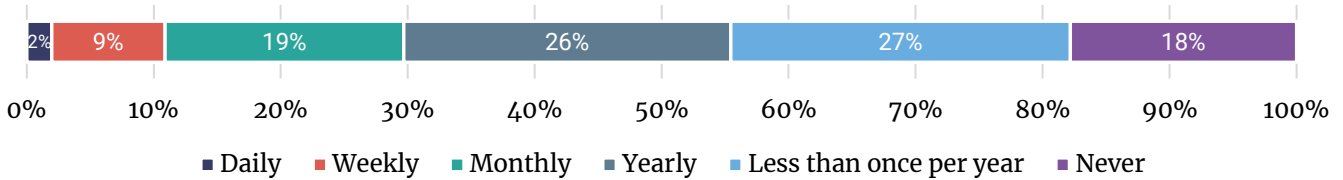


Female journalists and security

Experiences with aggression, threats and intimidation

82% of female journalists have experienced aggression, intimidation and threats when doing their jobs. Half of the respondents said that it had increased (strongly) over the past 5 years. The interviews showed that the nature of incidents has changed, namely that they have become more explicit and threatening than before.



Of the various types of intimidation that female journalists could face, online verbal aggression is the most commonly encountered. Over half (54%) have experienced it. Four out of ten experienced offline verbal aggression. Three out of ten (27%) encountered online threats and 17% encountered offline threats. Online derogatory and discriminatory comments are the most commonly encountered form among female journalists.

24%

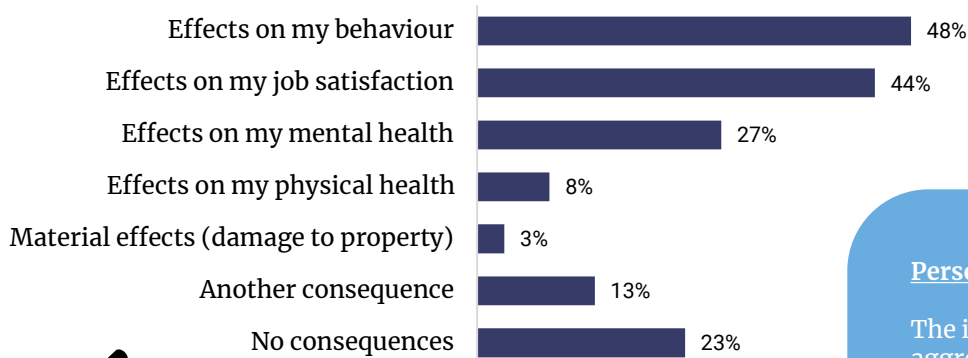
..of all aggression, threats or intimidation experienced by female journalists takes place via Twitter.

33%

..of female journalists that face aggression, threats or intimidation experience it as discrimination on the basis of sex.

Impact of incidents

Almost half of the women that encountered aggression, intimidation and threats thought it affected their behaviour and 44% thought it affected their job satisfaction. A quarter thought it affected their mental health.



Consequences for work

The interviews showed that journalists have become more cautious. Some choose their words more carefully and feel less free to do their jobs. Others were unable to (temporarily) do their jobs due to their experiences with aggression, threats and intimidation.

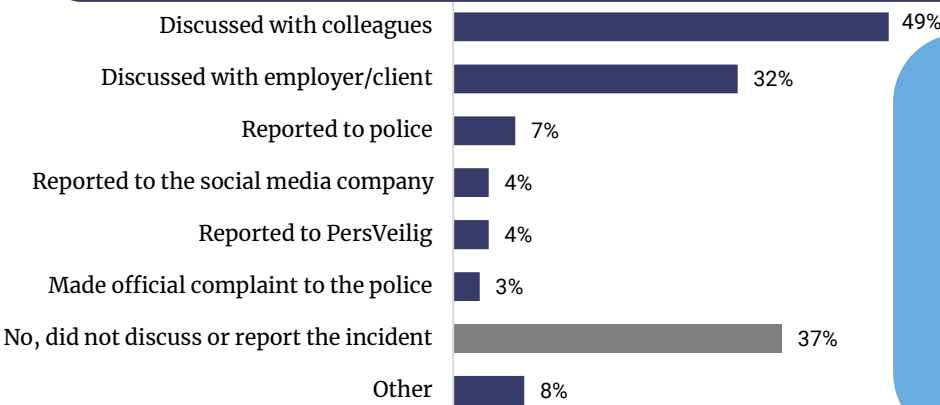
Personal consequences

The interviews showed that aggression, intimidation and threats can result in a general sense of insecurity, because there is a constant threat or because they must constantly be on their guard. Some experienced physical or mental complaints after experiencing intimidation. In some cases, it actually resulted in them having to go into therapy.

Female journalists and security

Discussion and reporting

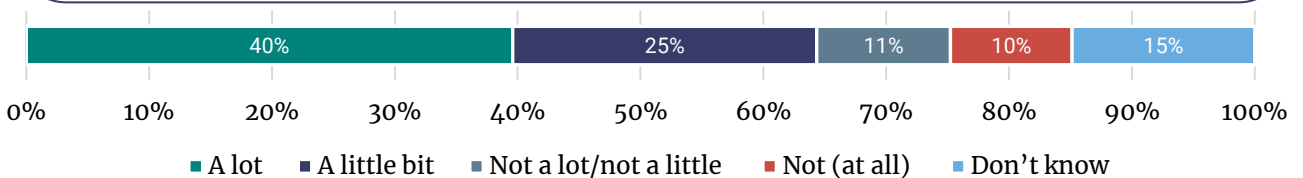
Almost four out of ten (37%) female journalists that encountered aggression, intimidation or threats over the past year did not discuss it with anyone. Half (49%) discussed it with colleagues; a third (32%) shared their experiences with their employer or client. Only four percent reported such incidents to such as PersVeilig (4%).



The interviews showed that discussing the matter with colleagues is generally regarded as worthwhile, because this allows experiences to be shared. Contracted journalists often inform their employer about physical aggression or threats, but do not always do so when it comes to online aggression or threats. It is more difficult for freelance journalists to report aggression, threats or intimidation because they do not always know who they can contact.

Experienced support

The majority of female journalists that experienced aggression, threats or intimidation over the past year felt 'a little bit' (25%) or 'a lot of' (40%) support from their employer, client and/or colleagues. One in ten did not feel supported (at all). The interviews showed that journalists who felt supported experienced this support in the form of security measures that can be offered by the client or employer. For example, organising security guards. But it is also important for employers or clients to fully support the journalist who is being threatened or exposed to aggression.



Need for support

The interviews resulted in five suggestions for future support.

Structural approach to the problem by emphasising the importance of press freedom and having better ways to address aggressors.

Awareness and training: "I think it will be good for all journalists to have more information about how to better deal with aggression. The PersVeilig course is very useful in this regard. Everyone can take part in it but, as an organisation, you should simply say that everyone is taking part."

Representation of interests

It is important for journalists that they are taken seriously, and that someone listens to what they are experiencing.

Information about how journalists can do their job in a safe manner. This relates to measures that can be taken to increase security, as well as tips about how to deal with aggression, intimidation and threats.