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World Trends in
Freedom of Expression and Media Development

REGIONAL OVERVIEW OF **LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN** 2017/2018

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2017/2018*

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REGIONAL OVERVIEW 2017/2018

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

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Introduction

Introduction

This regional report discusses media trends and their effects on freedom of expression, media pluralism and media independence, as well as the safety of journalists in Latin America and the Caribbean. This is a large and highly diverse region in terms of culture, the size of national media markets and political systems, which spans 33 countries. The media landscape and the factors which impact upon it are varied throughout the region, but some regional trends and commonalities occur which are highlighted in this review.

The greater access to digital media content for millions of the region's inhabitants has been the most significant and pervasive trend, with consequences for the traditional broadcasting and news sectors, as well as for the agenda of national communications regulators and for citizens who increasingly rely on internet platforms to provide for their information and communication needs. From the perspective of the regulatory and policy frameworks, the political shifts in some countries have also had effects on the media democratization discourse and practice, with effects on agenda setting mechanisms, news coverage, cross-ownership regulation and changes in state advertising flows.

Insecurity and self-censorship for the media in Latin America and the Caribbean has deepened since 2012 due to an escalation of violence against journalists, legal harassment, and the increasingly hostile treatment of the private and independent media by the political leadership in some countries. The region is dangerous for journalists in terms of their safety, and reflects the second highest number of journalist killings for any region globally. Rates of impunity within the region remain high, and non-fatal physical attacks have also increased. While women journalists remain vulnerable to physical threats, both with regard to sexual harassment from co-workers and as recipients of threats or harassment due to the content of their reporting, the online harassment of women journalists has increased.

Trends in
Media Freedom

Overview

There is a general trend in the region of strengthening media freedom through legal frameworks and sometimes through the creation of policy and/or judicial tools based on freedom of information and expression. But the implementation of these measures is usually not in line with the text of these standards, as social and political contexts present barriers to the exercise of media freedom.

The difficulties experienced by journalists in the exercise of their profession, including state-led violence, threats and surveillance, have become a predominant feature in many countries in the region. The dissociation between strong legal frameworks and their weak implementation manifests in the form of the inadequate protection of journalists and is also evidenced in many aspects related to gender and media freedom.

The rise and expansion of new technologies has allowed for new and more refined ways of governmental and judicial censorship. The region faces the challenge of enforcing mechanisms regarding internet intermediaries' limited liability and disproportionate online content blocking.

Regional trends include the following:

- A strengthening of media freedom broadly, through legal frameworks and the creation of policy and/or judicial tools based on freedom of information and expression;

- Problems with the inadequate implementation of legal frameworks and/or policies to strengthen media freedom;

- Continued pressure on and surveillance of journalists;

- Emergent forms of censorship with the increase of digital technologies, including the taking down of internet content;

- While the gender gap in terms of media access in the region has reduced, women do still not enjoy equitable online media access relative to men.

Limitations on media freedom

DEFAMATION AND OTHER LEGAL RESTRICTIONS ON JOURNALISTS

There is an increasing trend to regulate so-called 'hate speech'. Examples of this include draft bills that propose to sanction those who publish online content deemed as 'hate speech' and to allow the executive to order take downs of content considered as such. Most of these draft bills criminalize the distribution of content considered to constitute 'hate speech'.[1] Several states have tried to pass legislation that typifies content that may damage the reputation and/or honour of a person through the internet as specified criminal offences, which may pose a threat to legitimate criticism.[2] Nonetheless, as of 2017, none of these bills had been approved.

Public officials throughout the region have initiated criminal proceedings against internet users, and predominantly against users and/or journalists opposed to the ruling party. Claims against these internet content contributors are based on defamation laws, which has included some charges raised against so-called 'memes' which parody political personalities.[3] This is consistent with the persisting trend of most in the states in Latin America and the Caribbean to retain criminal defamation laws. These laws also apply to internet content, which then qualifies such content as criminal offences.

Intellectual property legislation is used to block online content, which in cases may be considered as censorship[4]. This growing trend can be seen in the attempts to reform intellectual property-related legislation that favours right-holders to the detriment of freedom of expression. Campaigning efforts in favour of more stringent intellectual property laws argue for regulations which would allow for broader content removal. The Trans-Pacific Partnership is endorsed by some of the countries in the region, which implies higher copyright-related censorship and criminalization of innocuous practices. [5]

INTERNET CURBS, CUT-OFFS AND CONTENT REMOVAL

Data provided by Google shows that, with a few country exceptions, from 2012 to 2015 online content removal requests by governments have been scarce, and almost nil in some cases.[6] A similar trend as exhibited by Facebook's figures[7] and Twitter's.[8] Figure 1.1 shows the number of government requests to remove data on Twitter for the Latin American and Caribbean region. The figure shows zero data removal request in 2012. The number of data removal requests on Twitter have been on the increase since from 2013 to 2016. 165 Twitter data removal request were recorded in 2016.

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[1] Díaz 2017.
[2] Pérez de Acha 2016.
[3] Global Voices 2016; Diario Popular 2017; El Diario 2017; La Silla Rota 2015.
[4] Usuarios Digitales 2016.
[5] Derechos Digitales 2016a.
[6] Google 2017, see by country.
[7] Facebook 2017, see by country.
[8] Twitter 2017, see by country.

Figure 1-1: Government data removal request for Twitter
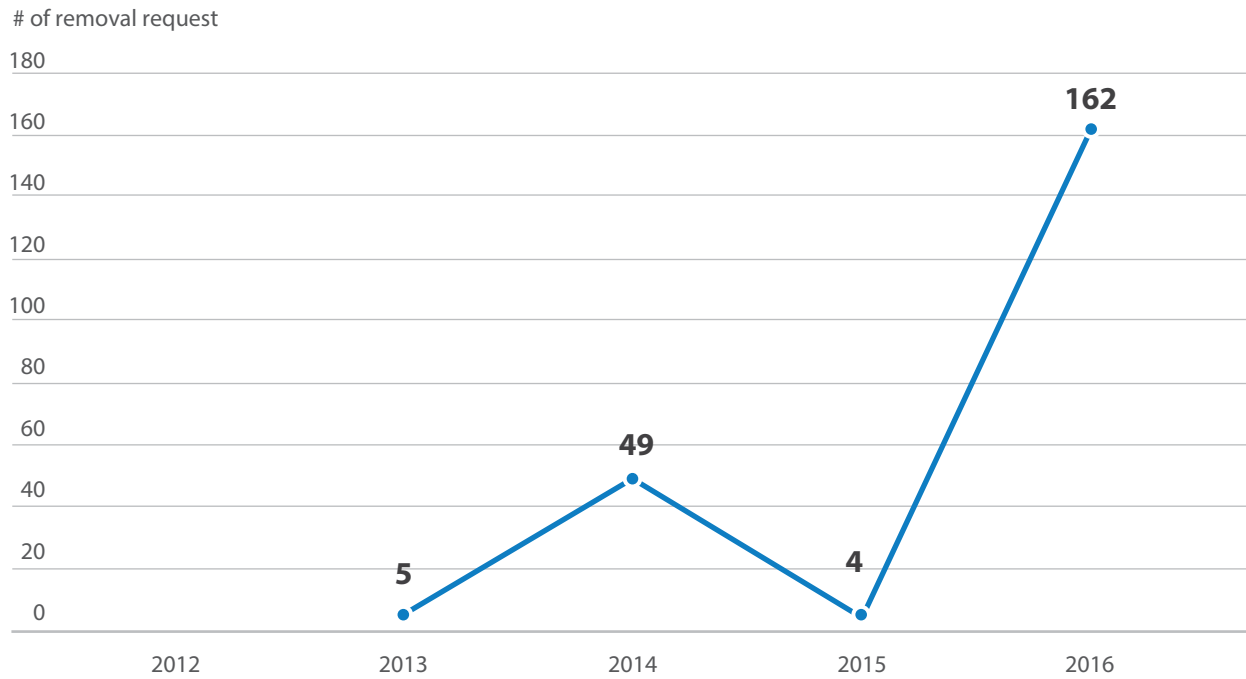
# of removal request

Source: Twitter

Converse to the low Twitter removal request, Figure 1.2 below reflects the Google government data removal request rate, where there is high number of government data removal requests. There was a slight decline from 2012 to 2014, but since 20015 the volume of data removal requests have been on the increase.

Figure 1-2: Government data removal requests for Google

# of removal request
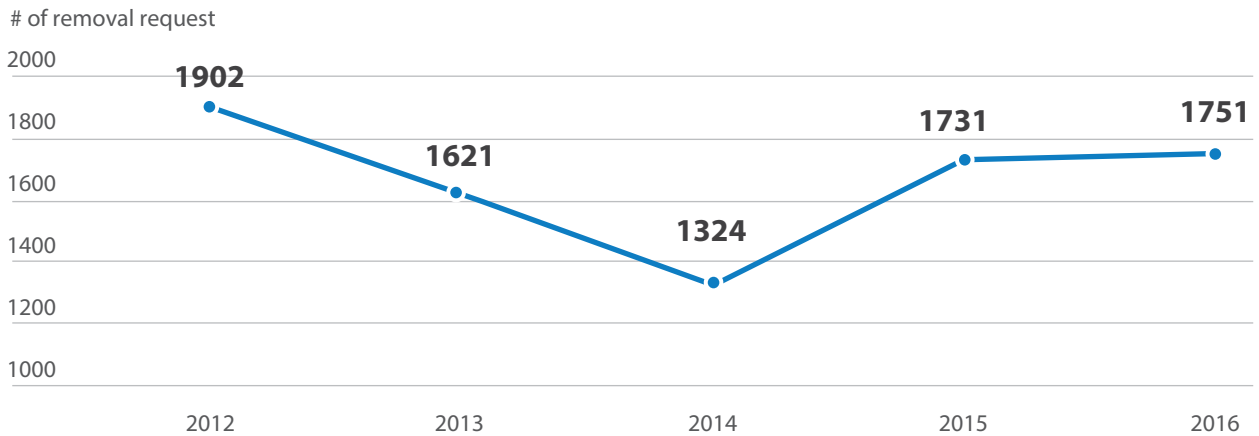
Source: Google

Despite the high standards for freedom of speech in regional legislation and treaties, there have been many attempts to pass legislation allowing for content removal based on different claims, mainly the 'Right to Be Forgotten' (RTBF), copyright, 'hate speech' and defamation. These tend to classify certain content or speech as illegal or offensive, allowing for its removal or blocking.[9]

Many states have initiated attempts to enact the RTBF, either through legislation or jurisprudence. The interpretation of what defines the RTBF varies in the different countries, but it has been broadly understood and applied as:

1. The right to access, rectify or eliminate users' personal data stored and managed by third parties;
2. Special obligations to eliminate financial and/or criminal information after a period of time has elapsed;
3. The de-indexation of information in search engines, which means that the information remains online, but is not listed in the search engines' results.[10]

There is an emerging trend in the region to question whether there are RTBF obligations that should fall upon on media outlets rather than search engines or platforms, and whether these ought to be rooted both in media law and/or criminal law. [11]

Public and private actors have identified two aspects of concern with enacting RTBF regulation: firstly, the application of the principle of non-intermediary liability for online content that they have not produced; secondly, to deal with the tensions between the right to protect personal data, privacy and reputation of internet users, while also protecting freedom of expression and the right to access information.[12] This is particularly important for the region, as the internet has been a useful tool to access information related to military dictatorships and amnesties, which played an important role in the reconstruction of democracy. When confronted with Amnesty Laws that have pardoned the crimes of authoritarian regimes, 'historical memory' has become a crucial element in the reconstruction of democratic processes. In this respect, the RTBF would have the opposite effect, in terms of transitional justice in the region.[13]

NATIONAL SECURITY AND COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM

Several countries in the region have appealed to national security to justify the imposition of restrictions on the right to freedom of expression, such as the refusal to provide information requested on the basis of access to information laws. Many cybersecurity schemes in the region do not adequately address the need to protect the legitimate rights to freedom of expression and privacy, as evidenced by the lack of coherent media and information literacy policies throughout the region. The problem of the fight against terrorism has not been a relevant factor in this region.

