-grantmaking>.
- lxxxviii <https://im-defensoras.org/fondo-de-accion-urgente/>.
- lxxxix See <https://www.iwmf.org/programs/emergency-fund/>
- xc <https://womeninjournalism.org/isafe>
- xc1 Deeyah Khan, Norwegian film director and UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for Artistic Freedom and Creativity; Farida Shaheed, former UN Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights; and Safak Pavey, a Turkish writer and politician.
- xcii There is no website as yet; Deeyah Khan's email is on file with the author and can be shared on request.
- xciii See <https://artisticfreedominitiative.org/our-programs/resettlement-assistance-residency-program/nyc/>
- xciv <https://westbeth.org/wordpress/about/history/>
- xcv See <https://artisticfreedominitiative.org/our-programs/resettlement-assistance-residency-program/nyc/>
- xcvi As reported in MLDI's 2020 Annual report: <https://www.mediadefence.org/impact-publication/a-year-in-review-our-2020-learning-report/>. The 2020 figure is distorted because of 131 cases brought against a single journalist for a satirical tweet.
- xcvii Listed at <https://www.mediadefence.org/our-funded-partners/>
- xcviii For example, Barefoot Law in Uganda (<https://barefootlaw.org/>), Human Rights Law Network in India (<https://www.hrln.org/>), and the network of Namati (<https://namati.org/>).
- xcix For an example of the latter, see the Legal Defense Fund announced by Malaysia's Freedom of Expression cluster of NGOs: <https://ifex.org/legal-defence-fund-established-to-support-journalists-facing-threats-in-malaysia/>
- c Annex XX lists a number of them
- ci <https://www.pressfreedomdefensefund.org/>. In 2019, it made legal defense grants totalling US\$508,873.
- cii <https://www.rcfp.org/>
- ciii <https://artisticfreedominitiative.org/>
- civ A large number are listed here: <https://vlaa.org/get-help/other-vlas/>.
- cv See <https://lawyers4reporters.org/> and <https://fieldofvision.org/legal-clinic-2021>.
- cvi For example, Cardozo's Filmmakers Legal Clinic (<https://cardozo.yu.edu/filmmakers-legal-clinic-formerly-indie-film-clinic>), UCLA's Documentary Film Legal Clinic (<https://law.ucla.edu/academics/clinical-education/clinics/documentary-film-legal-clinic>), and Yale's DocProject (<https://law.yale.edu/mfia/projects/docproject>).
- cvi See <https://mmdc.ru/about-center/nasha-rabota-v-cifrah/>

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- ^{cviii} As reported in UDEFEGUA's 2017 Annual report: <http://udefegua.org/>
- ^{cix} See <http://www.trust.org/trustlaw/>; <https://www.pilnet.org/>; <http://www.a4id.org/>; <https://i-probono.com/>; <http://islp.org>; and <https://edlc.org/our-work/finding-lawyers/>.
- ^{cx} See <https://www.iwmf.org/programs/emergency-fund/> and <https://www.iwmf.org/bjtrf/>.
- ^{cxii} <https://www.rarenet.org/>
- ^{cxiii} <https://www.civicert.org/>
- ^{cxiiii} <https://www.digitaldefenders.org/funding/>
- ^{cxv} <https://www.opentech.fund/funds/rapid-response-fund/>
- ^{cxvi} <https://secfirst.org/about/>
- ^{cxvii} Patricia Aufderheide's Dangerous Docs: Reducing Risk when Telling Truth to Power recounts a number of examples: February 2015, <https://cmsimpact.org/resource/dangerous-documentaries-reducing-risk-when-telling-truth-to-power/>
- ^{cxviii} For example, Spitfire (<https://www.spitfirestrategies.com/>), M+R (<https://www.mrss.com/>).
- ^{cxix} See <https://www.sundance.org/pdf/artist-relations/2020SFFPUBLICISTLIST-v2.pdf> and <https://collab.sundance.org/resources-we-love>
- ^{cx} For example, Good Work: <https://thisisgoodwork.org/>
- ^{cxxi} For example, Edelman: <https://www.edelman.com/about-us/citizenship>
- ^{cxvii} Listed at the Cyber Civil Rights Initiative's online removal guide: <https://www.cybercivilrights.org/online-removal/>
- ^{cxviii} All listed at <https://www.cybercivilrights.org/intl-victim-resources/> and <https://www.cybercivilrights.org/professionals-helping-victims/>.
