

“Media and Conflict in Crisis Situations”

Annexes

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Interview Journalist 1

Researcher

Hätte ich die erste Frage hast du schon mal wegen deines Geschlechts ein Sicherheitsproblem gehabt?

Als du aus einem Konfliktgebiet berichtet hast und wie bist du damit umgegangen bei mir?

Journalist 1

Ja, hatte ich auf jeden Fall, also ich bin angegriffen worden, weil ich eine Frau bin.

Ja.

Researcher

Magst du da noch erläutern, oder?

Journalist 1

Ja, also, das war konkret war das auf dem Tahrir Platz.

Ein Jahr nach der Revolution also sozusagen zum Jubiläum und?

Es ging darum, Journalisten aus dem öffentlichen Raum zu verbannen.

Und speziell Frauen warum

Kann ich eigentlich so nicht wirklich beantworten, weil klar das hat vielleicht einfach auch was damit zu tun, dass Frauen vielleicht.

Auch irgendeine Art von Funktionen haben in der Gesellschaft und in dem Fall waren es eben sozusagen noch Mubaraks Schergen, die.

Also Jagd auf weibliche Journalistinnen hauptsächlich gemacht haben, aber auch auf Einheimische und es ist sehr bekannt geworden, da gab es ein Bild, da haben sie eine, hat das Militär eine Frau?

Sehr gedemütigt auf dem Platz und haben ja im Grunde genommen die Klamotten so ausgezogen und haben sich so weggezogen und man hat ihren blauen BH gesehen und dieses Bild ist dann natürlich durch alle Medien gegangen und das sollte natürlich dann auch sozusagen abschreckendes Beispiel sein für alle Frauen, weil niemand natürlich gerade in so einem kulturellen Kontext so.

In den Medien sein möchte, weil man ja nicht nur für sich selber verantwortlich ist.

Und die Scham hat, sondern weil man ja natürlich auch die Familie da wahnsinnig so befleckt sozusagen und.

Das war ganz also konkret gegen Frauen gemacht und diese Bilder sind auch kein Zufall und ich bin extrem attackiert worden.

Es gab auch so eine Amerikanerin, der ist es auch, was ähnliches passiert und ich bin ganz krass halt attackiert worden und verschleppt worden und wir sollten also es war wirklich so ne Art Todeskampf, weil dann so eine Massenhysterie angefangen hat und dann also wieso Hooligans auf einmal und jeder hat einfach immer nur einen Handgriff gemacht, aber am Schluss ist man dann trotzdem irgendwie.

Also wenn man Pech hat tot und dann lagen schon Menschen auf dem Boden und das war so ein Pulk und die sind dann über diese Menschen drüber gestolpert und so und ich die Leute, die mich retten wollten, hätten mich beinahe erstickt, weil ich noch eine Tasche hatte und so und dann also ganz schlimme Sachen sind passiert und das war tatsächlich so, weil ich ne Frau war und ganz komisch am nächsten Tag.

Gab es ein Video davon.

Also ich fand es jetzt eigentlich ganz gut, weil man es halt dann ich bin halt so ich möchte das dokumentiert haben, aber ist auch irgendwie komisch, warum ein Mensch sich hinstellt und es filmt.

Researcher

Ja.

Journalist 1

Und da wusste ich eben nicht, ob das dann vielleicht jetzt im Nachhinein eigentlich jetzt erst während des Gesprächs, ob das vielleicht auch so als Warnung gedacht war, dass man irgendwie, dass es gefährlich ist und dass man da nicht hingehen soll.

Researcher

Ok.

Journalist 1

Einige von denen wurden auch verletzt und denen ging es eben auch darum, dass man ihr Bild in der Öffentlichkeit eben nicht verzerrt, weil es war natürlich, wie es halt so immer ist 90% gute Leute da und die paar Hooligans würde ich jetzt mal sagen, in dem Fall politische haben natürlich das Bild in der Öffentlichkeit dann geprägt und es ging meines Erachtens darum, dass man das Narrativ prägt.

Prägt auf dem Tahrir Platz.

Und ja, und die einen wollten eben, dass es n Frauenfeindlicher westlich feindlicher journalistenfreier Platz bleibt.

Und die anderen haben ja dafür die Revolution eigentlich nicht gestartet, dass dann die Leute auf diesem Platz dann wieder zurückfallen, ja, also das war definitiv, weil ich eine Frau war, ja.

Researcher

Mhm.

Ja.

Mhm.

OK und die werden auch dann oft über einen Kamm geschert.

Denk ich mal ne also wenn man dann so diese.

Journalist 1

Ja, das wussten wir auch und deswegen haben die alles mögliche gemacht und also haben ja wirklich der eine hat Verbrennungen davongetragen, die haben alles gemacht, was möglich ist und am nächsten Tag wussten die, in welchem Hotel ich bin und haben dann noch ein Blumenstrauß gebr hat und dann sich entschuldigt.

Für welche Artfläche, mit denen sie gar nichts zu tun haben?

Und das ist halt natürlich aber auch so funktionieren natürlich die Medien, weil man natürlich das nicht zeigt, sondern nur den Angriff zeigt.

Researcher

Ich mach mal weiter wie schätzt du die Sicherheitsrisiken ein, wenn du dich auf den Einsatz in einem Konfliktgebiet vorbereitest?

Glaubst du, dass sich deine Einschätzung von den deiner männlichen Kollegen unterscheiden?

Journalist 1

Kann ich jetzt so nicht sagen, aber bei mir ist natürlich so ich bin ja in so in Gebieten, wo jetzt nicht so viele anderen Journalisten vielleicht noch nicht sind oder generell nicht sind also ich hatte mich ja sozusagen spezialisiert aufsagen wir mal die toten Winkel unserer Gesellschaft.

Deswegen war ich zum Beispiel nicht in der Ukraine, weil in der Ukraine waren schon 1000 gute Journalisten.

Da braucht man meine Meinung nicht dazu und ich bin halt dann konkret sage ich jetzt mal bei den Warlords und Kongo oder in den Nuberbergen im Sudan und da sind eben einfach keine anderen Journalisten davor gewesen.

Deswegen kann ich schlecht Erfahrungsschatz zurückgreifen, nur zum Beispiel in den Nuber Bergen war ein super Journalist da, der Wolfgang Bauer von der Zeit, dass also immer der Beste von allen ist, so toll und da kam aber raus, dass die wahrscheinlich chemische Waffen benutzen, und das ist dann das Einzige, was ich so in meinem Kopf habe und dann hat man natürlich extreme Angst und wenn man dann vor Ort das äh, ist es dann auch ganz anders, deswegen hatte ich mir sozusagen angewöhnt, eben nicht das Militär zu fragen und nicht irgendwelche Leute zu fragen, sondern es eigentlich mit mir.

Selber auszumachen.

Wenn ich halt dann von vor Ort bin, einfach sehr viel mit den Einheimischen zusammenarbeite, weil diese Übervorbereitung kann ein total beeinflussen und auch man wird dann ganz komisch also einer hat mir dann irgendwie mal so jemand von so einer Sicherheitsfirma.

Eine Verbindung hergestellt und die Sicherheitsfirmen, die Leben natürlich auch davon, dass sie sagen ohne uns kommt hier keiner lebend rein und raus und diese...

Genau und das Gleiche ist mir dann auch immer im Irak passiert, dass ich da so total geschützt war mit so 4 Leuten und Kalaschnikow und gepanzerte Auto und also man hat wirklich gedacht, dass man also sofort in Luft fliegt, wenn man rausgeht und dann bin ich aber danach noch eine Woche alleine dort geblieben, hatte auch gar kein Geld für die Sicherheit und dann sieht man, dass das oft auch, also auch ehrlich gesagt ein Business ist ja.

Researcher

Ja.

Schränkt einen das dann auch vielleicht ein bisschen ein, wenn man von so viel Sicherheitsmenschen eher?

Journalist 1

Ja total ja natürlich weil erstens man lenkt ja sehr viel Aufmerksamkeit auf einen selber und man kriegt ja eigentlich überhaupt gar kein Gespür von dem Land also man kommt ja nicht einmal mit dem, sagen wir mal Geldschein in Berührung es gibt keine Zufallsbekanntschaften, man kann jetzt nicht irgendwo anhalten und Tee kaufen oder so also man hat ein ganz anderes Bild als wenn man halt logischerweise. So in die Bevölkerung hineintaucht.

Researcher

Ja, ja OK.

Dann mach ich weiter.

Inwiefern beeinflussen geschlechterspezifische Sicherheitsbedenken deine Entscheidungen, wenn es darum geht, über Geschichten in gefährlichen Regionen zu berichten?

Journalist 1

Also ich war schon 2010 im Kongo und da war das eben so ich find dieses Wort so komisch, aber es war die Vergewaltigungshauptstädte der Welt.

Ja, und nirgendwo wurden halt so viele Frauen vergewaltigt übrigens auch Männer wie dort, und das war weil Halt dieser Krieg schon so lange, also im Dunklen stattgefunden hat und diese Vergewaltigungen dann eben nicht mehr nur rein sexuell waren.

So hab ich mir das vorgestellt, aber ich hab halt lange gebraucht, es ist ja jetzt alles ganz normal, aber ich hab das selber einfach sehr lange gebraucht verstehen, dass das alles System hat, also dass diese Vergewaltigungen sind auch dort ein Tabu, aber jede Rebellengruppe oder auch das Militär benutzt die man muss es machen, weil dann ist die Brücke zum zivilen Leben abgebrochen, man vergewaltigt, um Dörfer zu bestrafen, die mit den Rebellen oder mit der Regierung zusammenarbeiten.

Man macht zwar man, es kann ähm und es geht natürlich auch ganz speziell darum, die Frauen.

Zu eliminieren, weil in dem Rualen, also in dem dörflichen Gebilde, sind die Frauen extrem wichtig heute, wenn du jetzt in New York wohnst, ist es egal, du kannst alleine in Penthouse wohnen, aber man braucht die Frauen, die Frauen sind Mütter, Schwestern, die Kochen, die kümmern sich um alles, wenn die Männer weg sind.

Und wenn man diese Frau dann so krass zurichtet, weil die Vergewaltigungen sind, oft auch mit Gegenständen, die dann diese Membrane zerstören.

Das nennt man Fish Tulla und die werden dann.

Ja, also aus der Gemeinschaft ausgegliedert und dort ist es ein Todesurteil.

Ja und wenn man diese Schlüsselfigur rausnimmt?

Dann gibt es natürlich keine Ehe mehr, dann gibt es keine Familie mehr und dann haben die keine Mutter mehr, dann haben die keine Schwester mehr und so weiter und dann zerbricht diese ganze Gemeinschaft und so kann man auf ne sehr billige Art und Weise.

Ganze Regionen zerstören, weil man Vergewaltigungen als billige.

Massenvernichtungswaffe benutzt.

Das hat lange gedauert, bis ich das verstanden hab, dass das jetzt keine kongolesische Erfindung ist, sondern dass es eigentlich in jedem Krieg umso länger er anhält.

und benutzt wird, weil der Körper der Frau immer irgendwie eine Message an den Feind ist und.

Ja, deswegen hab ich mich eigentlich sehr also instinktiv darauf irgendwie spezialisiert, weil ich das immer wieder gesehen hab und dann irgendwann verstanden hab, dass das eben überhaupt nichts mit der Kultur oder der Ethnie oder sonst irgendwas zu tun hat, sondern das ist einfach Macht.

Researcher

Mhm, Mhm, ja. Und?

Also und inwiefern hast du dann?

Irgendwie da Sicherheitsbedenken gesehen, also vielleicht auch für die Quelle, also wenn du irgendwie mit denen gearbeitet hast oder in Interviews geführt hast oder was hast du dann da irgendwelche Vorkehrungen getroffen?