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[9] Lara and Pérez de Acha 2017; Derechos Digitales 2016a.
[10] Keller 2017.
[11] Corte Constitucional de la República de Colombia 2015.
[12] Bertoni 2014; Lara and Pérez de Acha 2017.
[13] Bertoni 2014.

Access to information and privacy protections

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Since 2012, the region exhibits positive progress in terms of discourse transparency and Freedom of Information (FOI). Figure 1-3 indicates that the region, in 2015, was above the global average for open data access. One of the main causes for this improvement is the persistence of regional organizations, such as the InterAmerican Court of Human Rights - IACHR[14], some national governments and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)[15]. While in some cases these reforms have ensured greater accountability, citizen participation and Open Government initiatives, there is still scope for improvement, particularly in terms of implementation.

In the Caribbean, only very few countries have freedom of information acts in place, and where such legislation does exist, authorities have established complex mechanisms to actually access information, which prove cumbersome. Many documents and institutions are often exempted from these laws, and officials often clamp down on information or add to the list of exemptions as a means to stifle investigative journalism.[16]

Figure 1-3: Open data index for Latin America and the Caribbean
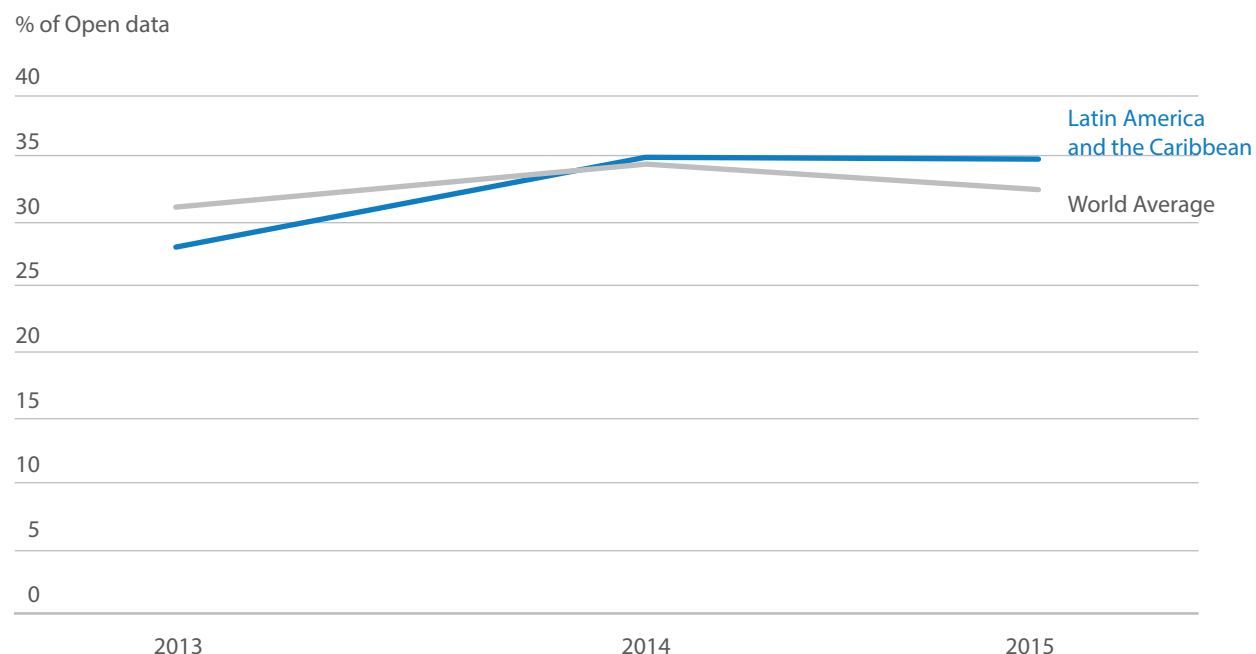
% of Open data

Source: Global Open Data Index Survey

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[14] Lanza 2014.
[15] ELLA Network 2013.
[16] World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers 2016.

PRIVACY, SURVEILLANCE AND ENCRYPTION

Generally, a blurred distinction persists between the rights over personal data and public interest information.[17] The impact of the General Data Protection Regulation of Europe (GDPR) on independence and data protection laws and authorities is yet to be assessed in the region.

Countries have enacted regulations that allow for extended data retention by Internet Service Providers (ISPs) and telecommunications providers. Many states authorize the interception of communications without corresponding judicial authorization[18], while most of these practices are only authorized by the executive in the form of decrees and administrative regulations.[19] In many countries, the interception of communications has been used to target media owners and workers, as well as journalists, having a chilling effect on freedom of expression.[20] In addition, there is no distinction between surveillance laws and their reach regarding these practices, particularly between the content and the metadata associated with such communications.[21]

There is an increasing acknowledgement in the region that in contexts where dissident voices or even just informative outlets are threatened, and when widespread self-censorship is on the rise. There is a need for protection of independent, anonymous voices reporting about sensitive issues.[22] This has led to a wider acceptance of the need for media companies and journalists to invest in cybersecurity, encryption and other safety measures.[23] Despite this, there is a trend among many governments to disregard or simply prohibit anonymity and encryption technologies, as well as a push for the usage of surveillance technologies from the online to the offline environment.[24]

Domestic data-protection authorities are increasingly granting requests of removal of personal data online, even though in some cases these conflict with the collective right to access public interest information (for example, requests of removal linked to corruption cases or crimes committed during authoritarian regimes). This is of special importance, considering that orders to remove specific content are often targeted at journalists or oppositional figures to governments, affecting the independence of both the media and dissident voices.

PROTECTION OF CONFIDENTIAL SOURCES AND WHISTLE-BLOWING

There is a persisting lack of protection of journalists and whistle blowers in the region.[25] Generally, the region recognizes the right to privacy, as the right of inviolability of communications and/or as the right to data protection. Many states have not translated these rights into national rules that comply with international human rights standards, nor have they made advances at the level of implementation.[26] Nonetheless, recognition of the protection of journalistic sources is generally respected, both at the regional and national level. Whereas few journalists have been forced to reveal their sources by courts, direct demands for sources occur on a regular basis in many countries, requiring journalists to seek protection or redress in court, which may involve high costs, both monetary and non-monetary. One of the major difficulties with the implementation of freedom of information laws is ensuring that citizens and journalists have an adequate literacy of their rights to freedom of information. [27]

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[17] Derechos Digitales 2015.
[18] Rodríguez Pereda 2016. Many interception and surveillance practices in Latin American and the Caribbean were authorized by the executive only, in the form of decrees and administrative regulations. Some of these include data retention mandates with no judicial review, confidential regulations for communications intervention; surveillance administrative orders, among others.
[19] Rodríguez Pereda 2016.
[20] Posetti 2017.
[21] Rodríguez Pereda 2016.

[22] World Wide Web Foundation, Centre for Internet and Human Rights at European University Viadrina, Oficina Antivigilância at the Institute for Technology and Society - ITS Rio and Derechos Digitales 2015.
[23] Peña 2015.
[24] World Wide Web Foundation, Centre for Internet and Human Rights at European University Viadrina, Oficina Antivigilância at the Institute for Technology and Society - ITS Rio and Derechos Digitales 2015.
[25] Open Government Partnership 2014.
[26] Asociación por los Derechos Civiles 2016.
[27] Posetti 2017.

Internet governance and media freedom

The practice of internet governance based on multi-stakeholder, bottom-up principles is gaining traction in the region for the discussion of digital media issues, including in 16 national and regional Internet Governance Forums[28]. A growing trend of a heightened government interest in Internet governance issues is evident. The openness of related discussion settings, as well as the principle of an equal footing for stakeholder participation, act as enablers of freedom of expression in relation to these issues. Currently, local and regional multi-stakeholder initiatives are growing rapidly in the region, with 16 national initiatives mapped in 2017.[29]

Gender equality and media freedom

The gender gap in terms of media access in the region has reduced. There are approximately 149 million women (49 per cent of the population) without access to mobile phones and the gender gap in mobile phone ownership in Latin America and the Caribbean is 5 per cent.[30] While the internet access gender gap is less visible among the youth, it is still sizeable. Among 18-29 year-olds, there are still only seven women online for every 10 men (as compared to one woman to two men among 40-49 year olds). Amongst internet users in the region, the use of social networking sites and blogs are more equitable.[31]

Since 2009, a statutory and regulatory trend has emerged which aims at safeguarding women's media freedom and safety, mainly by identifying situations that may be deemed as risky, unsafe or as likely to lead to violence. However, these usually lack enforcement proceedings and the necessary funds, rendering them practically ineffective.[32]

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[28] Internet Governance Forum 2018.
[29] Aguerre et al 2017.
[30] GSMA 2015.
[31] Breuer and Wel 2014.
[32] Ottaviano 2016.

Trends in
Media Pluralism

Overview

Increased internet access in the region, particularly in mobile broadband services, has spurred the production and consumption of content in digital media and online platforms. Accordingly, internet penetration, affordability and quality of service has improved. However, there are wide disparities within the region regarding internet access related to the economic status of users, as well as gaps between rural and urban areas.

Recent debates over regulatory frameworks include the scenario of convergence and the risks of media concentration to freedom of expression and pluralism. The digitization of television is a clear trend, with different levels of progress and implementation throughout the region. Challenges arise with regard to the efficient allocation of spectrum, as well as the timing for the implementation. Cross ownership concentration among media and telecommunications services is a persistent trend, despite regulatory attempts to prevent this.

The traditional broadcasting and print sectors are migrating toward digital platforms, and in many cases complementing their outlets with the online world (mobile and fixed). This includes a greater presence in different social media, but access to online content from these sectors might have certain restrictions (user subscription or identification). Both the broadcasting sector and the printed press face increasing challenges to sustain their traditional revenue models mainly based on advertising as the data-based advertising model is on the rise.

Almost two thirds of the most popular websites and internet platforms are from outside the region. Global content platforms in the music and audio-visual sector compete with traditional television and radio channels (digital, cable, satellite). In some large markets this has spurred discussions on setting quotas for the distribution of national content. In addition, there is a lack of content in indigenous languages in countries. The broadcasting and press sectors also face the challenge of users' migration from the analogue to the digital world, particularly among the youth, resulting in a loss of audience numbers for traditional media.