- ^{cxviii} <https://en.unesco.org/programme/ipdc>
- ^{cxviii} Adopted by the UNESCO General Conference on 20 October 2005. The Convention has 149 parties: <https://en.unesco.org/creativity/convention>
- ^{cxv} For example, Freedom and Creativity: Defending art, defending diversity, 2020: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000373357>; Culture & Working Conditions for Artists, 2019: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000371790>
- ^{cxvi} Artistic Freedom was a theme at 2019 World Press Freedom day: <https://en.unesco.org/creativity/events/art-under-pressure-advocating-artistic-freedom-world>
- ^{cxvii} Such as, for example, this two-day workshop on artistic freedom organized on the occasion of World Press Freedom Day 2021: <https://en.unesco.org/news/national-workshop-artistic-freedom>
- ^{cxviii} <https://en.unesco.org/global-media-defence-fund>
- ^{cxix} <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/media-freedom-coalition-an-overview/media-freedom-coalition-an-overview>
- ^{cx} As reported at <https://en.unesco.org/global-media-defence-fund>
- ^{cxxi} See, generally, <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/SP/Pages/Welcompage.aspx>.
- ^{cxvii} See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/issues/culturalrights/pages/srculturalrightsindex.aspx> and <https://www.ohchr.org/en/issues/freedomofopinion/pages/opinionindex.aspx>.
- ^{cxviii} The Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression: <http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/expression/index.asp>
- ^{cxviii} Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information: <https://www.achpr.org/specialmechanisms/detail?id=2>
- ^{cxv} The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media: <https://www.osce.org/representative-on-freedom-of-media>
- ^{cxv} Of course this is not always successful, but it can be a useful strategy for some cases: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/media-freedom>. It is also a good way of documenting threats and cases.
- ^{cxvii} See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/media-freedom-coalition-an-overview/media-freedom-coalition-an-overview>. The initiative was started in 2019 by the UK and Canada and while they have attracted the support of several dozen states, it has been slow to get off the ground in terms of advocating around any actual cases.
- ^{cxviii} Conducted by the lead author of this study, for Open Society Foundations; available on request.
- ^{cxviii} <https://skylight.is/solidarilabs/>
- ^{cx} <https://www.ambulante.org/en/iniciativas/ambulante-mas-alla/>

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- cxli <https://www.rightscon.org/>
- cxlii <https://gjin.org/>
- cxliii <https://wan-ifra.org/world-editors-forum/>
- cxliv <https://ifacca.org/en/>
- cxlv IFACCA, Artists, Displacement and Belonging, February 2019: <https://ifacca.org/en/news/2019/03/01/artists-displacement-and-belonging/>. IFACCA was approached for an interview but did not respond.
- cxlvi Obvious candidates include organizations and festivals such as Ambulante, IDFA, DocuBox, DocSP, In-Docs, Sundance, CPH:DOX, Beirut DC, Sheffield DocFest. In terms of forums, the (mainly UK and US) forums of Documentary Producers Alliance (<https://www.documentaryproducersalliance.org/>), Brown Girls Doc Mafia (<https://browngirlsdocmafia.com/>), and the D-Word (<https://www.d-word.com/>) were mentioned. There will be other, country-specific, ones.
- cxlvii <https://colpin.ipys.org/>
- cxlviii <https://vladimirherzog.org/vlado-protECAo-aos-jornalistas-2/>
- cxlix Doc Society's *Safe and Secure*: <https://safeandsecure.film/introduction>
- cl As described by Carrie Lozano, the former director of the fund who was interviewed for this study. See also The IDA Enterprise Documentary Fund: Where Journalism and Filmmaking Meet, 2 March 2017: <https://www.documentary.org/feature/ida-enterprise-documentary-fund-where-journalism-and-filmmaking-meet>.