Dass die, dass die Quelle dann auch geschützt ist oder irgendwie spezifisch geschützt ist, weil sie eine Frau ist vielleicht oder?

Journalist 1

Ja fand ich sehr interessant, weil ich wollte eben dann sozusagen die Heldin dort treffen.

Die hatte Schlimmste erlebt, was man erleben kann, die wurde also ich weiß gar nicht, ob das jetzt zu krass ist also.

Wie gesagt, diese Vergewaltigungen haben ja dort Strategie und die sind dann eben dort bei ihr rein und haben also sie halt vergewaltigt und ihre Töchter vergewaltigt und den Mann gefesselt und man nennt es Forst, kannibalism, äh.

Die musste Teile von ihrem Mann essen.

Weil sie sonst halt die Familie umgebracht hätten, und das ist ja so richtig.

Also danach kannst du ja nie wieder normal werden.

Und diese Frau ist eine ganz spezielle tolle Frau gewesen.

Mama Massika, die hat, anstatt verrückt zu werden oder Amok zu laufen hat sie ein Heim gegründet, wo lauter so vergewaltigte Frauen die ähnliche?

Schicksale erlitten haben und natürlich dann auch viele schwanger werden von den Verteilungen einen Zufluchtsort finden und in Ruhe die Kinder zur Welt bringen können und halt in der wie die Frauen halt sind, in der Solidarität geheilt werden können und sie hat eben was gemacht, was davor noch nie jemand gemacht hatte.

Die Täter beim Namen genannt und nicht die Opfer, weil sonst sagt man keine Ahnung.

Die Massika wurde vergewaltigt und nicht der hat das gemacht.

Das ist natürlich da hat sie sich extrem viele Feinde gemacht, weil es durch alle Gesellschaftsschichten durchgeht.

Es ist nicht, dass die einen das nur machen, sondern alle und sie war und extremer Gefahr und als ich in der Hütte war, war noch über Schusslöcher schon drin, weil die fahren dann einfach vorbei und schießen rein in der Hoffnung, dass jemand erwischen.

Aber durch solche Arten wie mein Interview dann das dann rausgekommen ist, hat sie dann ne Sichtbarkeit und diese Sichtbarkeit ist wieder n Schutz, weil eine Bäuerin die Katze einfach umlegen, aber eine, die irgendwie so schon 5 mal in der Zeitung war, da muss dann die Regierung drauf reagieren und muss investigieren und dadurch hat sie eigentlich schon ist sie kein Nobody, ja also das fand ich ganz interessant, dass die dann dadurch auch eine Art Schutzschild haben.

Researcher

Ja ja, das ist spannend, auf jeden Fall.

Ich mach weiter.

Wo bin ich stehen geblieben?

Gab es Momente, in denen Sicherheitsbedenken dich dazu gezwungen haben, deine journalistischen Praktiken anzupassen?

Und wenn ja kannst du ein Beispiel nennen?

Journalist 1

Ja, also anpassen.

In dem Fall ist, dass man es halt nicht mehr dieses Risiko eingeht und dass man zu Hause sitzen bleibt.

Und per whatsapp oder so NGOS anruft?

Aber das ist natürlich ne andere Art von Journalismus.

Oder wenn man in einem Flüchtlingslager geht an der Grenze und dann trifft man das hört sich jetzt grad schrecklich an was ich sag aber dann trifft man nur die Leute, diese eine Gruppe, die das Land verlassen hat und die hat natürlich ein spezielles Bild von der ganzen Lage, sonst werden sie nicht weggegangen.

Aber allein der journalistische Mehrwert weiß ich nicht.

Ob der dann also ist es dann ein ausgewogenes Bild oder ist es einfach eine ein Mikrokosmos, der echt ist, aber einfach nur ein Teil von?

Vielen verschiedenen Wahrheiten ist deswegen also für mich ist halt schon wichtig, dass man halt First ten Informations hat und nicht.

Auch so dieses westliche Gewollte, also viele Politiker, aber auch viele Journalisten haben ein Wunschbild sich dann irgendwie erfüllen muss.

Und wenn ich zum Beispiel in einem Flüchtlingslager bin und dann kommt ein Kind an und sagt My Dream is, dann weiß ich, dass da schon 10 amerikanische NGOS waren, weil kein normales Kind würde so reden.

Und das ist dann so, was sich die Westen sich wünscht, dass jeder ein Traum hat und jeder Ingenieur werden möchte.

Und Astronaut und so?

Researcher

Ja ja.

Das haben wir jetzt eben schon ein bisschen angeschnitten, aber vielleicht hast du noch ein zweites Beispiel wie gehst du mit Gesprächen mit Quellen in Umgebungen um?

In den Geschlechterrollen besonders ausgeprägt sind.

Journalist 1

Das da hab ich so einen Vorteil immer gehabt, weil ich eben als Frau in die Frauenbereich rein kann.

Was meinen Männern männlichen Kollegen also sehr?

Also unmöglich war und dadurch, dass ich aber auch eine westliche Frau bin, hatte ich teilweise eben auch so einen Sonderstatus, dass ich dann bei den Männern dabei sein kann.

Oh, das war ein ganz toller Einblick, weil es ja tatsächlich ganz unterschiedliche, also getrennte Leben sind, aber mit ganz unterschiedlichen Blickweisen und fand ich super spannend, ja.

Researcher

Mhm, würdest du dann sagen.

Dass Frauen, die nicht aus dem Westen sind, also aus Europa oder Amerika, dass die mehr Schwierigkeiten haben oder weiß ich nicht, zum Beispiel lokale Journalistinnen.

Dass die Schwierigkeiten haben, da mit Männern zu sprechen?

Journalist 1

Könnte ich mir jetzt schon vorstellen, also in dem speziellen Bereich, auf jeden Fall.

Es wäre unmöglich gewesen, vielleicht keine Ahnung, wenn dann irgendwie CNN irgendwo draufsteht und so aber eigentlich ist dieser der kulturelle Kontext so groß.

Es ist so also fast unüberwindbar.

Also zu dem Zeitpunkt ich red, aber ich, ich war jetzt vielleicht hat sich da jetzt irgendwas geändert, aber ich kann es mir nicht vorstellen.

Researcher

Hast du Schwierigkeiten beim Zugang zur Information oder Quellen aufgrund deines Geschlechts erlebt, also quasi die Kehrseite jetzt wie hast du es geschafft, diese Hindernisse zu überwinden?

Journalist 1

Ich fand eigentlich immer ganz gut, weil man mich nicht so ernst genommen hat.

Und wenn man nicht ernst genommen wird, dann reden die Leute frei, wenn ich jetzt ankomme und hab irgendwie 10 Leute und jeder hat n Ausweis unterhalb 20 Lichtkameras und so dann überlegt man sich einfach was man sagt, aber wenn da irgendwie so ne sagen wir mal Dumpfbacke kommt die so ausschaut, als hätte sich verlaufen, dann redet man ganz offen.

Researcher

Mhm, Mhm, halt auch irgendwie weniger eingeschüchtert oder so, ne wenn man irgendwie oh.

Journalist 1

Weil man nichts befürchten hat.

Ja, weil das informeller auch rüberkommt.

Researcher

Mhm, Mhm, OK.

Welche Art von Unterstützung oder Ressourcen empfindest du als essenziell, um deine Arbeit bei der um deine Sicherheit bei der Arbeit in Konfliktregionen zu gewährleisten?

Journalist 1

Bei mir war es einfach die Einheimischen.

Der Zugang zu den Einheimischen und kein Gerät auf der Welt kann dann so viel bringen, wie das.

Ich kann auch ein konkretes Beispiel nennen wir waren in einem Kriegsgebiet, das Autos stecken geblieben weit und breit also da gab es gar nichts, also wüste und irgendwo, es gab keine Handynetze und die Leute dort hatten auch gar kein Handy und der Typ, mit dem ich unterwegs war, der hatte ein Satellitentelefon und hat dann dieses Satellitentelefon zusammengebaut und.

Ja, um so nach einer Stunde habe ich ihn gefragt, ob er das jetzt geklappt hat, meinte er ja, but I Don't know who to call?

Benzinkanister zu Hause hat aber der hat kein Telefon, also es bringt eben unsere Technik bringt nichts, wenn man kein Netzwerk mit den Einheimischen hat und ohne dir ist man aufgeschmissen einfach.

Researcher

Mhm aber von dem, was du bis jetzt erzählt hast, sind die ja auch häufig einfach sehr offen oder sehr freundlich.

Journalist 1

Wahnsinn, das wär ohne die das wär ist unmöglich und das ist natürlich auch, was man vielleicht sich schlecht vorstellen kann im Westen, dass die arabische Welt so unglaublich gastfreundlich ist und dass dieses Recht.

Dieses Gastrecht, das überhaupt ermöglicht, sonst würde kein Mensch da in irgendeiner Form von A nach B kommen und das kann man sich im Westen übrigens gar nicht vorstellen, dass man bei Fremden übernachten kann, die einen gar nicht kennen und dass die sagen Nein, ja und erstmal der Cousin wohnt 2 Dörfer weiter und da kann man dann auch übernachten, obwohl man die noch nie gesehen hat.

Und die Kochen für einen und das ist immer schwer vorstellbar, weil die denken dann immer man hat keine Ahnung, die übersetzen halt ihre Welt immer in die Welt der anderen anderen.

Researcher

Ich hab ein bisschen über dich gelesen, ich war mir jetzt aber nicht mehr ganz sicher, ob du mal für eine Nachrichtenorganisation direkt gearbeitet hast.

Trotzdem vielleicht kannst du trotzdem deine Einschätzung gehen.

Glaubst du, dass Nachrichtenorganisationen genug tun, um Journalistinnen in solchen Situationen zu unterstützen?

Warum oder warum nicht?

Journalist 1

Ich glaube, es ist schwieriger, als man denkt, weil man natürlich auch nicht jemanden jetzt da reinlaufen lassen kann, wenn man also dort angestellt ist, weil ein Bein weg ist oder Schlimmeres dann wer zahlt das?

Ja dann es hört sich jetzt ganz schlimm an, was ich sag, aber die wollen natürlich dieses Risiko nicht eingehen, weil das Risiko ist da.

Was machen die, wenn die Person entführt wird?

Deswegen ist es leider gang und gäbe, dass man eigentlich so Footage von denen dann kauft und diese Freiberufler eigentlich ganz schrecklich behandelt.

Und das sind aber eigentlich die einzigen wirklich vor Ort sind und die eigentlich total ausnutzt und wie Dreck behandelt der.

Researcher

OK, schrecklich.

Hast du im Laufe der Zeit Veränderungen darin wahrgenommen, wie die Branche mit geschlechtsspezifischen Sicherheitsherausforderungen umgeht?

Journalist 1

Hab ich keine Erfahrung, weil ich so Eigenbrötler bin.

Researcher

Ich hab nur noch eine Frage eigentlich, ob du noch irgendwas hinzufügen möchtest, ob dir noch irgendwas einfällt, was du als wichtig empfindest zu sagen.

Journalist 1

Was ich halt sehr wichtig finde ist dass man also einem Datenzeitalter, wo Daten alle sind irgendwie die Leute auch vor Ort schickt diesen Filter rausnimmt also man hat immer den Filter, weil man dann mit einer NGO spricht oder so ja, aber die sind natürlich auch genauso gepolt, aber noch so viel wie Leute vor Ort schicken und das irgendwie auch unterstützen und sichtbar machen und.

Fänd es eigentlich also sehr unzeitgemäß, wenige Leute vor Ort zu haben und dann eigentlich auch immer mehr von der gleichen Meinung also es gibt ja eigentlich jetzt auch niemanden, der eine andere Meinung Madrid als oder eine andere Perspektive hat.