Trends in **Media Pluralism**

Regional trends in media pluralism include the following:

- Increased internet access in the region, particularly in mobile broadband services, but with wide disparities in user access related to economic status, and between urban and rural areas;

- Higher penetration of social media and increased internet access;

- Debates over regulatory frameworks to address convergence and concentration;

- The digitization of television continues, but with varying levels of progress and implementation throughout the region;

- The traditional broadcasting and print media sectors are increasingly migrating their content onto digital platforms;

- Both the broadcasting sector and the print sector increasingly experience challenges of sustainability as their traditional revenue models compete with the online data-based advertising model;

- The representation of women in the media has improved, but within the broadcasting sector female presenters and reporters are generally under the age of 34 years.

Access

INTERNET AND MOBILE

Weakened net neutrality and zero-rating practices are sometimes perceived as threats to freedom to access information, with the latter having achieved a deeper penetration in most countries in the last three years. These practices generate a potentially tiered internet, which has an impact on freedom of choice and access to information.[33]

Consumption of content among users is often performed via more than one device every month,[34] however, there is an emerging trend of mobile-only usage, particularly among the youth.

The region is highly diverse and aggregate figures on internet access tend to obscure the sub-regional differences. Most of the region, except for the Caribbean, is above the world average in terms of access to the internet. Regional growth of internet users since 2013 had increased by nearly 17 per cent by the end of 2015[35] as shown in Figure 2-1.

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[33] Asociación por los Derechos Civiles 2016.
[34] Pew Research Center 2016.
[35] ITU 2017.

Figure 2-1: Percentage of individuals using internet in Latin America and the Caribbean

Figure 2-2: Mobile cellular subscriptions per 100 inhabitants

As portrayed in both Figures 2-1 and 2-2, by 2015 the region, which is comprised of 625 million people, had 52 per cent of its inhabitants with internet access. The urban – rural divide marks persisting constraints for broadband access.[36] On average, online access in urban areas is 10 per cent more than rural areas, and in some countries the gap is over 30 per cent.[37]

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[36] ECLAC 2016.
[37] Katz 2015.

Trends in **Media Pluralism**

Mobile adoption has largely increased in recent years, driven by increased mobile broadband deployment, as well as greater accessibility to smartphones. Yet, this growth stagnated between 2015 and 2016 as depicted in Figure 2-3.

The growth rate for fixed broadband has remained high over the period 2012 to 2015, as depicted in Figure 2-3 below, although both fixed and mobile showed a decline since 2014.[38]

Figure 2-3: **Growth rate of fixed-broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants**
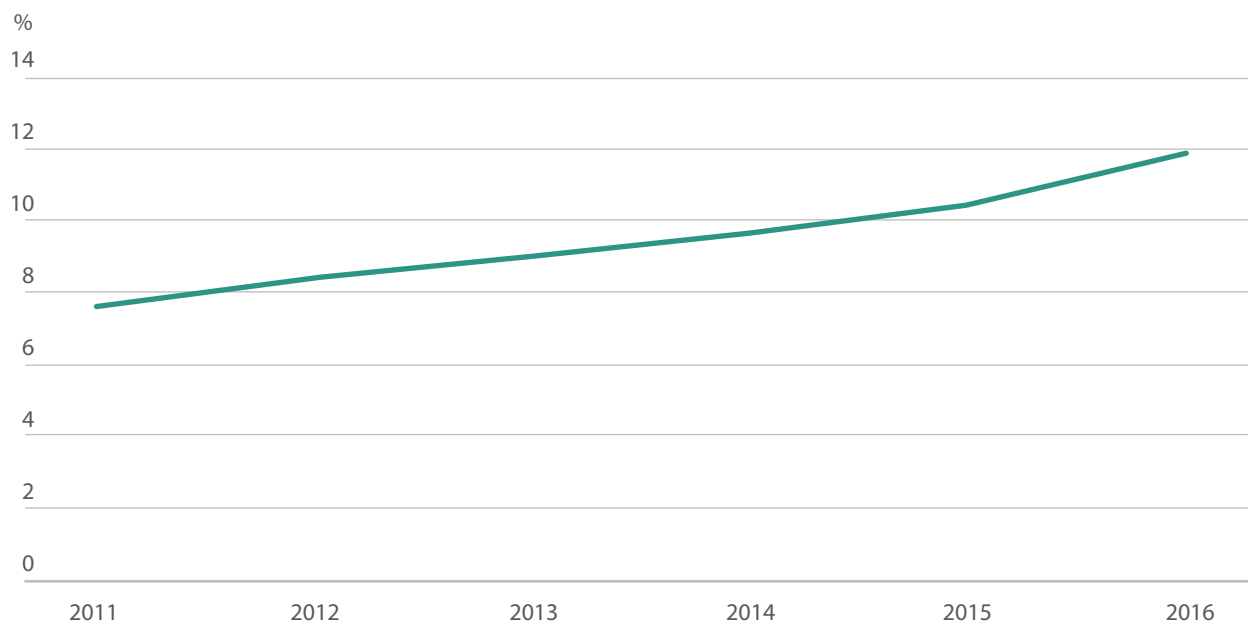
Source: ICT Facts and Figures - ITU

A recent study projects that access to internet through mobile devices will increase by 50 per cent by 2020 in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC).[39] While in 2010, the penetration rate of fixed and mobile broadband was the same, since then the latter has comfortably surpassed the first: the annual growth of mobile broadband has been 55.3 per cent while that of fixed broadband was 11 per cent during the same period.[40]

This marks a clear trend in internet users in the region accessing online content through mobile devices, mainly smartphones. This follows the trend in more developed economies, but it should be carefully considered when assessing the multiple forms of digital divides that are emerging.[41] [42]

Improving the affordability of both fixed and mobile broadband is a regional challenge. On average, while in 2010 it was necessary to allocate 17.8 per cent of the GDP per capita to access broadband services in the region, in 2014 only 3.84 per cent of the income was necessary.

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[38] Katz 2015.
[39] GSMA 2016.
[40] ECLAC 2016.
[41] ITU 2015; ECLAC 2016.
[42] Anderson and Horrigan 2016.

The improvement of the quality of internet service is one of Latin America and the Caribbean's most pressing needs: the average download speed in fixed broadband is of 7.26 Mbps, whereas the average for developed countries is of 32.2 Mbps. When it comes to mobile broadband, the region is very disparate and only a small number of countries have very high download speed rates. Some countries which lag behind in fixed broadband, are better positioned in mobile broadband speed rates.[43]

BROADCAST MEDIA

Audiences in the region continue to predominantly turn to television for news about public interest issues. Even though the use of internet to access news is on the rise, it is still not a dominant source for news about public affairs.[44] Television then retains its dominance as a powerful medium that can shape the public opinion, including during electoral times.[45]

Trends towards the digitization of television occur with varying degrees of progress. While only one country has completed the transition process, some countries are enabling the entrance of new community and public operators, while others have advanced even further by applying policies to increase diversity in public, community and commercial operators.[46] Most countries have developed a plan for the digital transition and by 2025 the switchover is expected to be complete. Plans for the digital transition include mechanisms to ensure access for low income recipients[47]. The digitization of state-administered and non-for-profit television signals is likely to be difficult, since most of them lack resources to finance their technological transition, both in the technological aspects and infrastructure. Most countries are losing the opportunity to promote pluralism and diversity in broadcasting by replicating the existing spectrum use structure and granting the spectrum savings generated by digitization to current operators. In addition to maintaining the current status quo of existing operators, in many countries, the entry of new commercial television operators has not been enabled, even where there is new spectrum availability.[48]

While international online video platforms are dominant in the online video content arena (YouTube, Vevo), traditional broadcasting groups of the region (Televisa, Clarin, Globo) have managed to capture relevant positions through the uploading of television content online, maintaining their presence in the online world. Video streaming is dominated by Netflix, but there are growing local initiatives that arise mainly from telecoms operators (Telefónica, América Móvil, Telecom Argentina, Claro) and cable television companies (Cablevisión). A multi-platform model forms a clear regional trend for native media companies, but it remains to be seen how this evolves as the younger generation defines their subscription preferences in the near future. Regulators have expressed concern about how to preserve the concept of 'television' in this environment.[49]

Some of larger national markets in the region have not yet seen initiatives to substitute subscriptions from cable and pre-paid television channels in households for online video platforms, despite the growth of the latter[50]. Satellite television is expected to grow at an average rate of 10 per cent for the next decade in the region, which is consistent with the recent trend that from 2010 to 2015 satellite capacity grew an annual 8 per cent.[51]

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[43] Katz 2015.
[44] Pew Research Center 2015.
[45] Alcántara Sáez y Tagina 2016.
[46] OBSERVACOM 2016.
[47] ECLAC 2016; 5G Américas 2016.

[48] OBSERVACOM 2016.
[49] CNTV 2015.
[50] Competitive Intelligence Unit 2016.
[51] Mundo Contact 2015.

Radio is still a relevant media source for news and entertainment in the region, yet with declining audiences: there are approximately 3,649 broadcast radio stations in Central America and 21,039 in South America. Some regional studies show that radio is the medium with the highest index of trust amongst audiences, with approximately 55 per cent approval. In 2011 radio was the medium with the highest rate of penetration. Although the use of traditional radio is still in effect, it is migrating to smartphones, tablets, computers and devices that allow 'on the go' information and entertainment: online radio audiences have grown an average of 16 per cent in the region.[52]

General-content radio outlets have a more significant impact and political influence on audiences, particularly in urban areas in the region. Specialized-content FM stations have increased their audience share, since they target more specific listeners with better defined interests.[53] The region has more than 10,000 community radio stations[54], many of which serve social groups and indigenous sectors. Despite the lack of availability of official statistics, their audiences have been growing, especially those of indigenous and ethnic groups seeking to improve citizen participation.[55]

NEWSPAPER INDUSTRY

Newspapers remain as an important source of information for Latin American audiences. On average, users in the region read newspapers 3.7 days a week, with a slight difference among male (3.8 days a week) and female (3.5 days a week) readers.[56]

Although it is still a region with a growing circulation of printed newspapers (3 per cent between 2010 and 2015), the number of newspaper titles is decreasing as the readership is migrating to smartphones (see Figure 2-4).[57]