- cli The UNESCO/ICFJ report, The Chilling: Global trends in online violence against women journalists, includes 28 recommendations for action, including from wider society and by the international community (page 91 and onwards): <https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/the-chilling.pdf>
- clii UNESCO/ICFJ, The Chilling: Global trends in online violence against women journalists, April 2021, p. 15: <https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/the-chilling.pdf>
- cliii <https://www.kulturradet.se/en/news2/programme-for-artistic-freedom/>
- cliv Unidad Nacional de Protección, regulated under Decree 10660 of 2015: <https://www.unp.gov.co/la-unp/que-hacemos/>
- clv Unidad Nacional de Protección, ABC para acceder a las rutas de protección individual y colectiva, <https://www.unp.gov.co/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/abc-ruta-de-proteccion.pdf>
- clvi See, for example, Colombia: Protection Gaps Endanger Rights Defenders, 10 February 2021: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/02/10/colombia-protection-gaps-endanger-rights-defenders>
- clvii Fundación para la Libertad de Prensa, defends the freedom of expression and promotes a healthy climate to practice journalism and is one of the most representative organizations in Colombia to provide support for journalists: <https://www.flip.org.co/>
- clviii <https://www.coljuristas.org/>
- clix Programa Somos Defensores, <https://somosdefensores.org/>
- clx For example, CAJAR represents the family of the high profile television personality, Jaime Garzón, who was murdered in 1999.
- clxi All can be downloaded at <https://flip.org.co/index.php/es/publicaciones/manuales>.
- clxii <https://www.facebook.com/AmbulanteCol/>
- clxiii See <https://skylight.is/solidarilabs/>
- clxiv Peace Brigades International
- clxv See, for example, the prosecution of Jen Moore and John Dougherty, in 2017: <https://www.business-humanrights.org/en/latest-news/peru-hudbay-minerals-responds-on-arrest-of-two-north-american-activists-allegedly-over-their-involvement-in-a-documentary-on-impacts-by-its-operations/>
- clxvi As described in, for example, Environmental Risks and Human Rights Violations in Peru: Mining in Celendín: <https://www.ciel.org/environmental-risks-and-human-rights-violations-in-peru-mining-in-celendin/>
- clxvii Resolución Ministerial N°0159-2019-JUS, https://cdn.www.gob.pe/uploads/document/file/310740/RM_159_2019_JUS.pdf
- clxviii Asociación Pro Derechos Humanos, <https://www.aprodeh.org.pe/>.
- clxix Coordinadora Nacional de Derechos Humanos, <https://derechoshumanos.pe/>.

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- clxx Manual de protección para comunidades rurales y defensores de derechos humanos, Edición andina, 2015: <https://movimientom4.org/wp-content/docs/manual-proteccion-comunidades-rurales-y-defensores-DDHH.pdf>
- clxxi Ley constitucional contra el odio, por la convivencia pacífica y la tolerancia; <https://albaciudad.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/GO-41.274-081117.pdf>
- clxxii Centro Nacional Autonomo de Cinematografía
- clxxiii <https://provea.org/>
- clxxiv <https://foropenal.com/>
- clxxv <http://www.grancine.net/>
- clxxvi See <https://monitor.civicus.org/country/brazil/>
- clxxvii Brazil: 'This is a moment of fragility for civil society', April 2019: <https://www.civicus.org/index.php/media-resources/news/interviews/3836-brazil-this-is-a-moment-of-fragility-for-civil-society>
- clxxviii CIVICUS, 2017. Contested and under pressure: a snapshot of enabling environment of civil society in 22 countries: https://www.civicus.org/images/EENA_Report_English.pdf.
- clxxix CIVICUS, 2020. Activists criminalized and continuous delegitimization of press in Brazil: <https://monitor.civicus.org/updates/2020/01/07/activists-criminalised-and-continuous-delegitimization-press-brazil/>.
- clxxx Vox, 2017. Brazilian are losing faith in democracy and considering a return to military rule: <https://www.vox.com/polyarchy/2017/9/19/16333360/brazilians-losing-faith-democracy>.
- clxxxi Global Report on Expression 2019/2020, ARTICLE 19: https://artigo19.org/wp-content/blogs.dir/24/files/2020/10/SumarioExecutivoGxR_PT.pdf.
- clxxxii Global Report on Expression 2019/2020. ARTICLE 19: https://artigo19.org/wp-content/blogs.dir/24/files/2020/10/SumarioExecutivoGxR_PT.pdf.
- clxxxiii Global Report on Expression 2019/2020. ARTICLE 19: https://artigo19.org/wp-content/blogs.dir/24/files/2020/10/SumarioExecutivoGxR_PT.pdf.