Das ist ja eigentlich immer nur noch alle sagen das gleiche.

Und da finde ich so schon so Perspektivwechsel ganz interessant und das bedeutet nicht, dass man diese Gegenseite versteht, oder in einer Form für Gutheit.

Aber es geht darum, die Logik des anderen zu verstehen, und deswegen finde ich das schon wichtig, dass man auf allen Seiten ist und nicht immer wieder die gleiche Rolle.

Für immer und ewig.

Reproduziert.

Researcher

Ja toll, dann ist es das schon gewesen. Vielen Dank!

Interview Journalist 1 – Translation

Researcher:

Have you ever encountered a safety issue specifically because of your gender while reporting from a conflict zone? And how did you deal with it?

Journalist 1:

Yes, absolutely. I was attacked because I'm a woman. It happened on Tahrir Square, during the one-year anniversary of the revolution. The aim was to drive journalists especially women out of public spaces. I can't fully explain why women in particular were targeted, but it likely has to do with the roles women play in society. In this case, it was remnants of Mubarak's regime who were primarily hunting female journalists and also local women.

There was a widely circulated image of the military humiliating a woman stripping her clothes and exposing her blue bra. It was meant as a warning: in that cultural context, such public shame doesn't just affect the woman, but also dishonors the family. The attack I experienced was part of that pattern. I was violently assaulted and dragged away it became a kind of fight for survival. People panicked and trampled each other. Those who tried to save me almost suffocated me in the process.

Interestingly, a video of the incident surfaced the next day. On one hand, I appreciated the documentation, but on the other, it felt strange that someone had simply stood there filming. Maybe it was also meant as a warning to show how dangerous it was to be there.

Some of the attackers were injured too. But what stood out was the attempt to shape the public narrative. Although 90% of the people at the square were peaceful, a few violent individuals created an image of hostility against women, against the West, and against the press. Some wanted the square to remain that way. That was clearly not what the revolution was for. And yes, the attack happened to me because I was a woman.

The day after, they somehow knew which hotel I was staying at and sent me flowers as an apology supposedly from people not involved in the attack. But of course, the media only shows the attack, not the apology.

Researcher:

How do you assess safety risks when preparing for an assignment in a conflict zone? Do you think your assessment differs from that of male colleagues?

Journalist 1:

That's hard to say. My work tends to take me to areas where few or no other journalists go what I call the blind spots of society. I didn't go to Ukraine, for example, because there were already so many excellent reporters covering it. Instead, I focused on places like the Nuba Mountains in Sudan or warlord-controlled regions of the Congo places where journalists rarely go.

So I can't rely on much collective experience. In the Nuba Mountains, for instance, there was one great journalist, Wolfgang Bauer, who reported on suspected chemical weapons being used. That kind of thing stays in your head and heightens fear. But once on the ground, things often feel very different.

That's why I've stopped relying on official sources or military advice. Instead, I try to navigate these decisions internally, based on local contacts and gut feeling. Too much "security prep" can actually distort your perception. At one point, a private security company got involved and told me I'd never get in or out alive without them it's a business model, really.

I had the same experience in Iraq: I was accompanied by four bodyguards, an armored vehicle, and heavy weaponry. It made it feel like death was imminent. But once I stayed an extra week without all that protection because I couldn't afford it I realized much of it was exaggerated.

Researcher:

Does having that kind of security entourage restrict your reporting?

Journalist 1:

Absolutely. It draws attention and creates distance. You don't get a true sense of the country. You don't touch local currency, meet people by chance, or stop for tea. You don't immerse yourself in the environment at all.

Researcher:

To what extent do gender-specific safety concerns influence your decisions about which stories to cover in dangerous regions?

Journalist 1:

I was in Congo back in 2010, at a time when it was called "the rape capital of the world."

Both women and men were being raped on a large scale. These were not just acts of sexual violence they had become systematic. It took me a long time to fully understand that.

Rape there had become a weapon of war. It was used to punish villages for cooperating with either the government or the rebels. Women were especially targeted not only to inflict harm but to destroy entire communities. In rural areas, women are central: they are mothers, sisters, caretakers. If you destroy a woman's body and social standing, the whole village can fall apart. Many of these rapes involved objects that caused permanent injury, leading to conditions like fistulas. Women were then ostracized essentially a death sentence.

In these communities, if you eliminate the women, you eliminate the family structure: no more mothers, no sisters, no wives. It was a brutal but cost-effective way to destroy entire regions. I had to learn that rape isn't just an individual act it's a cheap weapon of mass destruction used in prolonged conflicts. And the female body always becomes a message to the enemy.

Yes, that's actually why I instinctively ended up specializing in this area because I kept seeing it happen, and at some point, I realized it had nothing to do with culture, ethnicity, or anything like that. It's simply about power.

Researcher:

Mhm, right. And in what way did you encounter safety concerns in that context? I mean, perhaps also for your source when you were working with them or conducting interviews did you take any specific precautions to protect the source? Especially if the source was a woman?

Journalist 1:

Yes, I found that very interesting. I had wanted to meet the "heroine" there someone who had experienced the absolute worst that one can endure. I'm not even sure how to describe it, it might be too extreme...

As I mentioned, those rapes were strategic. The men broke into her home, raped her, raped her daughters, tied up her husband and then committed what's called "forced cannibalism."

She was forced to eat parts of her husband. Otherwise, they would have killed the rest of the family.

There's no coming back from something like that.

And yet this woman Mama Masika was remarkable. Instead of going mad or becoming violent, she founded a shelter for women who had been through similar horrors. Many of

them had become pregnant from the rapes, and she created a space where they could give birth in peace and find healing through solidarity with other women.

She also did something that no one had done before: she named the perpetrators not the victims. Normally, people would say something like “Masika was raped,” without naming who did it. But she changed that.

Of course, that made her a lot of enemies, because the perpetrators came from all walks of society it wasn’t just one group.

Journalist 1:

It wasn’t just one group doing these things it was everyone. She was in extreme danger. When I visited her in her hut, there were already bullet holes in the walls. People would just drive by and shoot into the house, hoping to hit someone.

But through things like my interview, which later got published, she gained visibility and that visibility became a form of protection. You can easily kill a farmer without consequences. But someone who’s already been in the media five times if something happens to her, the government has to respond and investigate.

So in that sense, she stopped being a “nobody.” I found that really interesting how media visibility can actually serve as a kind of shield.

Researcher:

Yes, that’s definitely fascinating. Let’s continue. Where were we...?

Have there been moments when safety concerns forced you to adjust your journalistic practices? And if so, could you give an example?

Journalist 1:

Yes adjusting, in this case, means simply not taking the risk anymore. You stay at home and do interviews via WhatsApp or contact NGOs remotely. But of course, that’s a completely different type of journalism.

Or you go to a refugee camp near the border and I know this sounds harsh, but then you only meet a specific group of people: those who left the country. Naturally, they have a particular view of the situation otherwise, they wouldn’t have left.

So I’m not sure how much journalistic value that really has. Is it a balanced picture? Or is it just a microcosm authentic, yes, but only one of many truths?

That's why, to me, firsthand information is crucial. And not this Western-preferred version of events, either. Many politicians but also many journalists chase a narrative they want to see confirmed.

One of the people I was traveling with had a satellite phone. He spent quite some time putting it together about an hour. Then I asked him, "So, did it work?" And he said, "Yeah... but I don't know who to call."

He had a fuel canister waiting at home but no phone number to reach anyone. So in the end, our technology is useless if you don't have a local network. Without the locals, you're simply lost.

Researcher:

Mhm. But from everything you've said so far, it sounds like locals are often quite open and friendly.

Journalist 1:

Absolutely. Without them, it would be impossible. And that's something many people in the West can't imagine—that the Arab world is so incredibly hospitable.

This sense of guest-rights—hospitality—is what even makes travel possible there.

Otherwise, no one would ever get from point A to point B. In the West, it's hard to imagine sleeping in a stranger's home. But there, people say, "No problem." And then they'll say, "My cousin lives two villages over—you can stay with him too," even though you've never met them.

They cook for you, they take care of you. It's just hard for Westerners to grasp, because they always translate their own worldview onto everyone else.

Researcher:

I've read a bit about you, but I wasn't sure have you ever worked directly for a news organization? Still, I'd love to hear your opinion:

Do you think media organizations do enough to support female journalists in those kinds of situations?

Why or why not?

Journalist 1:

I think it's more complicated than people assume. If someone is officially employed, you can't just send them into a dangerous situation. What happens if they lose a leg or worse? Who pays for that?

It sounds harsh, but media companies don't want to take that risk. And the risk is real. What do they do if the person gets kidnapped?

Journalist 1:

That's why, unfortunately, it's become common practice to just buy footage from freelancers who are treated terribly, by the way.

And yet, they're the only ones actually on the ground. They're being completely exploited and treated like dirt.

Researcher:

Wow, that's awful.

Over time, have you noticed any changes in how the industry addresses gender-specific safety challenges?

Journalist 1:

I don't really have any experience with that I work alone, I'm kind of a lone wolf.

Researcher:

Mhm.

Okay, I have just one last question: Is there anything else you'd like to add anything you feel is important to say?

Journalist 1:

Yes what I find really important is that in this data-driven age, where everything is about information, we still need to send people on the ground. We need to remove the filters. Because there's always a filter when you talk to an NGO, for example. But they're also biased. That's why it's so essential to keep sending people into the field and to support that work and make it visible.

I think it's really outdated to have so few people reporting from the ground and as a result, we're hearing the same opinions over and over. There's hardly anyone left offering a different perspective. Everyone's saying the same thing.

That's why I think it's so important to have a shift in perspective. That doesn't mean sympathizing with "the other side" or justifying their actions. It's about understanding their logic.

That's why it's so essential to be present on all sides and not just keep reproducing the same narrative over and over, forever.

Researcher:

Wonderful. That's all thank you so much!

Interview Journalist 2

Researcher

I will start with.

Has there been an incident where you faced a safety challenge specifically related to your gender while reporting in a conflict zone, and how did you navigate it?

Journalist 2

My God. Well, I had a lot of safety issues, but I have to consider again for another filter. That was it because of my gender. Because I'm a certain age and I've been in the field for a long time. We never had this lecture before. You have to imagine how things have changed quickly over the last few years. You have to take into account that this is not the world we were in.

Researcher

It wasn't thought about much from this perspective.

Journalist 2

No, none. Never. That's crazy. That's why the question is difficult for me, because I have to remember all that happened. Was it because of the gender? Because this was not in a in a into questioning, I had a problem I had a safety problem, because of gender, no.

Researcher

You wouldn't think about that initially.

Journalist 2

It's in its wide reporting.

On war countries or anything?

Researcher

It doesn't have to be war. It can also be a situation of crisis.

Journalist 2

Recently, two months ago in Belgium.

I've been taking photographs of the biggest famous actor here in Belgium.

And during the interview, he called me Baby. I told him, please, very quietly. do not. Please. I do not wish to be called baby. My name is Journalist 2 and he totally became very aggressive.

Researcher

Wow!

Journalist 2

He was very insulting. He shouted. He said. Why? Why? Why is a problem with you, woman? We can't do anything anymore. He was also defending Depardieu. The story with Depardieu, No, this big French actor. He's a friend of Depardieu this actor.

Yasin

They're older, no?

Journalist 2

About sixty. And he was aggressive that in the moment I saw I'm. I'm gonna slam his face, or he's gonna slam my face, because he was close to me, red. And, splitting. And then he left the interview. Because I dare to ask him, don't call me baby.

Yasin

It's really crazy how offended they get, no?

Journalist 2

For sure!

Researcher

I mean it is a professional interview, wow!