Figure 2-4: Number of newspaper titles
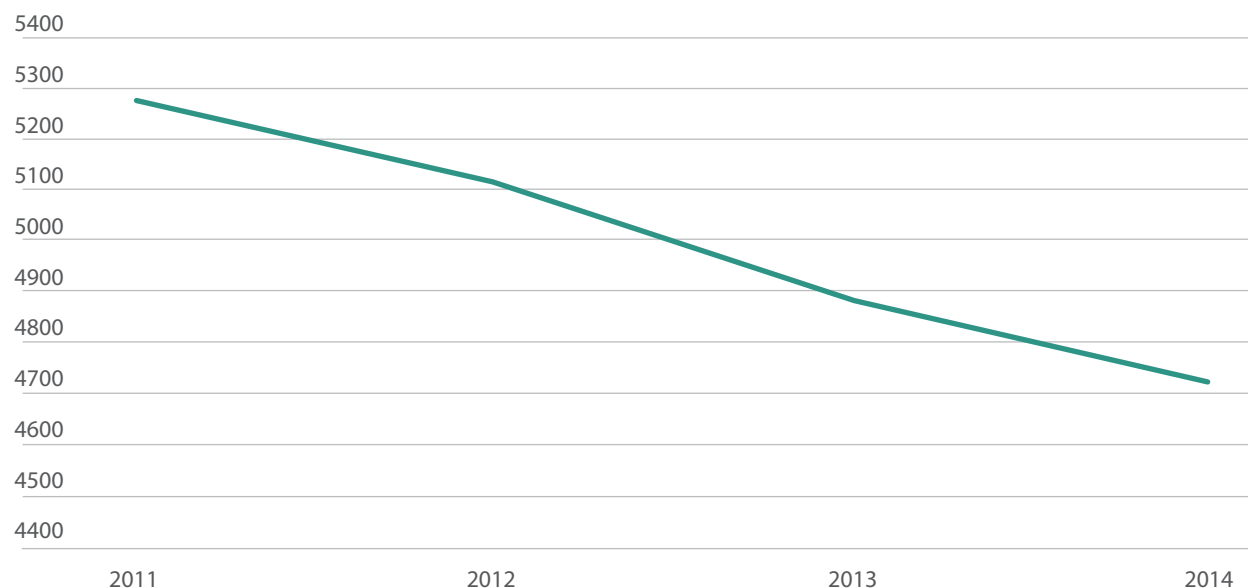
Source: World Press Trends

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[52] Merca2.0 2016.   [55] Llorente and Cuenca 2013.
[53] Llorente & Cuenca 2013.   [56] Merca2.0 2016.
[54] Radios Libres 2017.   [57] World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers 2015.

While digital newspaper readership is increasing, readership on all digital platforms has surpassed the number of readers in print.[58] A broad awareness exists among the print sector regarding the challenges of a multi-platform environment, but only the largest and more consolidated outlets have managed to migrate to this new business model. There has been a diminishing trend of newspaper titles in circulation in the last six years, with an effect on external pluralism.

Journalism published solely online has been increasing in the region over the last seven years. A recent regional study reports that 32 per cent of the content of these sites is produced in-house, while the remaining 68 per cent rely on other sources and in curatorial practices, some of which include fact-checking processes as well.[59] Some have achieved journalistic recognition for their work,[60] contesting the supremacy of traditional press outlets in some countries.

Economic models

PLURALISM AND MEDIA OWNERSHIP

Media concentration is a long-standing regional issue[61] which has prompted three distinctive approaches in regulatory policy. Some countries (such as Argentina, Uruguay, Venezuela, Ecuador and Brazil) have linked media diversity with ownership plurality. Therefore, they have enacted bills and regulations that seek to assure diversity by imposing certain restrictions on vertical, horizontal and cross-media ownership. Mexico has chosen to prevent media concentration through a constitutional and regulatory framework review that adopts more antitrust-centered principles, seeking to inject concurrence in converging markets (audio-visual and telecommunications). Lastly, several countries have chosen not to engage in policies that prevent media concentration, where market forces define the limits and levels of dominance of different actors.[62]

In the last three years, Latin America and the Caribbean have seen an increase in specific regulations establishing the net neutrality principle. In some cases, it has been included within telecommunications' regulations. Other countries have presented draft bills sustaining the principle of 'technological neutrality'. In all cases, neutrality is a relevant policy dimension to enhance pluralism in the informational landscape.

As is the case with the newspaper market, the radio landscape in the region seems to be less affected by market concentration and can be thus considered more competitive, but there is no aggregate recent data to substantiate this claim. As of 2013, Latin America represented 4 per cent of the overall global radio advertising revenues. Nonetheless, it is forecasted that Latin America and the Caribbean will be the fastest growing region between 2013 and 2018, with a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 7.7 per cent, especially in the two largest countries.[63]

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58 World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers 2015.
59 Meléndez Yúdico 2016.
60 For example, Prize Gabriel García Márquez for El Faro from El Salvador in 2016.
61 Kitzberger 2017.
62 Becerra 2015.
63 PWC 2015.

As with radio, newspaper markets in the region are generally considered to be less concentrated than television, though Chile stands as an exception being dominated by a newspaper duopoly.[64] Nonetheless, greater competitiveness of newspaper markets in Latin America is mitigated by two factors: cross-media ownership and the agenda-setting role of television in other media coverage.[65]

Governments have made increasing use of financial and regulatory powers to restrict the capabilities of journalists and media by allocating state aid to government-friendly outlets and a discretionary approach to public advertising. These methods can amount to indirect censorship, and may constitute an abuse of public and/or monopolistic funds, abuse of regulatory and/or supervisory authority, and the use of extra-legal pressures.[66]

ADVERTISING, BETWEEN OLD AND NEW MODELS

Advertising in digital media shows a significant rise in the total expenditure share: it increased by 29 per cent, reaching in the last five years a 12.8 per cent share of total expenditure (as of 2009, digital media represented only 6.6 per cent of total expenses). Advertising expenditures in Latin America reached US$ 25.668, including US$ 4.8 thousand million in printed press, US$ 15.5 thousand millions in television, USD 2.1 thousand millions in radio and US$ 3.3 thousand millions in digital media.[67]

NEW PLATFORMS AND BUSINESS MODELS

The adoption and consumption of digital products and services in Latin America is very high, with a divided share of attention: recent studies have shown that the regional average of popular websites with country-specific focus is 40%[68], while global platforms tend to dominate the remaining 60%. Among some of the most popular websites in the region stand e-commerce, news and social network platforms.[69]

However, in the last three years, companies have had to adapt their business models to the changing expectations of customers. Most companies across all sectors have a large number of channels such as Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn, as well as networks such as Snapchat, WeChat and Messenger. In this context, newer tools based on artificial intelligence and virtual reality are not yet fully available in the region for monetization.[70]

The rise of platforms has also led to an increased adoption of pay-walls by traditional Latin American outlets. Media outlets throughout Latin America have announced that digital advertising, which includes programmatic advertising –meaning real-time algorithmic advertising-, banners and advertising displays only amount to 12% of their income, while platforms such as Facebook and Google absorb more than 70% of digital advertising.[71]

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[64] Boas 2013.
[65] This is the case of Clarin and Globo.
[66] SembraMedia 2017, Vaca Villarreal 2017. See also the Principles on the Regulation of Public Advertising and Freedom of Expression by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights 2011.
[67] Katz 2015.
[68] ICANN, 2017. LAC DNS Marketplace Report.
[69] Such as the e-commerce platform Mercado Libre, the social network Taringa! or UOL Brazil (news, e-commerce, entertainment).
[70] InBound Cycle 2017
[71] Knight Center for Journalism 2017.

Content

USER-GENERATED CONTENT

Video, social media, and messenger apps are popular amongst internet consumers, while top preferences of users producing user generated content include platforms such as WhatsApp, YouTube, Facebook, Facebook Messenger, Instagram and Twitter. Nearly 80 per cent of internet users use social network sites, which is a high proportion when compared with other regions. [72]

ALGORITHMS, ECHO CHAMBERS AND POLARIZATION

There is no consolidated data to assess whether the usage of social media in the region is contributing to the echo chamber and filter bubble effects.

'FAKE NEWS'

Complementing the rise of digital press outlets, nine countries have established fact-checking organizations.[73] These are working collaboratively to exchange methodologies and technical tools to measure 'fake news'. This trend has implications for pluralism as it exercises a gatekeeping function in the wake of the 'post-truth' era.

REPORTING ON MARGINALIZED GROUPS

There are no systematized figures on the issue of reporting on marginalized groups for the region. However, scattered reports evince that the media tends to portray them in a stigmatized way, usually linking them to crime, illegal drug consumption and social conflict. In most cases, this leads to re-victimization of the subjects and "spectacularization" of the factual reporting[74] .

NEW NEWS PLAYERS: THE DEMOCRATIZATION OF NEWS PRODUCTION?

Social media forms a new channel for access to news and information, citizen communication and political participation. The online social activism in many countries to protect the right to education, women's rights, expose entrenched male violence, denounce corruption, protest against environmental degradation and to expose mass murders and state-actors involved in violence, are all examples that have been documented in the region through social media platforms.[75]

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[72] Katz 2015.
[73] Chequeado 2017.
[74] See Comunicación y Pobreza 2015; Maldonado 2016; ElPais.CR 2017; FM La Tribu 2017; Romano 2017.
[75] Peña, Rodríguez and Sáez 2015; Valenzuela 2013.

The increasing influence of social media and community journalism in recent years has enabled new forms of civic action which are perceived as 'independent' from mainstream economic, political or social interest. The use of platforms such as Twitter and Facebook, and messaging apps such as WhatsApp, are increasingly used to report on political matters and to invite people to protests or demonstrations using hashtags and other forms of tagging to identify the shared content, even though these networks are often prone to harassment, governmental repression and blocking.[76]

MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY

Caribbean countries (particularly Anglophone) have much higher integration levels of ICT-assisted instruction and the essential infrastructure, including basic hardware (i.e. computers) and internet connectivity, than most Latin American countries from South and Central America.

Considerations around ICT use are integrated into national policies and curricula, but not necessarily implemented in teaching practice. Only four out of 38 countries reported that their national curriculum did not include recommendations for ICT-assisted instruction. Radio use in educational settings (something that has a long tradition in some countries across the region) is no longer predominantly used. Educational television is either used a great deal, or not at all. [77]

MEDIA CONTENT DIVERSITY

Citing media content diversity concerns, some governments have tried to regulate specific content[78] which generated a strong rejection on the part of the media owners.[79] Although direct government intervention on content would be inadmissible in most national contexts, the absolute freedom of broadcasters to define content that is aligned with market criteria poses challenges for pluralism, as there is a historical weakness of public and community television in the region.

The most prominent distribution agreements instituted between major players of the industry include the platforms of open television, paid television and online distributors.[80] Increasingly, popular online platforms are selected by traditional media to distribute their content online, which entails that they leverage their outreach rather than compete with each other.[81] This trend seems to promote pluralism more effectively than a configuration where an offline powerful content distributor becomes a powerful online one, but there are challenges for new and independent media, which could also have negative consequences on external pluralism.

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[76] DW Akademie 2016.
[77] UNESCO Institute for Statistics 2012.
[78] CNTV 2015.
[79] SIP 2016.
[80] Televisa 2016.
[81] Prensario Internacional 2016.