- clxxxiv National Federation of Journalists (FENAJ). Report on Violence against Journalists and Press Freedom in Brazil—2020: https://fenaj.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/relatorio_fenaj_2020.pdf.
- clxxxv Reuters: Brazil's Bolsonaro suspends funding for LGBT+ screenplays, 21 August 2019: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-brazil-lgbt-bolsonaro/brazils-bolsonaro-suspends-funding-for-lgbt-screenplays-idUSKCN1VB2GR>
- clxxxvi "Marighella" não é caso isolado, Cultura está sob censura, diz Wagner Moura: <https://noticias.uol.com.br/colunas/leonardo-sakamoto/2020/01/14/marighella-nao-e-caso-isolado-cultura-esta-sob-censura-diz-wagner-moura.htm>
- clxxxvii ANCINE, 2020. The Audiovisual Sector Fund—FSA: <https://antigo.ancine.gov.br/en/funding/direct-support-through-audiovisual-sector-fund-fsa>.
- clxxxviii A.T. Souza, P.R.B. de Moraes and M. Bordin, A herança escravocrata na segurança pública no Brasil. *Geographia Opportuno Tempore*, 4(1), 65-91: <http://www.uel.br/revistas/uel/index.php/Geographia/article/download/32545/23632>.
- clxxxix Ordinance No. 457 of 10 February 2021
- cx <https://escoladeativismo.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/AGUIA-DIGITAL--V7.pdf>
- cxci <https://securityinabox.org/pt/>
- cxcii <https://artigo19.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/docmanifesta%3a7%3a3oartigo19.pdf>
- cxci https://artigo19.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/guia_de_protecao_e_seguranca_para_comunicadores_e_defensores_de_direitos_humanos.pdf
- cxci https://portugues.witness.org/portfolio_page/como-filmar-violencia-policail-em-protestos-para-que-mais-videos-virem-mais-direitos/
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- cxci <http://www.cultura.pe.gov.br/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Protocolo-de-Seguranc%CC%A7a-e-Sau%CC%81de-no-Trabalho-do-Audiovisual-COVID-19-Pernambuco-2020.pdf>

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- ccix As described at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1g1AxQNawZiY3LUoo9hjJphXxIn3DssBC/view>
- cc At redenacional@vladimirherzog.org. A web platform, modelled on that of other civil society mechanisms, is planned and will allow those in need to seek assistance online. It will be hosted on the Vladimir Herzog website.
- cci CMSI—Center For Media & Social Impact. Documentary filmmakers’ Statement of Best Practices in Fair Use: <https://cmsimpact.org/code/documentary-filmmakers-statement-of-best-practices-in-fair-use/>.
- ccii See, for example, R. Neumayr, Por que o brasileiro precisa conhecer o “Fair Use”? http://dn.adv.br/artigo/?id_artigo=477#sthash.Ucr3f10u.dpuf
- cciii Interviewees agreed to have their names published (see Annex 4) but specific quotes or points of view are non-attributable.
- cciv Human Rights World Report 2020, “El Salvador,” available on: <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2020/country-chapters/el-salvador>
- ccv <https://www.cristosal.org/>
- ccvi BBC, Film-maker killed in El Salvador: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/8235174.stm>
- ccvii <https://cpj.org/americas/el-salvador/>
- ccviii <https://www.elfaro.net/>
- ccix El Faro, “Bukele is a threat to journalism,” July 31st, 2020, available on https://elfaro.net/en/202007/el_salvador/24697/Bukele-Is-a-Threat-to-Journalism.htm
- ccx <https://www.riesgocruzado.com/el-salvador>
- ccxi The program creates a comprehensive prevention model for journalists to reduce risk and increase prevention, following the HEFAT model focused on improving journalist’s situational awareness, self-defence and first aid skills: see <https://www.iwmf.org/programs/hefat-training/>
- ccxii <https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0349722/>
- ccxiii Unfortunately we were not able to interview him.
- ccxiv As described at <https://www.wola.org/analysis/qa-guatemalas-controversial-ngo-law/>
- ccxv See, for example, a joint CSO letter of September 2020: <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/AMR3430792020ENGLISH.PDF>
- ccxvi <https://udefegua.org/>
- ccxvii <https://www.protectioninternational.org/en/our-work/where/guatemala>
- ccxviii <https://skylight.is/>
- ccxix <https://academiadecinegt.org/>
- ccxx <https://www.facebook.com/agacinegt/>
- ccxxi <https://skylight.is/vivx/>. A dedicated mobile app, connecting human rights activists with volunteers was launched in early 2021.