Journalist 2

Now it's a problem with the client with a magazine. Because I refuse to give the pictures.

Journalist 2

Now they're stuck. Because now they're they're doing the. Bouclage. (Deadline) They put it together or and I refuse to give the pictures, but it's one of my main clients. I'm just ***** in both ways here. If I give the picture, I feel humiliated.

because I don't. They say, We understand. But I feel I'm a pain in the *** for them,

Researcher

But didn't they do anything, or was it only you and the actor?

Journalist 2

No, they was two other journalists, but from the magazine, and they didn't interfere.

One of them interfered and said. Wow, she's asking you not to speak to her like that.

Understand her. But everybody would just... I froze. I froze, because we didn't expect him to behave like that. That is a scary situation. We are very close, very close in the room, and we didn't expect him to burst out this way. You don't have the words to say something. And then I told him I don't want to discuss with you because you're very, very aggressive. No, but this room turned into a complete mess you know?

Journalist 2

I would say when I faced safety troubles. Of course, I think about my own safety.

Now it's coming back to me. I told you it will take time.

Researcher

No, no worries. We have time.

Journalist 2

Two years ago, I was arrested in Iraq at a checkpoint by the Iraqi army.

I was not alone. I was me, a journalist, and our fixer, and first of all, when we got arrested, I didn't feel scared, with my being a woman, it was quite the opposite, for instance. They were checking bags and bodies, but because I was a woman, they didn't check me. I knew they

wouldn't because I know very well the Muslim countries, and I'm not a man. A male is never fully allowed to carry. Body search, and then nobody was searching in Europe either, but even less in a Muslim mm Mm in a way, I felt better, and it's quite funny because those times you say, I could carry anything. They don't care because they're not ***** gonna touch your body, which is hell.

I told them I'm a woman. You're not going to body search me, and they look at me. Of course, we are not searching you are a woman, something that was quite funny, but then we got arrested and we went. We were brought to the Army intelligence place, which was not funny at all. And then there I got a bit scared with my being a woman because I had some people interrogate me.

Researcher

Were you the only woman in the group?

Journalist 2

Very often, the only woman I was being interrogated, interrogated, interrogated. And the guy was very vicious-looking. I wanted to protect myself. I kept a huge coat on, and the heating was very strong. In the end, I was sweating, and the guy was like You are sweating. You're scared. And I didn't want to tell him: No, I'm just not taking my coat off with the way you look at me, it's very scary. And this time I got arrested.

I had no defense. We couldn't leave. We were not free to go out, and then in the end, after quite aggressive interrogation, he asked me if he could stay in touch and if I could give him my phone number.

Researcher

Before or after they released you?

Journalist 2

After.

Researcher

What was he thinking?

Journalist 2

What the hell? He was really aggressive and, going through my pictures, looking through my phone. They asked me questions. How can they be pushing for that?

Researcher

They could have probably even gotten your phone number if they took all your things.

Journalist 2

And yes, they oblige me to give the code of my phone. I couldn't resist long.

You can't resist too long when they are armed.

Researcher

How long were you held there?

Journalist 2

One night and then he asked me for my number if he could have it. And then he said something in French: J'adore Paris

Researcher

What a weird situation.

Journalist 2

Well, this thing happened, and you feel, of course, you feel like you have no, no defense, no defense except your brain. Your brain is your best defense. How do you speak to this man? How do you show respect and be nice to him, but also protect yourself.

Researcher

It's just it's a balance.

Journalist 2

It's a balance act, which I think is something that we are used to do as women since we were children.

Researcher

That's true and it happens everywhere.

Journalist 2

How to escape this kind of situation? How to deal with that?

Well, because you seem you're on the border or something could happen. For instance, I had a problem with a journalist. It's funny because maybe you're not expecting that kind of answer, but maybe it can help with your thesis.

I also had the case twice with a male journalist pretending there is no other bedroom in the hotel to book, and we have to sleep in the same room.

It happened to me twice. I don't know if it's relevant for your thesis?

Researcher

No for sure.

Journalist 2

I think it's a wide view. And this is happening the way we've been harassed by our own colleague, because people are always asking us when we are there in these countries, because a lot of people have this racist vision of when we go to the Middle East, they are all barbarians. Coming to get the girls. It's not that at all. It's quite respectful, but we can speak about it later. But what is very often the danger is coming from our team from the inside. And we don't speak about that because people don't ask. Because I've been answering too many interviews about the gender, but they never asked me about your own team?

It's the same with rape. Most of the rapes are inside the families, not in the street, because

you were in shorts. There has been a lot of harassment from my male colleagues, not from all of them. But of course, sometimes it's two times.

The story with the bedroom. Once, I didn't say anything because I was young.

The second time, it was during the Arab Spring in Tunisia. We were outside, and this other journalist. I noticed that he booked a very fancy hotel. I was surprised when he arrived at the hotel, there was a pool which I would have loved in the holidays, but not when you're kind of reporting and you're working. And then we arrive at the reception. And he said, by the way, I thought we would go in a nicer hotel and share a room, instead of having two separate rooms in a shittier hotel. This was the second time that happened to me. This time, no way! I was so angry and I didn't say anything 10 years ago, but this time I burst, it all comes back up, I said: There's no way I'm staying here! And I understand that we don't have the money to pay for 2 rooms there. We're going to spend all our salary there.

Researcher

But he also went to a fancy place on purpose? He chose that place?

Journalist 2

Yes, and we are at the reception in Tunisia. Can you imagine in Tunisia, there were four guys at a reception listening to the conversation because this time I said, this time I don't feel ashamed. I'm speaking up. And I said I'm going to find another hotel. And he said. How, where? I said. I don't care.

I will find another hotel in Tunisia, and it was very nice because the guy from the reception came to me. I was going out and he told me, Madam, we heard your conversation. This is really not acceptable. We are going to drive you to another hotel. So the guy from the hotel drove me to a hotel. Which was £20 per night, which was perfect. And they drove me there. Such a nice guy. But you know it's funny.

You always find hell, but then the nicest people too, because for them in the Tunisian mind, it was no way a man would do that, to a woman, it was Interesting.

It depends where you report and what's going on. I think the question was, did you have any security problems because of your gender? And how did you work with it?

Researcher

That's right. Then I'll move on. When preparing to enter a conflict zone, how do you assess, assess the safety risks? Do you think your evaluations differ from those of your male colleagues?

Journalist 2

Very often with a fixer who is going there. Everything is on the fixer because the guy is from the region, and he knows the language.

He knows the region perfectly well; he always works with guys who are from villages.

Researcher

Never without the fixers?

Journalist 2

Never without fixers. Impossible! Impossible! I would never do it. Never, ever, ever.

I trust them perfectly, and also because they know how the cultural rules are

I also feel like they will tell me what I can do as a woman. And then for me it's the safest way. Even if I work with different fixers.

Researcher

Do you feel they tell you different things than male journalists in the same situations?

Journalist 2

I don't know. Maybe sometimes, for instance. They tell me I'm used to sleeping with, for example, a journalist that I know very well, and we sleep in the same room. When it's too dangerous. I don't like us to be in different bedrooms, and for example, to fix up sometimes on that. Now you should sleep in different rooms because you are male and female. But I will say I also fight back, and I say, well, but in our culture it is normal. Because I've been travelling with the same guy journalist, for many years. I feel perfectly safe. We trust each other. Especially in that last place where, together, they gave us rooms that were very far from each other.

Researcher

Where was that?

Journalist 2

In Iraq. Then that night there was an earthquake. It was a big earthquake in Syria and Turkey also, about two years ago. And we were in Iraq, but just felt it all those.

Researcher

It went that far?

Journalist 2

It went far, and then because his room was so far from mine. I didn't know what to do. And I got out and ran to his room, and I said we should have stayed together.

Researcher

But apart from that, you just listen to whatever the Fixer says.

Journalist 2

Yes. For example, in Afghanistan, don't forget your scarf.

Researcher

And then apart from that, do you have anything else that you do, other than using a scarf? Anything else, or is that just it, because the fixers, they tell you pretty much everything you have to know?

Journalist 2

Usually, they are pretty cool. And people know who you are from a different culture they don't expect you to behave exactly the way they do. They don't expect that from you. They know you're a foreigner.

Researcher

They work a lot with journalists then.

Journalist 2

Depends. Sometimes they work a lot for journalists, sometimes not. It depends.

But the people there don't expect you to behave exactly as they do because they know you are a foreigner, even if you do something, they find it weird, but not especially offensive.

Because they don't expect the same thing. And also as a woman, I think every woman would tell you that in a conflict zone.

As a foreign woman, you are considered a male guest, not a woman. Meaning, even when I go to parts of the world where men and women are separated, I will stay with the men, they give you an attention which is different, which is quite nice, not nice for the woman living in the country without. Because it happened to me very often that they don't put me with the women at dinner. They put me with the men at dinner. They don't separate me from my team. Everything is very different.

Researcher

How do gender specific safety concerns shape your decisions when it comes to covering stories in dangerous regions?

Journalist 2

Not much. Not very much concerned about it. It's a general concern about safety. I'll go there, but of course, I've been working a lot on, for instance, rape as a weapon of war, in the Congo DRC. But also in Daesh with the rape of Kurdish women.

Daesh is a region where rape is happening a lot.

Researcher

You're not concerned for yourself in that situation?

Journalist 2

Not, for a gender specific safety risk.

Researcher

I see.

Journalist 2

I don't. I didn't feel this could happen to me. It's, it's a weapon. They have their own violent strategy, which I'm not a part of. But of course, the biggest concern for us is being kidnapped. That's the biggest concern because a lot of journalists are being kidnapped. And it's it's a huge jackpot for people, because it can mean a lot of money.

Researcher

They are blackmailing

Journalist 2

Or killed you. But as a woman, of course, I can imagine that something could happen to me because I am a woman.

Researcher

But that's something you think about when it would happen and not before; they would kidnap anybody?

Journalist 2

I take it into account. Because during all those years we were doing those inquiries about the rapes in the region, there was a big risk of kidnapping. Huge, so you think of it, and then you make your decisions based on that knowledge. Of course, it goes through my mind.

Researcher

Right. Have there been moments when safety concerns compelled you to adjust your reporting practices?

Journalist 2

Yes, many times. But I have to go through it, for instance, in in Congo DRC I've been working. I told you with in the Kivu, that's where. Rapes are going on.

That's where the war is a huge about it. But the South is a mining region - Katanga.

And I've been reporting on the mining conditions in Katanga, and there I was really scared for my safety. The first time I went there in the mines, nobody told me that women were not allowed in certain mines because the job is very dangerous for the people mining. I guess you heard about it. People die every day, and they are digging huge holes, very deep, and collapsing. They don't get much money. It's hell for them. When you arrive in the mine, of course, everything went wrong. We went there. Maybe they didn't know that we were coming. But the first time I arrived; it was very bad when we arrived. Of course, they are sweating; they are working. They don't feel like seeing white people take a picture of them. Just looking, of course, yes. But also, I heard that a woman brings... bad luck. Curses, but curses especially. A guy explained all of this to me. Sometimes they do some rituals...

I am not an expert on this, but they do some ritualistic things. Mm maybe.

Maybe to give you courage to bring bravery, because the job is ***** dangerous.

And the woman shouldn't be there. For people who risk their lives, blah blah blah. If they believe a woman shouldn't be there and see some, it's really much more annoying for them, much more, which I didn't know. I couldn't take any pictures.

I felt that if I took a picture... because those guys are quite strong.

Researcher

You don't want to cross them?

Journalist 2

No, no, no. No, no, no, no, I didn't.