Gender equality and media pluralism

GENDER EQUALITY IN THE MEDIA WORKFORCE

According to the Global Media Monitoring Project (2015), the majority of workers in the media in Latin America and the Caribbean are still men. Even though the overall global average of female reporters in print, television and radio news has varied little across a 15-year period beginning in 2000, the gap has narrowed the most in Latin America and the Caribbean (+14 per cent).[82]

WOMEN AND DECISION-MAKING

Women hold very few places amongst media shareholders in Latin America: only 15.4 per cent in the region are women and only 21.4 per cent hold leadership positions. [83]

GENDER AND REPRESENTATION

By 2015, both Latin America and the Caribbean referred to gender equality, women's rights or human rights policy in less than 5% of its total news content. In Latin America, these issues were mainly reported as Science and Health or Social and Legal topics, whereas in the Caribbean, they were mainly reported as Social and Legal. Also, by 2015, only 7% of stories reported in Latin America referenced stories where issues of gender equality or inequality was raised, whereas in the Caribbean it amounted to 18% of stories reported. In both regions, these were usually reported as Social and Legal topics. It must be noted that there was little gender difference in reporters of stories that evokes gender equality or inequality issues. Lastly, by 2015, less than 5% of stories reported in Latin America and the Caribbean challenged gender stereotypes, while the ones that did, were usually reported as Science and Health or Social and Legal topics. [84]

CHANGING THE PICTURE FOR WOMEN IN MEDIA

The only area in which women achieve a level of parity is as television presenters, but they are usually aged 34 or below, while the same aspect does not impact male presenters. Nonetheless, over the past two decades, the gender gap of people in the news has narrowed by 13 per cent between 1995 and 2015. Women presenting or reporting stories has increased and now represent 47 per cent in newspapers, 36 per cent in radio and 50 per cent in television. In this regard, Latin America also shows a steady and significant climb: from 29 per cent female presenters in 2000 to 44 per cent in 2015, which indicates a 15 per cent reduction of the gender gap in 15 years. [85]

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[82] Global Media Monitoring Project 2015.
[83] Global Media Monitoring Project 2015.
[84] Global Media Monitoring Project 2015.
[85] Global Media Monitoring Project 2015.

**Trends in
Media
Independence**

Overview

The Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) region shows a disconnect between legal, regulatory and policy efforts, and the implementation of these to achieve both institutional and functional independence. Trends include the inadequate implementation of regulatory and policy measures to safeguard media independence. Furthermore, economic concentration and media capture have had a negative effect on media independence throughout the regional media landscape.

Regional trends regarding media independence include the following:

- Several policymaking attempts designed to change the media landscape and the financing modes through integral regulatory modifications have occurred across the region;

- Despite efforts to improve the processes for the allocation of broadcasting licenses, these are often undone by the lack of transparency and obscure allocation of licences by regulators, who often operate under political influence;

- Countries have increasingly adopted their own news or media ombudsman, who receives complaints from the public and investigates media coverage to promote quality reporting and awareness of the public's concerns, as although these are weak instruments to uphold media accountability;

- Governments in the region have made an increasing use of financial and regulatory powers to restrict the capabilities of journalists and the media through the allocation of state-aid and advertising;

- While there are still relatively high levels of citizen trust in media and digital platforms, many governments in the region are posing threats to independence by prohibiting anonymity and encryption technologies;

- Despite positive progress made during the last five to ten years, women are still behind when it comes to media management, shareholding, and employability, but in some areas they are beginning to achieve salary equity with men.

Trends in **Media Independence**

Trends and transitions in regulation

INDEPENDENCE AND GOVERNMENT REGULATION

In the last decade, the region has seen a wave of media regulatory framework reforms that seek to replace the predominance of market approaches and light-touch regulation.[86] There have been several policies and attempts designed to change the media landscape and the financing modes through integral regulatory modifications.

As reported by the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression of the Organisation of American States (OAS) in 2014, the Americas are increasingly improving their processes for allocating licenses through legal provisions that are clearer and improving their transparency. There is also an emerging trend to organize more open, transparent and consultative processes in the digitization of television strategies implemented by local regulators, which are now under more public and continuous scrutiny.[87] Nonetheless, the process of issuing licenses in many countries still lacks transparency and follows obscure or non-transparent procedures. In addition, the issuing of broadcast licenses or 'regulatory immunities', with options to renew, are legally 'precarious and revocable', and are subject to government decision.[88]

Attempts to set the framework for independent broadcast regulators, often with the telecoms regulators, have been made throughout the region and particularly within the larger countries. Nonetheless, in practice, regulators in the region tend to have scarce margins to avoid political influence in their decisions. Examples of this include failures to renew or retain licenses for editorially critical media; allocating the regulator back into ministries or reducing its competences and margins of action; lack of due process in the adoption of regulatory decisions, and a lack of process to hire relevant staff, among others.[89]

The majority of regional broadcasting is commercial and there is a lack of an institutional culture of non-for-profit public media. Additionally, state-owned media, with the exception of Chile, are usually characterized as having low audiences and a predominance of governmental content. These structural problems of the media system have led to a persisting trend in the region that have limited licensing in protection of the public interest. There are some exceptions to this trend. Some countries have created public channels with innovative approaches to programming. However, they all face the challenge of independence from government pressures.[90]

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[86] Gómez García 2013.
[87] Inter-American Commission on Human Rights 2014.
[88] Inter-American Commission on Human Rights 2014.
[89] Becerra 2015.
[90] Becerra 2015.

The community radio broadcasting sector is diverse, numerically significant, widespread and highly influential in certain contexts, where it replaces state-owned outlets. However, in most countries these have emerged in a regulatory vacuum, and in same cases in direct opposition to the law. Older established stations continue to operate with commercial or cultural licenses and are slowly being recognized and regulated in a growing number of countries. Yet such legal recognition sometimes imposes restrictions on the community sector that could threaten their viability, such as limiting transmission power or prohibiting advertising.[91]

SELF-REGULATION

There is an increasing number of countries that have their own news or media ombudsman, which receive complaints from the public and investigate media coverage to promote quality reporting and awareness of the public's concerns.[92]

Self-regulatory accountability is recognised as important for protecting the independence of the news media. During the last decade throughout the region, journalism has been questioned and subjected to public scrutiny. Reliance on self-regulatory mechanisms of journalism and communications ethics, such as sectoral codes of conduct and press councils in most countries, has continued in the form of standards of conduct for the exercise of communications and media professions in the region[93], despite their limits as instruments to uphold media accountability.

Press entities in the region have created their own press councils, which have their own self-regulatory process. These councils work as independent 'tribunals' that receive complaints regarding any actions taken by media and, when they consider so, issue a resolution adjudicating a decision.[94]

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[91] Becerra 2015.
[92] Organization of News Ombudsmen 2017. See for example the increasing number of Latin American members of the Organization of News Ombudsmen in http://newsombudsmen.org/regular-members
[93] See Accountable Journalism 2017.
[94] Asociación de la Prensa Uruguaya (APU), Centro de Archivos y Acceso a la Información Pública (CAinfo) and Grupo Medios y Sociedad (GMS) 2015.

TRENDS IN **MEDIA INDEPENDENCE**

Political and economic influences in media systems

PUBLIC TRUST IN THE MEDIA

Latin America and the Caribbean report a high level of trust in the media when compared with other institutions in the region.[95] Yet, more recently, the region is aligned with the global trend of traditional media distrust. Generally speaking, media outlets perceived as 'independent' from the state receive more trust by the general public.[96] Both radio and television were, as of 2015, at their lowest point of trust since 2006. Audiences with a higher level of education showed higher trust in the printed press and radio rather than television.[97]

MEDIA CAPTURE

Throughout the regions, the editorial line of media outlets owned by conglomerates is usually influenced by the commercial interests of their owners. The convergence of the media with other economic activities, including politicians who have become media tycoons, has an influence on the independence of news and information representation, and is sometimes seen to disrupt the alleged 'autonomy' of the media.[98]

Media shareholders usually own companies in other relevant sectors of the economy, and therefore media workers cannot freely report on issues that may affect the other businesses of media shareholders. As a result, not are only media workers affected in their reporting freedom, but citizens are equally impacted regarding their right to be well-informed.[99]

FINANCIAL REGULATIONS AND BUSINESS MODELS

Some studies have shown how different governments in the region have made an increasing use of financial and regulatory powers to restrict the capabilities of journalists and the media by using state-aid and advertising. These methods can amount to indirect censorship.[100]

The degree of internationalization in Latin American media has increased through the articulation of local, regional and international capital, especially in the development of distribution and production infrastructure in the United States. Some perceive that, the internationalization of media capital has had its influence in the editorial lines of Latin American media.[101]

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[95] Rojas Aravena 2012.

[96] Edelman 2016.

[97] Latinobarómetro 2015.

[98] Becerra 2014.

[99] FIP 2016.

[100] Asociación por los Derechos Civiles, Iniciativa Pro-Justicia de la Sociedad Abierta, Open Society Institute 2013.

[101] Becerra 2015.

JOURNALISTS' EMPLOYMENT SECURITY

Media ownership concentration schemes in Latin America have had persistently negative effects on employment in the media sector. This entails less cultural, artistic and journalistic productions, and fewer job offers and opportunities for journalists and media workers in general. Since job offers and opportunities in the media sector are scarce, this has also led to journalists working in precarious employment conditions. Media workers feel forced either to generate material for diverse platforms for the same wages or to fulfil different functions in the same media (writing, photography, editing, etc.).

PROFESSIONALISM AND EFFORTS TO MITIGATE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC INTERFERENCE

The Worlds of Journalism data for the period 2013 to 2016 reflects statistics on the degree of government and politicians influence on the media in various regions. Figure 3-1 below reveals that the percentage of government and politicians influence over the media in the Latin American and Caribbean region is higher than the world average percentage levels. A recent study indicates that on average, almost 58 per cent of Latin American journalists acknowledge their personal beliefs and values as an influencing factor in their reporting, while only 16 per cent acknowledge business people as an influence. Also, almost 20 per cent recognized the influence of pressure groups, while 24 per cent recognised the influence of profit expectations.[102]

In the Caribbean, the Public Media Alliance (PMA), in collaboration with UNESCO, launched Social Media Guidelines for Caribbean journalists and media practitioners. These guidelines are aimed at aiding in the protection of media professionals, media companies and social media users, and also at identifying the essential ways in which public service broadcasting can be preserved and strengthened in its independence.[103]

Figure 3-1: **Government and politicians influence on media**

Influences: Goverment officials

%

Latin America and Caribbean region	World Average
23.2	21.9

Influences: Politicians

%

Latin America and Caribbean region	World Average
22.6	18.7
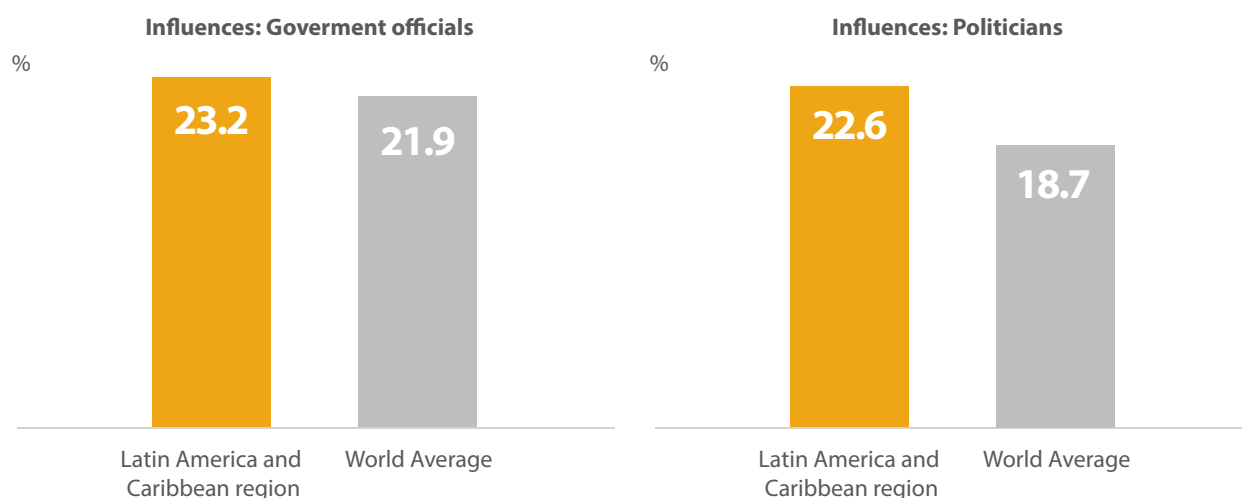
Source: Worlds of Journalism, 2016

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[102] Worlds of Journalism 2016.
[103] Jamaica Observer 2017.