- ccxxii <https://www.humanrightsfilmnetwork.org/filmfestival/muestra-de-cine-internacional-memoria-verdad-justicia>
- ccxxiii See <https://panal.gt/> and <https://www.facebook.com/festivalesgt/>.
- ccxxiv <https://rsf.org/en/honduras>
- ccxxv <https://www.facebook.com/linternamagicaasociacioncineastas/>
- ccxxvi <https://www.facebook.com/colectivacineastashn/>
- ccxxvii <https://www.fcmmujeres.org/en/>
- ccxxviii <https://cctegucigalpa.org/>
- ccxxix <https://sueñodealicia.com/>
- ccxxx See <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/spotlight-initiative>
- ccxxxi <https://journalistsprotection.org/en/mechanism/law-on-protection-for-human-rights-defenders-journalists-communicators-and-justice-operators>
- ccxxxii <http://colegiodeperiodistasdehonduras.hn/wp/>
- ccxxxiii <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/>
- ccxxxiv <http://www.clibrehonduras.com/index.php/rapcos>
- ccxxxv Information related to official data on the number of homicides in Mexico can be found here: <https://www.gob.mx/sesnsp/acciones-y-programas/incidencia-delictiva-87005?idiom=es>

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- ccxxvi For example, at a March 2021 press conference, President Lopez Obrador opened with a direct attack against various independent journalists and the freedom of expression NGO, ARTICLE 19 (as reported at <https://aristeguinoicias.com/3103/mexico/se-lanza-amlo-contra-articulo-19-enterate/>).
- ccxxvii <http://www.imcine.gob.mx/>
- ccxxviii <http://www.imcine.gob.mx/estimulos-y-apoyos/eficine189/>
- ccxxix <https://www.ambulante.org/en/iniciativas/ambulante-mas-alla/>
- ccxl <https://goodpitchmx.org/>
- ccxli <https://campamentoaudiovisual.org/inicio/>
- ccxlii <https://lasandiadigital.org.mx/>
- ccxliiii <https://www.ambulante.org/en/>
- ccxliv <https://www.docsmx.org/index.php>
- ccxlv <http://moreliafilmfest.com/en/>
- ccxlvi <https://figg.mx/35/public/>
- ccxlvii <https://www.amacc.org.mx/fiacine/>
- ccxlviii <https://periodistasdeapie.org.mx/>
- ccxlix <https://www.facebook.com/redefensorasmx/>
- cccl <https://www.gob.mx/defensorasyperiodistas>
- cccli Segob anuncia rediseño del Mecanismo de Protección para Periodistas y Defensores de Derechos, Animal Político, January 4, 2020, available on: <https://www.animalpolitico.com/2020/01/segob-redisenio-mecanismo-proteccion-periodistas/>
- ccclii <https://articulo19.org/>
- cccliii <https://pbi-mexico.org/es/sobre-nosotros/misi%C3%B3n-visi%C3%B3n-y-mandato>
- cccliv <https://socialtic.org/>
- ccclv <https://comitecerezo.org/?lang=es>
- ccclvi <https://serapaz.org.mx/>
- ccclvii <https://im-defensoras.org/red-nacional-de-defensoras-de-derechos-humanos-en-mexico/>
- ccclviii <https://propuestacivica.org.mx/>
- ccclix <https://www.articulo19.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/PDF2-GUIA-DE-SEGURIDAD-PARA-PERIODISTAS-AUDIOVISUALES-IBOOK.pdf>
- ccclx See <https://spd.peacebrigades.org/>
- ccclxi <https://www.alunapsicosocial.org/>
- ccclxii <https://www.idheas.org.mx/>
- ccclxiii <https://www.yaeshoramx.org/quienes-somos/>
- ccclxiv Protocolo de Prevención y Actuación ante Conductas de Acoso y Hostigamiento Sexual y Laboral y Otros Tipos de Violencia y Discriminación: <https://www.yaeshoramx.org/>
- ccclxv <https://www.casadeayni.com/fellowship>