I didn't take one picture, which never happened to me in my life. And then they got really angry and it spiraled. There was a minibus of journalists, and we thought we would never get through to the thing. An NGO asked me how I could go and do some reporting about the mining conditions in Katanga, Congo. I said I have to tell you that women in most of the mines are not allowed there. And they said, We'll check with our Congolese partner. I said it is not possible. They can provide you with a ride, but it's just to the fields. When you work with NGOs, you have people from there, and they can open the door for you when it's difficult. I was very surprised.

Then we are right there, and we have our first meeting with the Congolese partner.

The first thing he says, everything is fine, but there is a small problem, women are not allowed, and we were already there.

Researcher

You knew this before that you couldn't go.

Journalist 2

Yes, I knew it, but in the end, we did go; it just took a lot of time. That's when the guy we were friends the guy who was working in the mine. He did his best. So we went to some mines where the women were allowed.

Researcher

You'd say in the first situation you just decided not to take a picture, and the second time there was a lot of preparation.

Journalist 2

And with a partner, there are people who knew we could speak to the people who are working in the mines before they arrived. This changed everything for me.

Researcher

How do you approach interactions with sources in environments where gender roles are more pronounced?

Journalist 2

By speaking with males and females as a female, we have this great advantage.

The biggest advantage as a female reporter. Because we have access to women and men.

It's extraordinary. Yes, that's not the case for men. For me, that was a big, big discovery. I thought I would go to those people to those countries, but maybe I won't have access to the men, but I do. I am having dinner with them. I have.. Total access to them. And I have to talk about the access to women. That's how I approached it.

And I was wondering how the hell the reporting has been done till now because there were no female journalists before. It means that it's a whole field that you can cover now, and that

has not been spoken about before.

Researcher

Very good point.

Journalist 2

Yeah how? How the hell did they do it? The male. Yes, because there were no females in the field. No, no, no. Only very few females, very few.

So it means all the reporting in the world has been done by males, which is, which is very striking, because they didn't have access to women.

Researcher

It basically means that half of the people were not talked to.

Journalist 2

Exactly half of the people we didn't hear their voice, which is crazy. When you speak about it. Totally crazy. Of course, there were a lot of things to report about women because they hadn't been heard much for a long time. And also, as a woman, I think it's it's for instance, working on the subject of rape. I think it's better to have a woman rather than a man.

Researcher

It's probably hard enough to talk about these things, and then with a man, I don't know

Journalist 2

Exactly, it can be humiliating. Also, as women, we may have questions to ask that maybe men wouldn't, for instance, we interviewed Nadia Murad. We interviewed her when she was in a refugee camp. A few years later, she received the Nobel Prize with Mukwege. Doctor Mukwege. Doctor Mukwege received a Nobel Prize a few years ago. He's from Congo, and he's been helping a lot of the women who were raped. He built a hospital, and he'll be doing some lobbying all over the world for the rape to stop. And he is a huge, huge, huge guy, world-famous. This year, he received a Nobel Prize with Nadia Murad. That girl who just by chance, we interviewed in a refugee camp a few years ago. She got the Nobel Prize, which is wow, the story is totally crazy. So you say, oh my God, this is a girl I interviewed in a refugee camp.

Anyway, we went to this interview with her, and then she wanted to tell her story about it. The male journalist asked her one question, and she broke down because she had never talked about the rapes and multiple rapes, and then suddenly. I had this question. This is rape, so where are the children? But for the male journalist to ask this question... It didn't even come up. It didn't come up, so I asked her about the children. I say if there is rape, there are pregnancies. And that was huge information. Anyway, as I'm telling you, I think this kind of subject it's better to have a woman in the room. When we interviewed Nadia Murad, there was a journalist, there was a fixer, both male, and there was me. She was not reluctant to speak at all, the opposite, but I think it's always better to have a woman in the room.

Also, you asked me something important, and I have to tell you.

It would be very interesting for your thesis because you asked me how to prepare yourself for those kinds of things, because you have to ask if those women had specific training.

Researcher

Oh .Okay

Journalist 2

You have to ask them because I had two trainings. Very interesting from a gendered perspective. The first training I did was with the Belgian army, training to enter a conflict zone. You learn how to behave when there are mines to recognize the mines. If you get shot, how to take care of your partner without any medics?

And this was a good training for me, it was very good. It helped me all my life

Researcher

It was with the army?

Journalist 2

Belgian army, there was no difference between men and women.

But then I did a job for the European Commission, for the European Parliament, they sent me to Iraq, and they obliged me to do a HEAT to do the training. It's called hit H-E-A-T. I think I did wait for NGOs. And sometimes your client obliges you to do it. And it was sexist.

Researcher

Really?!

Journalist 2

So sexist. I was just shocked, I didn't say anything, but we were like How **** can you? This formation was totally wrong for women. For instance, they give you role play on how to behave if you're in a violent situation or in a dangerous situation, or in a daily situation. But in a risky country. And then they put me in a role play in the taxi, and I had this taxi driver, and the taxi driver spoke to me, and they watched me to see how I answered.

And I spoke to the taxi driver in the role play.

He was a guy from the coaching team, and I, well, I was the same as I've been. I've been working in the field for 20 years.

Researcher

So you have been working a long time in the field before you had this training?

Journalist 2

Exactly, but I was always willing to take some advice, if it's good advice. They then told me, after the role play, that I was smiling too much.

and that it gives off the wrong impression, and they could think that you want to flirt with them. My God. I got so angry about that. Because I was speaking to him in the exact way I've been speaking to all the real male taxi drivers when I was working in a conflict zone. And

I never had any problems doing that. Why should I? Because I'm a woman, not being nice, not smiling, and not answering his questions.

Researcher

They wouldn't maybe say that to a man then.

Journalist 2

It was totally, 100% because of the gender; it was paternalistic, such a paternalistic coaching. It was insane.

Insane! It was very insulting, teaching you as a woman that if you go to these countries, they are all Barbarians, so you don't smile, you don't speak to them.

Researcher

This approach is crazy also because you really, apart from the super sexist part it is also racist!

Journalist 2

Exactly.

Researcher

You think about people in these countries as if they're all the same. They all think the same.

Journalist 2

Exactly, and it's still not true!

Yasin

And this was the HEAT training?

Journalist 2

H-E-A-T. Yes. I think it's a lot of people with NGOs. Well, many, many people do this training for three days. You go through a kidnapping role play and this was useful because they would teach you how to react when you are being kidnapped.

Researcher

And the people teaching? Are there more males or females?

Journalist 2

Male. There are not enough female coaches. Definitely not enough females.

And it was funny because we went with the NGO Oxfam, and most of the Oxfam NGO staff were also taking the course. Also they were not 20 but 40 years old. Some guys had been living 10 years in Afghanistan, wondering What am I doing here?

And after a while, I was with a female colleague, and she had the same stories as me. A lot of what she has noticed is that there were a lot of problems with her journalist colleagues or NGOs, colleagues, the same people. Say NGOs and Journalists, what does that mean?

Same people, same jobs, same risks, same.

When they had this big problem, they would say, What are the dangers?

What dangers can you face? And with my friend, we went as always, he he he was writing,

writing of this dangerous one of the dangers is the sexual harassment we face from our colleagues. I thought they wanted to have sex with us. Or even worse, they want to have sex with the local people. Which is a problem. And the coaches from the training didn't even write it down on the board. They found our answers unimportant. What the hell? This is crazy. And the funniest thing is, 2 days afterwards, there was a big scandal about Oxfam itself. And the gender rules after that go back to Oxfam, also the people I was having the training with, who were nice people. But there were some sexual scandals. Within Oxfam, with local people in some countries. And those guys who were coaching when we told them about it were very paternalistic. I left the training one day earlier with my friend because the last part of the training was called, and I don't know what it was. It was called raped and Resilience. We didn't even know. But what is this? What is this? let's let's leave.

Researcher

Have you encountered difficulties assessing information or sources due to your gender? And how have you managed to overcome these obstacles?

Journalist 2

No. Opposite, because thanks to my gender. I think I can speak freely with men and women.

Researcher

Then maybe with the mines...?

Journalist 2

Yes, thank you. This is pretty much that.

Researcher

But otherwise it's the other way around?

Journalist 2

But in the mines, in the working fields, those guys who spoke to me, it would be totally different if I spoke with the same guy in the street, it would be very different.

This whole situation depends on very specific context we mentioned, but yes, definitely this. Once also, once it was mixed but, I went to a mosque and the Imam was very nice, he told me. You can go to the male part no problem. You can take pictures, and he said, Just put your hoodie on, then you have your hair covered.

And one guy was very aggressive and took me out of the male section because I was a female. But I can understand. I think it's not very interesting, but otherwise, we have a lot of access. I was even surprised that this Imam told me yes, we can go to the male section, you have permission.

Researcher

Nice to know that for once, it's also good to be a woman. And women have disadvantages, but sometimes it's also an advantage to not be a man.

Journalist 2

It is.

Researcher

I'll just go with the next. What kinds of supports, support, or resources do you find essential for ensuring your safety while working in conflict zones?

Journalist 2

Different support from locals. The team I'm working in a team. I won't go anywhere without them. Everything is based on my team and trust. Everything.

Then on the fixer. Locally and then remotely. They give us. You call this a sign of life.

It means that you have to communicate with one person in Europe every day to get proof of life. You give one person proof of life every day.

To be sure that you hadn't been kidnapped or murdered or jailed, or something.

That's a safety thing I do. Can you repeat the question?

Researcher

What kinds of support or resources do you find essential for ensuring your safety while working in conflict zones?

Journalist 2

Yes, and trusting the people, the local people. That's my best resource to trust them totally. And to be able to discuss openly about the risks out there. And to be able to ask them What do you think? What is the risk? Can we do it, to have an open discussion? Transparent discussion with them about the situation.

Researcher

And what would you say, because now we also talked about these trainings, that you did them also quite late in your career or also in the beginning?

Journalist 2

One early and one later.

Researcher

Would you say this is something essential that everybody should do before they go to a conflict? Or how do you perceive that?

Journalist 2

Yes, of course. Yes, actually, it could be done better, and maybe they could take females more into consideration, but not in a paternalistic way. That would be terrible to have, especially with women, but very paternalistic. In this training, they will tell us, Don't wear a miniskirt or show your boobs.

Thank you very much. Merci mais ta geule!

Journalist 2

Like if we were stupid chicken, come on. And also it's insulting. If you think you're stupid, but also it is. It's always this idea of women being a threat.

Because of her body. And this came very strongly in the training. Your body is a threat. Well, sorry to be a woman.

Researcher

It is also pretty crazy that mostly men would teach this training.

Journalist 2

That might be the problem, of course.

Researcher

It would be good for women to teach other women and people who have also worked in this field, maybe for a long time. They know how to deal with situations like that.

Journalist 2

Exactly. And also to this kind of fantasy we talked about earlier, that when you go to some country, all the I'm exaggerating, but all the men are, they want you because you're a girl, because you're white... But this is a total fantasy. It's not that at all.

I hate this way of thinking, and then to sometimes it might give you advice which are totally wrong and would stop you from doing a good job. Because then if you adapt your behavior in a way, I just think that every male you're gonna meet is a threat.

How can you have that? A genuine relationship with them is not going to work. This is a problem with the training, also. This is wrong.

Researcher

And it's very racist.

Journalist 2

Also. Very. because not everybody is like that. It's systemic racism. If you if you live with this idea, it's hell. And you're scared all the time as you don't consider people as your equal. No, it's problematic.

But also then don't do this type of work then because then you have already the wrong idea. Maybe rather do an office job..

Researcher

Only two more questions. You've worked for news organizations?

Journalist 2

Only for media newspapers, media.

Researcher

That also works do you believe news organizations or news outlets, this type of media is doing enough to support female journalists in these situations? Why or why not?

Journalist 2

You can read to laugh. You have to write it down because. Its crazy, they dont give a shit.