Trends in **Media Independence**

Gender equality and media independence

GENDER EQUALITY IN THE MEDIA WORKPLACE

Statutory and regulatory approaches to women's presence and gender parity has been scarce, despite media regulatory reforms in other areas. In countries where reforms aiming at decreasing media concentration and inequalities were or are being enacted, there has continued to be an absence of a gender-based perspective in the reform agenda. Some countries have addressed gender-based discrimination in their gender protection and anti-discrimination laws, though their implementation and application has been scarce.[104]

As of 2015, women were almost at parity in salary with men across the region in the reporting ranks of junior and senior professionals. In middle management, salaries did not always follow suit.

Achieving financial independence as media workers in the case of women is beginning to materialise. Women earned more than men in both low and high ranges of senior management across the region, while men earned more than women at the high range of the junior management level. Men earned more than women in the senior professional level, whereas women earned more than men in production and design, at both low and high ranges, but women hold less than a fourth (23.9 per cent) of the jobs in this level. A closer look reveals that at least a third of the countries in this region pay women more in production and design than they do to men. The senior professional level shows a greater degree of gender balance, with men slightly more than half (59 per cent) and women nearing parity (41 per cent). Senior professionals include senior writers, anchors, and producers.[105]

MEDIA MONITORING AND ADVOCACY

Regional media observatories have arisen with the objective of monitoring media content, making a critical review and reflection of media content, and appealing to different social sectors. These entities are usually independent from governments and tend to integrate members from academic centres (such as universities or research programs), social movements, the media sector and journalists, and non-governmental organizations.[106]

FORMAL AND PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

While gender issues tend to be absent in codes of ethics, guidelines and self-regulatory sectoral policies that regulate the activity of journalists, media, advertisers and publicity agencies, there have been some notable examples to counterbalance this trend.[107] Gender-based violence in the media is becoming a more visible issue.

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[104] Chaher 2016.
[105] International Women's Media Foundation 2012.
[106] Herrera Damas 2009.
There is no recent data, but as of 2009, there were approximately twelve media observatories in Latin America and the Caribbean.
[107] Ottaviano 2016.

Recently, Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) has seen an increase in the creation of the positions of news/public ombudsman to promote communication-related rights, educate audiences, amplify their complaints and consultations, and level the playing field between the different actors in the media ecosystem. These entities have been increasing their role in auditing news and media for gender parity. Following this practice, women heading ombudsman offices has increased, together with their participation in international organizations, such as the Organization of News Ombudsman. Thus, monitoring and diagnosing of media practices that may affect gender-based freedom has increased significantly.[108]

Since the first half of the previous century, media owners in Latin America have relied on trade associations to represent their interests and these have shown to have a degree of influence before public authorities and the general public. The most important is the Inter-American Press Society (*Sociedad Interamericana de Prensa, SIP*).[109] Generally speaking, these trade associations have advocated against the regional trend of regulating against cross-ownership, taking a stance against sector-specific rules for media. Recently some countries have established their own associations, most of them working as journalists unions or guilds, which are part of regional organizations.[110]

Self-censorship is reinforced by the persecution of trade union leaders who advocate for media workers' labour rights. Large media companies have an unofficial policy of not employing syndicalist media workers, and even paying anti-syndicalist media workers monetary bonuses. Thus, media workers are obliged to stick to the editorial line of their media holding even if it veers outside of ethical standards.[111]

CSOs have gradually increased their influence in media policy-making, even though situations and development are dissimilar across the region. This is particularly evinced in the first phase of policy-making, where citizen and CSOs display a noticeable presence during public debates and have managed to shape them in many occasions, by infusing debated and policies with the language of communication rights and moving debated beyond the realm of technical specialists. In recent regulatory reforms, CSOs have also made significant inroads during legislative debated in the drafting of new bills, by having their reports and recommendations being considered or consulted, and even attending at Congressional committees. CSOs have also called attention to merits and shortcomings of new laws, and monitored the work of various agencies and upbraided officials for failing to comply with regulations, by urging corrections. Also, CSOs have managed to impact the strengthening of institutional participatory mechanisms and channels of citizen participation.[112]

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[108] Ottaviano 2016.
[109] See SIP 2017.
[110] See FELAP 2017, FEPALC 2017.
[111] FIP 2016
[112] Observacom 2016.

Trends in
Safety of Journalists

Overview

Insecurity and self-censorship for the media in Latin America and the Caribbean has deepened since 2012 due to an escalation of violence against journalists, legal harassment, and the increasingly hostile treatment of the private and independent media by the political leadership in some countries.

Physical attacks have intensified, severely hampering the press in embattled areas where drug traffickers and other criminal groups operate with impunity. These threats were exacerbated by the expansive influence criminal elements have wrought over legal and state institutions, as well over as politicians. Assaults, including killings, have also taken place against journalists covering corruption and politics, in addition to narco-violence. Harassment through civil or criminal litigation, belligerent rhetoric, travel bans, and other means, narrowed the flow of information via the news media. The period between 2012 and 2016 reflected high levels of public protest during which periods threats to journalists increased.

Positive developments include the amendment or elimination or criminal defamation laws in several countries. More countries have established mechanisms to protect journalists and address impunity, however, in most cases these have not yet led to a decrease in attacks against media workers.

Trends in the safety of journalists in the Latin America and Caribbean region include the following:

- A high number of journalists, 125, were killed in the Latin America and Caribbean region between 2012 and 2016, which forms the second highest number for any region. Online journalists made up 10 per cent of the number of journalists killed, which forms an increasing trend. No online journalists were killed in the previous 5-year period;

- Regional disparity surfaces in the geographic concentration of journalist killings and violence: incidents of violence against journalists in Caribbean states were far fewer and less severe than in Latin American states;

- Several states convicted suspects in the cases of some journalist killings, but overall the rate of impunity remains high, where only 11 per cent of cases are resolved;

- Non-fatal physical attacks have increased. Incidents include abductions, beatings, destruction of equipment, death threats, attempted assassinations, attacks on infrastructure such as bombings of media offices, illegal detentions and torture.

- Women journalists continue to be vulnerable regarding threats to physical safety, both with regard to sexual harassment from co-workers, and as recipients of threats or harassment due to the content of their reporting;

- Online harassment of women has increased since 2012, including internet smear campaigns which often include sexual references, threats of sexual violence, and death threats, often motivating women journalists to practice self-censorship;

- The region reflected the establishment of a number of new mechanisms to promote journalist safety, including commitments by governments, the training of judges and judicial officials, new legislations providing protections for journalists, and efforts to decrease impunity for crimes against journalists.

Physical safety and impunity

UNESCO's Director-General condemned the killings of 125 journalists and media workers that took place in 10 Latin America and Caribbean countries between 2012 throughout 2016[113], the second highest number for any region. The number of killings rose each year throughout the 5-year period, except in 2015, which registered a slight drop. In 2016, the highest number of journalists were killed (28) in a single year. The total number of killing for the 5-year period from 2012 throughout 2016 is nearly double that of the previous 5-year period (2007 to 2011). The majority of the killings of journalists condemned by UNESCO's Director-General from 2012 until 2016 took place in 4 countries in central and South America. These cases accounted for 99 out of 125 condemnations, or almost 90 per cent of all journalist killings in the region. The 4 countries were also among the top 10 deadliest countries for journalists worldwide. Only 1 killing took place in a Caribbean state.

Figure 4-1: Journalists killed in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2012-2016

Total:
125

21   25   26   25   28

2012   2013   2014   2015   2016
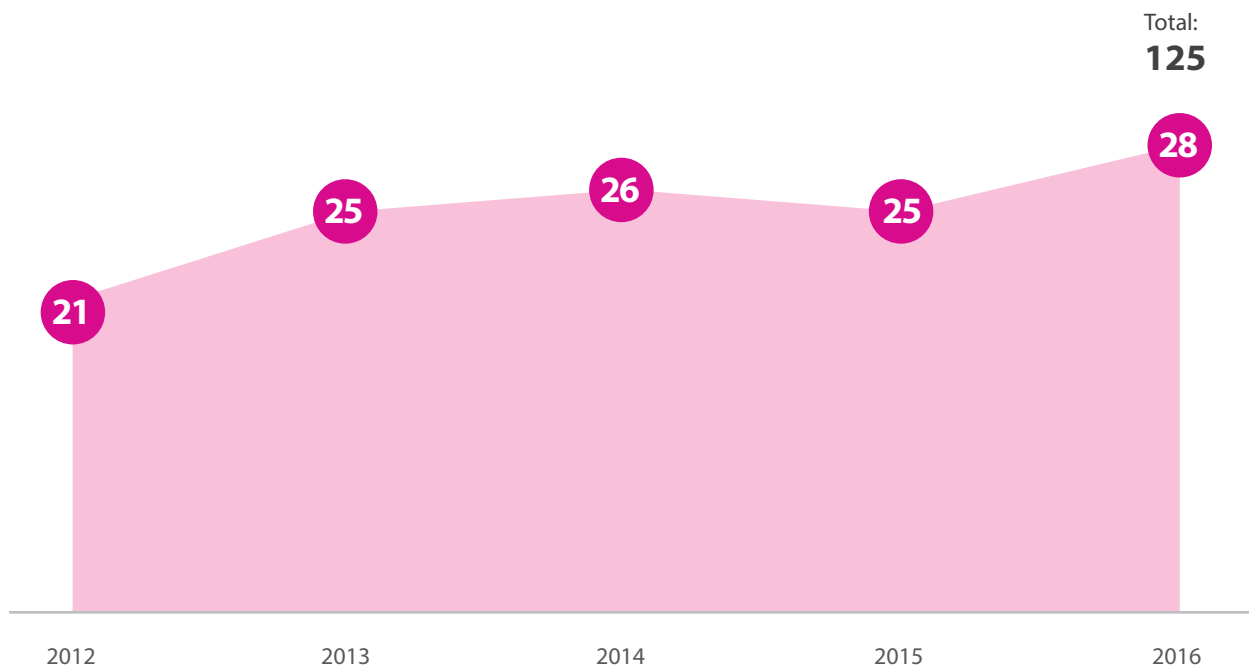
All victims, except 1, were locally based and working in countries where research indicates that journalists are targeted for reporting on crime, corruption and politics.[114] Journalists working outside of major urban areas, particularly in drug trafficking corridors and border areas, were particularly vulnerable.[115] Freelance journalists comprised 10 per cent of the victims. Radio journalists were the largest group of victims by medium, followed by print and television journalists. Online journalists made up 10 per cent of the victims, which forms a notable increase over the previous period when no online journalists were killed.