Maybe now it's changing, but when I got arrested, it was not a long time ago, it was two years ago. I was there.. I went for a newspaper. They didn't pick up their phone when I called back the chief editor. That shocked a lot, and I didn't receive anything. They just said that I would go with a journalist who works with them full time. Through him, the journalist. And we got arrested and sent back to Belgium.

That was a huge thing. How would they know if they don't pick up the phone when I call? No. Nothing. Anything could have happened to me that night. Nothing. They didn't care. They give a shit. And once, even worse. There was director, who was another even higher director. It was a few years before, and I was with this newspaper, and I knew about some journalists who had been kidnapped in the country, and he told me. Wow, that could be cool if it could happen to you, because you see, it brings great publicity for the journal, because of our competition. And he meant it. That is crazy.

Researcher

That is disgusting.

How can you say that?

Journalist 2

Many things that, Wow!

Researcher

Alright, I only have one more question. Over time, have you noticed shifts in how the industry assesses gender specific safety challenges?

Journalist 2

Yes. Yes, yes, yes, I'm sure those things are changing. And what I'm telling now, 10 years, it will be just amazing. First of all, because there are more and more females that has changed. I'm not surprised that maybe in this new training there went. It was different from this assessment for being a woman journalist. But maybe, maybe not. Quickly enough, maybe it will also come with a young journalist.

The problem with old journalists is that we've been used to not saying much.

And the young ones are straight, they say no, this is not correct.

What's more than us, they're more outspoken because it it was there were many females that when you were in the team, you just said, I'm a team.

It's great. Just keep a low profile. I thought you would be a bit of pain in the ass working with a female photographer, but in the end, it's really cool.

That's what I had to be. Low profile, that's why I think we shut our mouths a lot.

But now I think of newer generations. We don't have to be low profiles anymore because I think we endure too much without saying anything.

That's why when you ask me a question and it doesn't, I don't know.

I have to think about it. Maybe tonight I will have a lot of stories. Why didn't I tell this huge story, but that that.

Researcher

That's fine, but it's super interesting.

Also, I don't know if anything comes to mind now, but is there anything you'd like to add to anything you think is important to say?

Journalist 2

Nothing. We've been covering a lot.

You've been covering a lot of different questions.

Researcher

Thank you!

Interview Journalist 3

Researcher

Has there been an incident where you faced a safety challenge specifically related to your gender while reporting in a conflict zone? How did you navigate it?

Journalist 3

Not so much a safety challenge, but it was sometimes difficult to stay in a location with conservative Islamist fighters unless there was a woman present - a mother, sister, wife - whom I could sleep in the same room with because I could not sleep in an all-male space. In cases where a woman wasn't present, the fighters usually arranged a separate room for me and if one wasn't available, I would have to return from the front. A male colleague would not have faced that issue.

Researcher

When preparing to enter a conflict zone, how do you assess the safety risks? Do you think your evaluations differ from those made by your male colleagues?

Journalist 3

It depends on the conflict zone, specifically:

- the nature of the fighting (is it army to army or guerilla forces vs. an army?),
- the location of the conflict zone (are there nearby amenities, is it possible to return from the front and sleep in a hotel?),
- the working arrangement; (I almost always work alone and rarely run into other journalists in the field. Will my presence as a woman make me stand out and if so, is that a security concern? Eg. In places where journalists are being kidnapped?)

do I want to blend in or stand out clearly as a journalist? Again, depends on the conflict zone and if journalists are being targeted. In many places, I have often been the only woman on the front, a male colleague might not get a second look

Researcher

How do gender-specific safety concerns shape your decisions when it comes to covering stories in dangerous regions?

Journalist 3

They don't beyond what I've said above.

Researcher

Have there been moments when safety concerns compelled you to adjust your reporting practices? If so, can you share an example?

Journalist 3

All the time. You have to be flexible and fluid and ready to change your reporting practices at a moment's notice. It might be something as simple as hiding your notebook when somebody you are uncertain of walks into a room, until you can get a feel for if that person is going to be aggressive toward you, or cancelling a trip because conditions on the ground have rapidly changed.

Researcher

How do you approach interactions with sources in environments where gender roles are more pronounced?

Journalist 3

First thing is to understand the environment you are entering, in terms of social customs and traditions, and other elements such as religious practices, etc to not cause offense, which can get you into trouble and put you in danger. Be respectful, and find ways to do your job. In some places, women and men don't co-mingle in public, but as a female journalist, I have to. I haven't found that to be a problem so long as I am respectful and serious about my work. People generally understand that we are there to do a job and give us the space to do that, even if it isn't the norm in their society.

Researcher

Have you encountered difficulties accessing information or sources due to your gender? How have you managed to overcome these obstacles?

Journalist 3

No. For example, I was the first journalist to interview fighters and officials belonging to Al-Qaeda in Syria in face-to-face interviews. My gender made it harder but not impossible.

Researcher

What kinds of support or resources do you find essential for ensuring your safety while working in conflict zones?

Journalist 3

A strong network on the ground to keep you abreast of rapidly changing developments. Developing and maintaining a personal reputation for honesty and serious hard work, which most people will respect. A tip from a friendly source can sometimes mean the difference between unwittingly putting yourself into a dangerous situation and avoiding it.

Researcher

(Given they work or have worked for a news organisation) Do you believe news organizations are doing enough to support female journalists in these situations? Why or why not?

Journalist 3

News organizations don't do anywhere near enough to help freelancers in particular. That needs to change. There is a culture of not wanting to complain too much about concerns, etc lest you be considered 'difficult' and taken off an assignment. It obviously depends on the type of relationship you have with an editor and how comfortable you feel with him/her, but I see far too many young female journalists pushing themselves into dangerous situations in the hope of proving themselves without institutional support or a plan if they get into trouble.

Researcher

Over time, have you noticed shifts in how the industry addresses gender-specific safety challenges?

Journalist 3

No.

Interview Journalist 4

Researcher

Has there been an incident where you faced a safety challenge specifically related to your gender while reporting in a conflict zone? How did you navigate it?

Journalist 4

So many times I can't count. I have done boundary-setting assertiveness and self-defense training – that's very helpful in de-escalating a potentially dangerous situation that might lead to sexual assault. Using one's voice appropriately, being situationally aware are critical in those moments.

Researcher

When preparing to enter a conflict zone, how do you assess the safety risks? Do you think your evaluations differ from those made by your male colleagues?

Journalist 4

I am a safety trainer and consultant, so I am familiar with a multitude of risks around the world. I consult a multitude of colleagues and security experts on the ground. I look at patterns of attacks and dangers. I read up voraciously. I never go into a place blind. My evaluation is different from a male's due to the risk of sexual assault, but otherwise pretty similar. I've done assertiveness and basic self-defense training.

Researcher

How do gender-specific safety concerns shape your decisions when it comes to covering stories in dangerous regions?

Journalist 4

I always try to come up with a plan to reduce the risk of rape. That means not traveling alone, and preferably traveling with a male colleague. It means dressing and behaving in a culturally appropriate manner. I wear a wedding ring on both hands, not that that necessarily protects me, but it signals that I'm married.

Researcher

Have there been moments when safety concerns compelled you to adjust your reporting practices? If so, can you share an example?

Journalist 4

Are you speaking about general safety concerns or gender? If you're covering a conflict, you're constantly reassessing your safety. I can't begin to count the times that I decided not to travel to a place because the road was unsafe or the chance of kidnapping was high, or rebels had suddenly overrun a town and there was looting and shooting everywhere, and I didn't have adequate gear or a sound exit route.

Researcher

How do you approach interactions with sources in environments where gender roles are more pronounced?

Journalist 4

I dress and behave in a culturally appropriate manner. It's important to be aware of any particular dangers as a woman alone - sometimes it's best to work in tandem with a male photographer or fixer, for instance, and never travel alone.

Researcher

Have you encountered difficulties accessing information or sources due to your gender? How have you managed to overcome these obstacles?

Journalist 4

In fact, I find it easier as a woman to extract information from sources, be it military machos or women and children. I'm seen as less threatening than a man, so it's easier to gain sources' trust. Sometimes, macho men have been condescending, but as I grew older and was seen as a mother figure, they tended to respect me more. I might add that I'm an assertive person who is good at setting boundaries - that is helpful as a woman when dealing with macho sources.

Researcher

What kinds of support or resources do you find essential for ensuring your safety while working in conflict zones?

Journalist 4

I am a safety trainer, so I stay on top of the latest gear, tactics, and information. I seek information on the ground from colleagues and security experts. Any journalist working in a conflict zone should get training and set up consultations with the Committee to Protect Journalists, and look at their advisories. They should do a detailed risk assessment and come up with a contingency plan to mitigate danger and plan an escape route.

Researcher

(Given they work or have worked for a news organisation) Do you believe news organizations are doing enough to support female journalists in these situations? Why or why not?

Journalist 4

You can't make generalizations, especially when talking about a global scale, see below.

Researcher

Over time, have you noticed shifts in how the industry addresses gender-specific safety challenges?

Journalist 4

It is impossible to make generalizations about the industry, especially on a global scale. You can't compare Mexican media with African, Middle Eastern, or British. Some organizations have, some have not. Generally, the bigger legacy media from the West, like the BBC and *New York Times*, have been more sensitive to the issue because they have the resources and know-how, and there are legal liabilities. A smaller organization from the Global South will not be, as a general rule.

Researcher

Is there anything you would like to add? Anything that you think is important to say?

Journalist 4

No.

Interview Journalist 5

Researcher

Has there been an incident where you faced a safety challenge specifically related to your gender while reporting in a conflict zone? How did you navigate it?

Journalist 5

A safety challenge.

The incident that springs to mind was when I was in Iraq covering the ISIS offensive.

In I mean, I was in and out, but this would have happened in. I think it was 2015.

And it was actually at a very safe place. I was staying in a very secure home with contractors from America that I knew very well having stayed with many times.

And one night, late at night, I was in my bed and a driver for that company, who was an Iraqi guy from Mosul, broke into my room and, you know, attempted to grab me and.

And sticking his tongue down my throat and. So yeah, that was a little bit that had never happened to me before, and that was very confronting. And I kind of had to make a lot of noise and push him away. And it was, yeah, it was quiet, shaken just because I had been in this place that was had trusted. So I think that you know just. Maybe a lot more aware of being a woman. Just ensuring, I mean, there are always some things you can do, unfortunately, but I guess having a lot more, more villages, and maybe a plan in my head about what I would do if something like that happened again.

Thankfully, it never did. But it certainly is always in my mind, whereas before, I don't think I thought about it too much, but now it's a big part of my preparation and

Researcher

When preparing to enter a conflict zone, how do you assess the safety risks? Do you think your evaluations differ from those made by your male colleagues?

Journalist 5

Zone by zone. And doing my evaluations differs.

I don't know that they necessarily differ. I can't really speak.

To exactly what my male colleagues do, only because I typically work pretty independently. I'm not usually in a sort of team or with other journalists, so I'm not totally sure what the process is for male colleagues.

But I know for me, a lot of it is about your trusted fixer that interpreted that middle person. And because I'm usually well, always not going to places with security teams and things like that, I even, when I obviously now as a freelancer, I don't have that kind of budget. But even previously, at a corporation at Fox, I mean, looking back, I think that. That I should have maybe been treated better, but I was for whatever reason. And I think because I was a writer and not maybe on air talent, but you know, it was sort of a given that I would be OK. And I think a lot of my own safety calculations were based on the fact that I really wanted to blend in. Situations, I wanted to keep it very simple to be with the locals to kind of not draw attention to myself, and I always felt that the cameras and tripods and lighting and producers and security teams, and you know these guys wearing.

Tactical tummy clothes would draw attention that I never wanted, so I always stay a little bit

away from that. And so I have to assess my own safety risks. And it's just.

It's too. It's a combination of doing as much research as you can about a place about potential problems, talking to other journalists, cameramen, locals, and people who are on the ground to really get their assessments and what they think. So I take all that very seriously. But as I said, my most trusted person is the fixer and the driver. And you really have to. Do your best to, and typically, word of mouth is his best for that.

Because then if they've worked with other journalists who could vouch for them personally, that's certainly a lot more comforting. That's always. That's not always realistic in certain places. If your colleagues haven't worked there. Or maybe it's a little obscure or something. Like when I was living in Afghanistan, when the Taliban came in, everybody left, including all the fixes I knew and had worked with.

So then I had to start from square one and basically work with someone who had reached out to be on LinkedIn. So I had to take a risk with that.

But of course, you know, I interviewed them and I did the best I could with the limited information that I had. And that person is a good friend. Yeah, it's just as much knowledge as you can. And the locals are the best people for that. Or cameramen honestly, are the best people because often they're.

Very battle hardened and they're not always the person that people think to go to, but cameramen are really and photographers are often really amazing when it comes to giving you that logistical direction.

Researcher

How do gender-specific safety concerns shape your decisions when it comes to covering stories in dangerous regions?

Journalist 5

I guess I don't weigh too much into gender specific safety concerns. Again, it goes back to being with trusted people. The company that I would be with. Feeling a little bit alone in that.

Researcher

Have there been moments when safety concerns compelled you to adjust your reporting practices? If so, can you share an example?

Journalist 5

So with the Taliban, I have to adjust my reporting practices in the sense that I have to, you know, sometimes let my male colleagues kind of take the lead. And there are certain places that I can't go to or couldn't go. They would be able to go to a madrassa or to a meeting.

That I may not go to. Granted, I was often treated like a third gender in most of the Middle East or in Afghanistan, or these conservative places where you're not treated like an Afghan woman, but you're also not a man. So you are in a very arbitrary third gender.

So they were certainly willing to bend the rules a lot for me and do things that Afghan women

certainly couldn't do interview people. Work with a male team, which was very strange to locals, but. But then. When it came to religious things and some of the more very conservative Taliban leaders, you know, I wasn't able to meet with them.

So you know that was a bit of a shame. Or I had to. Kind of send my male photographer in instead of me. So things like that. I guess he could say he shaped my reporting decisions.

Researcher

How do you approach interactions with sources in environments where gender roles are more pronounced?

Journalist 5

Yeah. I mean, Afghanistan is a good example of that. I've also worked in Iran, and it really just depends. Some people are very surprisingly, OK. They'll shake your hand. And you're like, oh, OK, then others obviously won't even look at you. So it's always a bit hard to know what approach. That particular person may take it if you haven't interviewed them before, but I think you have to just. Again. In a little bit. Don't do anything that's going to draw attention. Unnecessary attention to yourself. Abide by. The you know religious dress and not that I would ever wear a burka, but certainly cover my head appropriately and the rest of my body. And I guess position yourself in a way that you are present. You're presenting yourself as sort of a hearing to their local customs and making them feel a little bit more comfortable. Because what is often not acknowledged is that to them, not looking at you or not shaking your hand, not acknowledging you, is actually a sign of respect. To them, you know, looking at you, shaking your hand can be disrespectful. So it's sort of the opposite of Western culture. And so I have to remind myself that this isn't necessarily them being rude. It's them. Projecting their sort of local customs, where you know a woman is. Places is sort of with her husband or future husband or family, and they're being respectful by not. Acknowledging me in that way. So it's something you just have to adapt to. It's a little bit jarring at first, but. You adapt very quickly.

Researcher

Have you encountered difficulties accessing information or sources due to your gender? How have you managed to overcome these obstacles?

Journalist 5

I wouldn't say that at all, I think. Especially places that have been in conflict for a considerable period of time. They are used to, you know, foreign is coming in and and so perhaps a lot more used to women and to journalists than. You know, maybe they were decades ago. Or if there wasn't a conflict happening, probably the most difficult thing is sometimes convincing them to let you go to the front lines, because these men want to protect you or think that you know it's their've never seeing a woman on a frontline because it's typically only. Men. So it just takes a little bit more convincing, and I've never been turned

away when I fought for it. But but yeah. Just an extra layer that of convincing that my male colleagues probably wouldn't have to go through.

Researcher

What kinds of support or resources do you find essential for ensuring your safety while working in conflict zones?

Journalist 5

Yes, I mean again it's challenging being a freelancer because you aren't privy to things that maybe. Colleagues who work at big networks and have big teams and budgets, so it can be a little concerning. And I know when I was in Ukraine during the invasion in those initial months feeling that pinch a lot because. Yeah, there wasn't a way to necessarily get out, and I ended up getting injured. Not from the war, but from an incident in my hotel. I got badly burned and just having to rely on locals or friends, or people that I knew. And that was a little scary. And then my one sort of support system. Who said, you know, if anything happens and we need to get out, you will come with us. He actually ended up dying in that initial. In a Russian bomb. So yeah, it was certainly that was a very challenging time for me. So, resources, you know, obviously, you would want evacuation resources if necessary. That would be nice. Medical as well. Without a kind of fear of cost burdens or not really.

It is hard at times to work. Having a team and being a writer, such as myself, and not having a team because you are very self-reliant. So you do have to rely on other journalists to support you. And so I've kind of learned to get by on the basics.

You know, take a snap phone. Take a couple of vests and a helmet. But my biggest resource is sort of trying to find a community or establishing a community before I go off to people that I know that I can turn to if necessary.

I think that is very key and I always do make sure that I have in a prime military or prior State Department or other officials. The stateside or in a nearby embassy, or somebody that I just kind of know that I can turn to if necessary.

Researcher

Do you believe news organizations are doing enough to support female journalists in these situations? Why or why not?

Journalist 5

Well, I think that question is a little bit general, as I said. I think the big news organizations, you know, they're very worried about the elements. And so they have teams that are dedicated, as I said, my experience was a little unique from that.

And looking. Yeah, looking back at it, it wasn't OK, but I think because I was sort of tenacious and forth for wanting to do these stories, and I was always trying to cut costs or make the budget extremely low because I knew that if it was. High high. That would cause red flags.

And what we say. Oh no, we don't want to cover that.

And then it would all be off. So I was always walking on eggshells, so that was probably why I never felt fully supported. So in my personal experience, I do.

I do think that there isn't necessarily enough to support female journalists in these situations, and I think we really need female journalists because I think that. As much as they don't want agenda stereotype men and women. Bring something different to the table. Just generally speaking, men tend to be a lot more interested in the combat side of what we call the Bang Bang, whereas women. Can't just be a little bit more interested in maybe the more human side of going to the refugee camp of sitting at the hospital. To me, the frontline is kind of the most boring part of the war. There's nothing that's compelling to write about that's going to happen necessarily. Most of it is just sitting around and waiting. So I do think that the human side is certainly much more interesting to me.

Researcher

Over time, have you noticed shifts in how the industry addresses gender-specific safety challenges?

Journalist

Not really. I haven't observed anything specific in that way.

I think if anything, news organizations probably don't want to bring up the issue of gender because. You know, for obvious sort of. Me too. Movement things that they don't want to become. A sense of you being discriminated against. So I think that it's not something anyone's ever really talked to me about.

Researcher

Is there anything you would like to add? Anything that you think is important to say?

Journalist 5

I think that covers most of it. I think that again. People talk a lot about AI, but AI can never replace that on-the-ground assessment. That being in the moment. Capturing sort of what is really happening, and in my experience working in conflict zones, I was always so shocked about what was being put out on Twitter or social media, and just it being so woefully inaccurate. That that. It just highlighted to me the importance of having that on the ground. Experience and relaying that story, and I also think that.

There are nuances that you start to understand about a place or a region when you're on the ground that you would just never know from reading 100 textbooks or sitting in 100 lectures. I think you have to have. That's on the on-the-ground perspective, and I just hope that organizations or individuals continue to invest in that. And that for people who want to continue to do this work, that, you know, freelancers in particular can be supported to do it. Because I think freelance journalism is super important.

Because typically and one of the reasons I wanted to be a freelancer is to not be, Beh,

beholden to any kind of political agenda or corporate agenda, but to really be able to go to a place with an open mind. But it is very hard to do this work in that sense because you don't have. The support. Sort of financially or security-wise. So it's something that I have to question a lot, especially as a mom, but I still feel very passionate about these stories. So things look a little bit different for me now, but it's still very much. On my radar to continue to do this work in whatever capacity that looks like.

Interview Journalist 6

Researcher

My first question would be, have there been any incidents where you faced a safety challenge specifically related to your gender while reporting in a conflict zone, and how did you navigate it?

Journalist 6

Of course, like it's a big yes because. If you've gone through my profile, you probably know what is happening in Cameroon, you understand that we are, we've been played with the Anglophone crisis for over six or 6-7 years now. It started in 2016, and since then, the security situation in our country has not been the best, especially for journalists. And given that I'm a female, it makes it even more complex because.

To access our sources is also very difficult. Especially accessing them personally. So how do we navigate this? We make good use of social media. WhatsApp and any other platform through which we can get to them, because most time, meeting them physically is something difficult. We have numerous ghost towns. Mondays are automatic ghost towns. Like you don't go out on Monday. You don't. You don't use any transportation means, you just if you have to see someone on Mondays, you have to try to meet them. So. Because of that, and then apart from Mondays, we have other dates, other national celebrated days that we could just call for lockdown. There are times when there is no. Maybe it's not a national day, and they just feel like. Probably the one to put a lockdown. And then there's a lockdown, and people are forced to stay indoors. So meeting people physically is often very difficult. So we resolve to use social media. And then yes, then because of the crisis as well.

It's me chasing law enforcement to really be very, I'll say, very weak because everyone's free to do what they want at this point, if you're, if you're lucky.

OK. I was just saying, if you're lucky enough, you will not be caught up or you will not be caught, and you can go cuff-free. But if you're unlucky and you're caught, you may probably end up dead because the measures that are being used now are also very radical, often very, very tough. So yeah. So security has really been very weak.

Law enforcement has been weak as well, and because of that, people feel like they can do anything. Especially, the separatist fighters. So it makes it even. It makes it so difficult for females. Working in this kind of environment because oftentimes we are personally reaching out to sources to interview them and they start making advances or they try. Maybe they want money in return or.

Yeah, mostly support advances because they feel like nothing will be done today if they are not caught. So yeah, there's a lot of.

Researcher

So you're facing this?

Journalist 6

Yeah. Very difficult for female Journalists.

Researcher

Yeah. OK. I see. So it's like on a daily basis, you're facing these challenges.

Journalist 6

Yeah. On a daily basis, like daily.

Researcher

OK. So the second question was when preparing to enter a conflict zone.

Yeah. So you're asking a question before I go off. Yeah, yeah, yeah, no worries. I'll ask it again. So when preparing, when preparing to enter a conflict zone.

How do you assess the safety risk? Do you think your evaluations differ from those made by your male colleagues?

Journalist 6

Yes, yes, my valuation is definitely different because for although the security situation is kind of different for both females and males because when it comes to the club they encounter the military or the separatists. The are more male colleagues.

Yeah, more. Vulnerable. Because. Yeah, because the militants, if it's like us, that was new. So sometimes, the military thing, our male colleagues are probably disguised.

As fighters, the security situation at that point is a little different from female journalists. But then most times you get information from the community members.

Before getting into a place we ask the Community Members if how the security situation of the places we ask if yeah, if we ask if there have been any issues of fabric going shots or kidnapping. Things here before getting into the place. So we make good use of our community members, and we often have community releases in the communities as well. So whenever there is something of the almost indicative.