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[113] UNESCO's internal database of Journalist Killings and Status of Judicial Inquiry, 2012-2016 inclusive. Unless stated otherwise, the figures on killings of journalists that follow are taken from this database.
[114] Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) 2018, Journalists Killed since 1992.
[115] Lanza 2016.

Figure 4-2: Type of media of journalists killed in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2012-2016

Total: 125

Radio	48
Print	34
Television	20
Web/online	12
Cross-platform	11
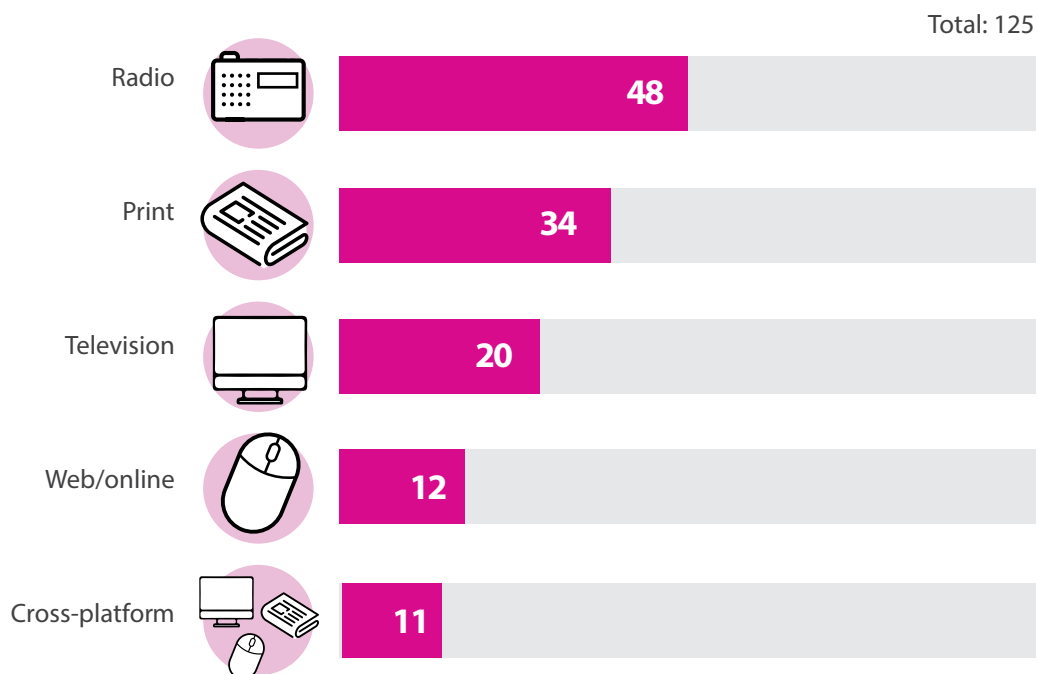
Several states convicted suspects for some journalist killings, but overall the rate of impunity remained high. In mid-2017, all Member States where journalists had been killed responded to the UNESCO Director-General's request for an update on the status of judicial inquiry. In 14 cases, or 11 per cent of the overall number of killings for the region for the 2012 through 2016 period, states reported resolutions to the cases. In 110 cases (88 per cent) states reported the status of enquiries as ongoing or unresolved. No specific information was provided for 1[116] case condemned by UNESCO's Director General.

Figure 4-3: Status of judicial inquiry into killings of journalists in Latin America and the Caribbean

| | Resolved (14) | | Ongoing/Unresolved (110) | | No Information (1) |

| 14 | 110 | 1 |

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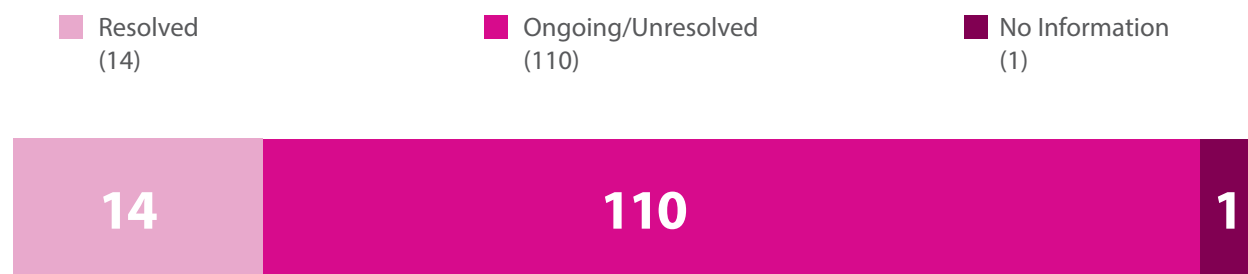
[116] Haiti responded with an acknowledgement that the DG's request had been received but provided no status update.

Trends in **Safety of Journalists**

Other types of aggression against journalists increased alongside killings since 2012. According to research by freedom of expression groups and the Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), at least 6 countries saw an increase in non-fatal physical attacks in recent years. Incidents include abductions, beatings, destruction of equipment, death threats, attempted assassinations, attacks on infrastructure such as bombings of media offices, illegal detentions and torture.[117] Organized crime appeared to be behind the majority of attacks, but politicians, government officials, and other powerful individuals are also believed to be

the perpetrators in some. Prosecutions in these attacks rarely occurred. Deficiencies in justice systems, corruption within law enforcement agencies, and intimidation of other actors such as prosecutors, judges and investigators, all contributed to patterns of violence and impunity in areas where criminal groups act as powerful and dominant forces. These elements were further enabled by a system of 'narco-politics', which involves drug traffickers' support of political figures to ensure their protection. In addition to physical safety risks, studies found that journalists operating in these climates regularly experienced mental health challenges such as trauma, due to routine contact with violence.[118]

Periods of high political tension and social unrest were dangerous for journalists. In several countries, contentious votes, succession of leadership, referendums, strikes, land disputes and international sports events were met with public protests, accompanied by increases in police summonses, detentions, interrogations, threats, confiscation of equipment and other forms of harassment. Reporting on street protests was particularly hazardous. Journalists were subject to harsh treatment by police and demonstrators, tear gas and rubber bullets. In several instances, journalists had their equipment destroyed.

Figure 4-4: **Journalists killed in Latin America and the Caribbean by country, 2012-2016**

Country	Killed
Mexico	37
Brazil	29
Honduras	19
Guatemala	14
Colombia	12
Paraguay	6
Peru	4
El Salvador	2
Ecuador	1
Haiti	1

Total: **125**

Though incidents of violence against journalists in Caribbean states were far fewer and less severe than in Latin American states, there were cases of threats made to journalists reporting on politics and corruption, assaults on journalists at protests, and risks associated with hurricanes.

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[117] Bock et al 2017; IFEX- ALC 2017; Lanza 2016; Owens 2014; Telesur 2017.
[118] Feinstein 2013.

Gender equality and the safety of journalists

Women journalists have been vulnerable to the increasing levels of violence targeted at the regions' media.[119] Between 2012 and the end of 2016, 6 women journalists were among the killings condemned by UNESCO's Director General. In at least 2 cases, the women were beaten or tortured before their death. While the number of women journalists killed in this 5-year period is slightly less than the previous period (2007 to 2011), which saw 7 women journalists among the victims, other categories of attacks against women in the media have increased in Latin America, with some instances in the Caribbean.

Attacks against women journalists, who were targeted in connection to their reporting, took on characteristic gendered components.[120] In its 2013 annual report the IACHR rapporteur for freedom of expression noted: "violence committed against female journalists because of their work has particular characteristics stemming from the social constructs of gender and discrimination to which women have traditionally been subjected. This violence is manifested in different ways, from murder and sexual violence—including sexual harassment—to intimidation, abuse of power, and threats based on gender."[121]

Several incidents of harassment, including sexual assaults against women by colleagues, were reported without consequence to the offenders. In a 2014 case documented by the NGO Reporters without Borders, 7 employees of a Caribbean state-owned radio station were fired after lodging official complaints about harassment. A survey conducted in Brazil in 2017 by the Brazilian Association of Investigative Journalism and the journalism site Gênero e Número, found that 86 per cent of women journalists had experienced harassment at work, while 83 per cent of women journalists had suffered from some form of psychological trauma stemming from online threats to physical intimidation.[122]

Online violence against women has increased since 2012, including internet smear campaigns which often include sexual references, threats of sexual violence, and death threats, against women who cover sensitive issues. Other cyber-attacks against women included publishing

Figure 4-5: **Sex of journalists killed in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2012-2016**

Female   Male

6

119

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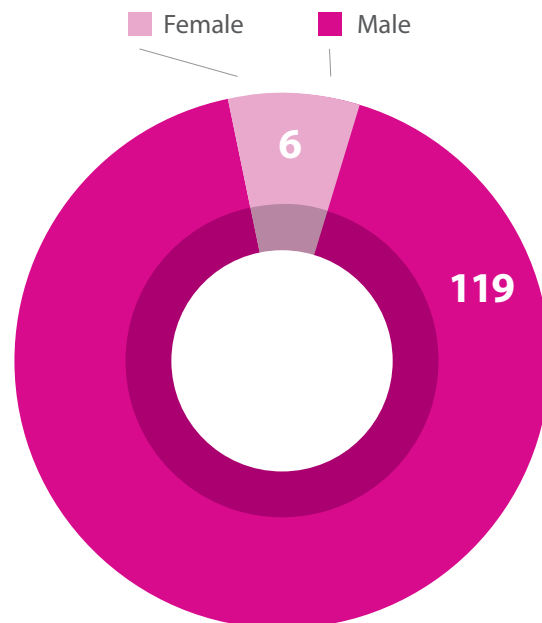
[119] Lanza 2016.
[120] ARTICLE 19 2016.
[121] Lanza 2016.
[122] ABRAJI 2017.

private pictures and other materials aimed at stigmatizing women journalists. The result is gender censorship as many women journalists felt compelled to withdraw from online media.

Some encouraging developments since 2012 include the prosecutions of several suspects in the 2000 rape and assault of Colombian journalist Jineth Bedoya, and the incorporation of a gender specific journalist safety approach into state mechanisms. In 2011, Colombia's journalist protection program was mandated to provide gender-specific protection resources, such as specialized risk assessments for and by women.[123] Other countries that have launched journalist safety mechanisms in recent years have included the need for gender-specific measures in their plans.

Other dimensions in the safety of journalists

The long-term imprisonment of journalists in Latin America and Caribbean states remained at low numbers between 2012 through 2016, relative to most other regions, but by 2016 the number of imprisoned journalists had slightly increased.[124] According to data compiled by the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), only 1 journalist was in prison at the end of 2012. For 2 years, 2013 and 2015, CPJ recorded no imprisoned journalists in Latin America or the Caribbean at the time of its annual census. By the end of 2016, 4 journalists were in prison, though the number dropped to 3 in 2017.[125]

These numbers do not reflect the majority of shorter-term imprisonments (less than year), and other forms of legal repression, which several governments in the region have increasingly enacted against journalists working within the independent and private media. Heavy fines and hostile rhetoric by government leaders have increased insecurity for journalists[126] and forced some outlets to curtail or amend their coverage. Cyber-attacks on websites, arbitrary surveillance and online harassment also took place. Several journalists were banned from travelling.

Several Caribbean countries have removed criminal defamation statutes since 2012. 3 countries, Antigua and Barbuda (in 2015), Jamaica (in 2013), and Grenada (in 2012), abolished criminal libel. Trinidad and Tobago partially repealed criminal libel in 2014, and the Dominican Republic removed prison sentences for defamation of government bodies and public officials. However, new cybercrime laws that potentially stifle freedom of expression in 2 Caribbean countries offset some of these advances. While the last decade has reflected a trend to amend criminal defamation laws in Latin America, most countries still employ criminal laws that can restrict freedom of expression.[127] In 2017, 1 country passed an anti-hate law which has been criticized for stifling political debate.

Physical attacks, arrests and other harassment, reinforced by impunity, increased the overall level of self-censorship among journalists since 2012. In his 2016 annual report, the IACHR freedom of expression rapporteur dubbed several areas in Latin America "Silenced Zones," where violence carried out against journalists or media workers by criminal organizations, at times with acquiescence of local state actors, has cut off information to communities. The Rapporteur also noted that a chilling effect can occur through the use of criminal laws to punish, repress, and inhibit critical speech. Self-censorship evolved

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[123] Boch and Shaw 2017.
[124] Ellerbeck 2015.
[125] CPJ 2017 Imprisoned database and imprisoned archives.
[126] Ponce 2016.
[127] CPJ 2016, Critics are not Criminals.

to the point where outlets published editorials stating they would avoid coverage of organized crime to protect staff from future attacks.[128] In 2017, 1 newspaper shut its doors because the profession had become too dangerous. To a lesser degree, journalists in the Caribbean have also self-censored, mainly in response to political and economic pressure.[129]

Data from the CPJ reflects that the number of journalists entering exile dropped between 2012 and 2015. In 2012, 7 journalists fled their countries and by 2015, that number had dropped to 3. However, freedom of expression groups reported that an increasing number of journalists were forced to go into hiding, relocating   internally or to neighboring countries temporarily, due to death threats and lack of protections from authorities as well as harassment by governments. While capitals and other large urban areas had previously been considered safer than provincial areas, this is becoming less so. In 2016, 1 journalist who relocated to a capital city due to death threats, was found and killed.

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[128] Freedom House 2016.
[129] Gibbings 2013.

Actions taken to enhance the safety of journalists

Levels of commitment to addressing the safety of journalists by Latin American and Caribbean states has improved since 2012. Over 50 per cent of the region, or 19 states, sponsored at least 1 or more of the 12 resolutions addressing the safety of journalists adopted by UN bodies between 2012 and 2017. 13 states sponsored 5 or more. The country which sponsored the most resolutions is Brazil (10), followed by Argentina (8) and Mexico (8).

Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, and Uruguay are members of the 'Group of Friends on the Safety of Journalists' at the UN headquarters in New York. Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay are members of the 'Group of Friends' at UNESCO in Paris. 'The Group of Friends' is an informal working group of states committed to strengthening the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity and its implementation at the national level. By 2017 no Caribbean states had joined 'The Group of Friends'. Nonetheless, the region emerged as a global leader in establishing mechanisms to promote journalist safety. Colombia has maintained a protection program, for journalists since 2000. The program provides security details or equipment to journalists under threat and assists with relocation.[130] Mexico established the office of the Special Prosecutor for Attention for Crimes Against Freedom of Expression (FEADLE) in 2010, with a mandate to investigate attacks against journalists; and in 2012 established the Mechanism to Protect Human Rights Defenders and Journalists. In 2015 Honduras instituted a law to protect journalists, social communicators, human rights defenders and legal practitioners. In 2016, Paraguay signed a letter of intent with UNESCO to establish a permanent safety mechanism for journalists in the country. A program for the protection of journalists in Guatemala was announced in 2016 and while this new program has not yet been implemented, the International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala, an independent investigative body, has been active for over a decade.[131]

There has been strong cooperation between Member States throughout the Latin America region in a UNESCO led-program to train judges and judicial officials in understanding the main issues surrounding freedom of expression, the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity. Since 2013, 5500 justice system workers in Latin America participated in training on international standards on freedom of expression and journalists' safety through online courses.[132]

[130] Bock et al 2017.
[131] Mendel 2016.
[132] World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development Global Report 2017/2018.

Figure 4-6: Latin American and the Caribbean Member States sponsoring UN resolutions on the safety of journalists since 2012

	2012	2013	2014		2015			2016	2017		
	UNHRC	UNGA	UNHRC	UNGA	UNESCO	UNSC	UNGA	UNHRC	UNESCO	UNESCO	UNGA
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Antigua and Barbuda											●
Argentina	●	●	●	●			●		●	●	●
Bahamas											
Barbados											
Belize											●
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)											
Brazil	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●
Chile		●		●		●	●	●			●
Colombia	●	●	●	●			●				
Costa Rica		●	●	●			●				●
Cuba											
Dominica											
Dominican Republic					●				●	●	●
Ecuador			●		●				●	●	
El Salvador		●		●	●		●			●	●
Grenada											
Guatemala	●	●	●	●			●				●
Guyana											
Haiti									●		●
Honduras	●		●	●			●	●			●
Jamaica											
Mexico	●	●		●			●	●		●	●
Nicaragua											
Panama		●		●			●	●			●
Paraguay		●	●	●			●		●	●	●
Peru	●	●	●	●			●	●			●
Saint Kitts and Nevis			●		●				●	●	
Saint Lucia											
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines											
Suriname											
Trinidad and Tobago					●						
Uruguay		●		●			●	●			●
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)											

1
UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL RESOLUTION 21/12: SAFETY OF JOURNALISTS

2
UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 68/163: THE SAFETY OF JOURNALISTS AND THE ISSUE OF IMPUNITY

3
UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL RESOLUTION 27/5: THE SAFETY OF JOURNALISTS

4
UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 69/185: THE SAFETY OF JOURNALISTS AND THE ISSUE OF IMPUNITY

5
UNESCO EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION 196 EX/31: SAFETY OF JOURNALISTS AND THE ISSUE OF IMPUNITY

6
UN SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 2222

7
UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 70/162: THE SAFETY OF JOURNALISTS AND THE ISSUE OF IMPUNITY

8
UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL RESOLUTION 33/2: THE SAFETY OF JOURNALISTS

9
UNESCO EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION 201 EX/SR.10: SAFETY OF JOURNALISTS AND THE ISSUE OF IMPUNITY

10
UNESCO EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION 202 EX/50: SAFETY OF JOURNALISTS

11
UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 72/175: THE SAFETY OF JOURNALISTS AND THE ISSUE OF IMPUNITY

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Appendices

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Regional Groupings

WESTERN EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA (27)

Andorra	Greece	Norway
Austria	Iceland	Portugal
Belgium	Ireland	San Marino
Canada	Israel	Spain
Cyprus	Italy	Sweden
Denmark	Luxembourg	Switzerland
Finland	Malta	Turkey
France	Monaco	United Kingdom of Great
Germany	Netherlands	Britain and Northern Ireland
		United States of America

CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE (25)

Albania	Estonia	Republic of Moldova
Armenia	The Former Yugoslav	Romania
Azerbaijan	Republic of Macedonia	Ukraine
Belarus	Georgia	Uzbekistan
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Hungary	Russian Federation
Bulgaria	Latvia	Serbia
Croatia	Lithuania	Slovakia
Czech Republic	Montenegro	Slovenia
	Poland	Tajikistan

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (33)

Antigua and Barbuda	Dominican Republic	Paraguay
Argentina	Ecuador	Peru
Bahamas	El Salvador	Saint Kitts and Nevis
Barbados	Grenada	Saint Lucia
Belize	Guatemala	Saint Vincent and the
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Guyana	Grenadines
Brazil	Haiti	Suriname
Chile	Honduras	Trinidad and Tobago
Colombia	Jamaica	Uruguay
Costa Rica	Mexico	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)
Cuba	Nicaragua	
Dominica	Panama	

ASIA AND THE PACIFIC (44)

Afghanistan	Kazakhstan	Timor-Leste
Australia	Kiribati	Malaysia
Bangladesh	Kyrgyzstan	Maldives
Bhutan	Lao People's Democratic	Marshall Islands
Brunei Darussalam	Republic	Micronesia (Federated States of)
Cambodia	Niue	Mongolia
China	Pakistan	Myanmar
Cook Islands	Palau	Nauru
Democratic People's	Papua New Guinea	Nepal
Republic of Korea	Philippines	New Zealand
Fiji	Republic of Korea	Tonga
India	Samoa	Turkmenistan
Indonesia	Singapore	Tuvalu
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Solomon Islands	Vanuatu
Japan	Sri Lanka	Viet Nam
	Thailand	

AFRICA (47)

Angola	Ethiopia	Nigeria
Benin	Gabon	Rwanda
Botswana	Gambia	Sao Tome and Principe
Burkina Faso	Ghana	Senegal
Burundi	Guinea	Seychelles
Cameroon	Guinea-Bissau	Sierra Leone
Cape Verde	Kenya	Somalia
Central African Republic	Lesotho	South Africa
Chad	Liberia	South Sudan
Comoros	Madagascar	Swaziland
Congo	Malawi	Togo
Côte d'Ivoire	Mali	Uganda
Democratic Republic of	Mauritius	United Republic of Tanzania
the Congo	Mozambique	Zambia
Djibouti	Namibia	Zimbabwe
Equatorial Guinea	Niger	
Eritrea		

ARAB REGION (19)

Algeria	Libya	Saudi Arabia
Bahrain	Mauritania	Sudan
Egypt	Morocco	Syrian Arab Republic
Iraq	Oman	Tunisia
Jordan	Palestine	United Arab Emirates
Kuwait	Qatar	Yemen
Lebanon		

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World Trends in
Freedom
of Expression
and Media
Development

REGIONAL OVERVIEW 2017/2018

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Across the world, journalism is under fire. While more individuals have access to content than ever before, the combination of political polarization and technological change have facilitated the rapid spread of hate speech, misogyny and unverified 'fake news', often leading to disproportionate restrictions on freedom of expression. In an ever-growing number of countries, journalists face physical and verbal attacks that threaten their ability to report news and information to the public.

In the face of such challenges, this new volume in the World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development series offers a critical analysis of new trends in media freedom, pluralism, independence and the safety of journalists. With a special focus on gender equality in the media, the report provides a global perspective that serves as an essential resource for UNESCO Member States, international organizations, civil society groups, academia and individuals seeking to understand the changing global media landscape.

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