Whenever there is a security situation, they will always indicate and news here flies very fast on social media if something is happening anywhere in the country or anywhere in town like it's so it's so fast the information spreads very fast through social media

Researcher

And then it's just civilians posting something?

Journalist 6

Civilians posting. We have a local news agency reporting. So yes, it's often very fast.

Researcher

How do gender specific safety concerns shape your decisions when it comes to covering stories in dangerous regions?

Journalist 6

OK, I would say. Personally I. Most of the very whenever, whenever I'm sure of the subject matter. Whenever I know exactly what I want to get, I will always resolve to take the easy old choice in the safest measures.

Journalist 6

It is reaching out to my sources online. I will do so if there's probably hiring of a Community member. Yes, anyone who could easily get the information. I'll do that just to ensure that just to ensure safety.

Researcher

Have there been moments when safety concerns compelled you to adjust your reporting practices, and if so, can you share an example?

Journalist 6

Yes, I'll say yes. Right now I'm very, I think I'm more. See, I'm more directed to the print media.

Journalist 6

Yeah, the reason being that.

You know, if someone gets your voice. Yeah. Yeah, it's it could actually put you in trouble, depending on your your. It's been on your your reporting on. So it's easier to probably report prints or print and you go cut free then probably.

Multimedia, I'm probably using. The radio or the TV

Researcher

Because they can more easily track you down when they know your voice

Journalist 6

Exactly. Yes, they can easily check you down to know your voice or they see your face.

Researcher

That is very scary.

Journalist 6

Yeah. Somehow. Yeah. Exactly. So somehow the prints have made it so easy you could actually hide your identity and keep reporting the right things.

Researcher

OK. So you just put like a different name and you. But you still report?

Journalist 6

Yeah. And also and it helps that the identities of the sources are protected

Researcher

Because they could also be put in danger by giving out information. OK. I understand.

How do you approach OK? This is like maybe like a little bit goes in the same direction. How do you approach interactions with sources in environments where gender roles are more pronounced?

Journalist 6

Well, I'm often very direct. I'm often very direct, especially when it comes to probably I'm questioning my sources or getting information. I'm also very direct, and I take note of any. Forms of probable harassment or any forms of violations, or if I just see a hint, I'm also very cautious, so I'm also very direct. I ensure that.

If I'm not comfortable with any act. I. Yeah, I see it openly.

Researcher

Do you also listen to your gut feeling? And when you feel like something's not right?

Journalist 6

Very much!

Researcher

Yeah, I understand. I understand. OK.

Have you encountered difficulties accessing information or sources due to your gender?

How do you, or how have you, managed to overcome these obstacles?

Journalist 6

Well, I'm not quite. Unless. Yeah, I think so. I think so. Because mostly for the fact that I'm a woman. There are times I'll contact especially male sources, and in they're trying to make advances and I call them out for it. They tend to withhold information because, OK, they'll be like, OK, because they're supposed to give me this information. Then I'm supposed to give this in return. And if I'm not complying, they will give no information. Yes, unlike their male counterparts, who can just maybe talk their way through, so long as we are women, no matter what you say, it really does not move them. They want one thing in particular, so it also makes it very difficult to get information because, say, maybe I have to interview a lawyer. I'll have to get to several lawyers, and probably one of them could give me the information I need because. If if I meet one and they they advances are so much and I need to go to the next.

Researcher

OK, so your strategy would be like just to try like to get as many sources and then hope that one of them will give you the information you need

Journalist 6

Exactly

Researcher

What kinds of support or resources do you find essential for ensuring your safety while working in conflict zones?

Journalist 6

First, having a press card. I belong to an association of journalists, and they make provision for all journalists, both male and female. You are given press cards. We have jackets. So somehow, when we are in the field and we are in possession of our press cards, it makes it easy to navigate some areas so long as they see press.

They could easily grant us access. So I always make sure I'm with a press card or a jacket and then for very difficult communities, I ensure I move with one person from the community, someone who has a lot of influence, so that if I meet any obstacle, the community person can probably talk in their native language and it will be easy for us to have access to the area.

Researcher

But do you also feel like you have the press card or like a vest or like you are?

You have something on that shows people that you are a journalist, that that is more

respected or like also maybe people be a little bit more cautious in, I don't know, getting in your way.

Journalist 6

Yes, people will be more cautious in getting in my way and but it's not in every instance because there are times when people see press, they may become scared and would rather withhold information they would have given to any civilian. So they are actually just guys here who do we dress, not these guys. We dress like civilians and we go looking for the information.

And we often have sources in the field in each community. We do well to keep a source, so it'll be easier for us to get information.

Researcher

Do you believe news organisations are doing enough to support female journalists in these situations? Why or why not?

Journalist 6

Yes, especially non-government organisations. I've I've I've attended a couple of trainings organised by these non-government organisations on reporting during conflict. I think there I think they were even organised by each other on reporting during conflict, and equally humanitarian principles that got reporting.

During COVID. So yes, they are doing so much because they the survivors that emerge from this conflict are increasing day by day, so these organisations have so much to do and they feel like probably the right reporting will help curb down the issues in the country. So there's been a lot of. Trainings. A lot of training for reporters

Researcher

And they're all in Cameroon?

Journalist 6

Yeah, all in Cameroon. Yeah. They have equally been applying for, I think I've equally received training, mostly virtual training. From international organisations as well.

On how to report during conflict.

Researcher

And did they differ from the ones you received in Cameroon?

Journalist 6

Oh, see, they are more elaborate because given that they are international, they have different experiences from those we have here, so it's to much needed because most times relying only on training from the country, they'll be talking based on the context in which we all find ourselves. But when we have. The opportunity to hear from others here, probably the testimonies of other reporters.

It widens our scope as well, and equally, the information we get. It helps us to better shape our decisions and polish our reporting

Researcher

Is it also security training?

Journalist 6

Yes. Yeah. Security training. And like I mentioned, I belong to an association of journalists, and we equally have security training from time to time.

Researcher

OK, so they also offer them. Yeah.

That's amazing.

Journalist 6

Yes.

Researcher

So we're almost done. Over time, have you noticed shifts in how the industry addresses gender specific safety challenges?

Journalist 6

Over time. Oh yes. By industry, you mean the reporting industry or

Researcher

Yeah, like the media industry, news organisations, et cetera.

Journalist 6

Yes, because yes, I've noticed so much. Not just for prints, even for television, for radio. And that's because there have been a lot of reports on GBB in The Newsroom. So because of a lot of violations happening in The Newsroom, there's been a shift. There's been a great shift, and it's more. It's more, shall I say. It's focused more on the women.

Of yes, fighting for the rights of the female journalists because they're often the ones with violations. Advances have been made towards them. The cases that have been reported are mostly done by reported and mostly done by female journalists, so there's been a great shift towards that

Researcher

And my last question would be, is there anything that you would like to add or anything that you think is important to say, anything that comes to mind? If not, that's also fine.

Journalist 6

No, it's fine.

Researcher

Thank you so much!

Interview Journalist 7

Researcher

I'm going to the first question:

Has there been an incident where you faced a safety challenge specifically related to your gender while reporting in a conflict zone? How did you navigate it?

Journalist 7

Yeah. The safety challenges. I would like to specifically focus on the agenda. My, my role as a woman. Yeah. First of all, there are the challenges. A lot of it was related to sexual harassment, for example.

They see you as a girl or a young lady, and they make advances. Some even offered to give you an interview so that they can, you know.

Try to sweet-talk you. You know, it's just sexual harassment that has different forms. So many different forms. Some even would want me to be the one to eat with them and view them as male bosses, so that they can take advantage. That kind of harassment. Of course, I was not raped, but the things that they would do to make you know that is sexual harassment. Yeah, that.

Another safety challenge was in relation to stereotyping. I don't know whether I call this a challenge, I don't know, but I had a lot of experience, a lot of stereotyping during my young years. Yeah, for example.

They don't believe that a woman is supposed to be holding a camera, so a camera.

It's for men, so they would specifically say, Oh, why are you holding a camera? So the stereotype of it is also part of it. It was a challenge for me as a female journalist.

And yeah, that I also faced this one was not only me, even the other journalists were name-calling, name-calling in the rebellion. It is about.

Calling journalists like Rebel collaborators, for example, when you do a story, when you do a story, and you want to check facts.

You want to cross-check? You know, check facts.

But by balancing, you want to balance to bring the rebels of views there. Maybe a collaborator, maybe a rebel spokesperson. You call the rebel spokesperson. Then you also put the government in that in your attempt to balance that story. So when they see you put the government soldiers, and also you have given a space for the rebels, they immediately start calling you rebel collaborators. So that was the problem.

So you would ask me, what did I do, or how did I manage to overcome? Yeah, some of these challenges. Number one. Yeah. One. I built very strong networks and a trusted team of journalists. That is the one important thing among journalists. Why? Because when you're with, for example. Male journalists and female journalists. The sexual harassment has been reduced.

Get up at 8. I start to fear. So I make sure I have this built. I had to build a strong network with fellow reporters, you know, for example, moving together because of the nature of the stories we were doing. We're just basically around killings. Abduction. Landmines, lasting bombing. Ambushing trucks.

Burning down schools.

Rape stories. Then they rescued children. Our stories were basically around the brutality of the war.

So in most of them say we'll build a strong network. You move together.

One important step that I took personally. I developed what I now call my own abbreviation. I call it the 3 C's. I used to get facts right as a solution. Prevent all these challenges. Those are the safety challenges.

I would make sure I use my 3CS now. 3C is in my own application in the news reporting. It goes like this. The 1st is that first step that I do, I cross-check my story. Then what is the second thing I used to do? I double-check my story. That is down the second C. The third C I used to do is to triple-check my story. I see now when I have 3 when I have three sources. Confirming or giving the other narrative.

I already know I have facts right, but I also go to confirm to make sure my story is factual.

You pin them down. It's like a safety check for you. Yeah. They find it very challenging to pin you like rubbish off your story because you're presenting facts. So I use the three CS as one.

I want to report encountering these safety challenges as a journalist. Then I also, in relation to that, I also used to travel, besides having all these security issues, you have to use military means.

Yeah. Because we had, we had lot of land mines, and some of these mines, when you step on them, you can blow them up.

So that was our safety need. We would travel with those military vehicles, and then the other thing that we also travel as a group. I mentioned that already, it is very important to travel as a group.

Maybe I can add a bit in relation to the military means we travel with our Members, but also in the choppers, the helicopter, the choppers. Why the choppers? Because they were hard-to-reach places where the only people who could get there at that time were the military, using the choppers.

For example.

Some parts of South Sudan, definitely. There were no roads. The only few available roads were full of landmines. So when the soldiers, the government soldiers, rescued children who were abducted by the rebels, they were normally rescued around South Sudan, which borders Uganda. So they take us journalists in the chopper to take photos to do that story.

So there's no way I would cover a rebel story in such an area without using the military.

Yes, we were building a good relationship with the military so that we could get transport from them. Then we expose the human right abuse that was taking place in our region.

Researcher

When preparing to enter a conflict zone, how do you assess the safety risks? Do you think your evaluations differ from those made by your male colleagues?

Journalist 7

Yeah, as a female journalist. Yes. Yeah, a lot is so OK. Yes, it is so, so much different. For example, I have to consider I have to consider the safety risk. Where am I doing this story? What time am I doing that story? For example, I used to avoid doing stories at night.

Yeah, because of that sexual harassment. But I mentioned it. Yeah. I avoid doing stories at night. Then I also make sure that when I'm going to do the story, I have my friends with me, my colleagues. And there is also.

Another part of it.

Another situation that I also used to consider when assessing when assessing the safety risk or whatever it is about the cultural aspect.

Yeah, the cultural part of it.

For example, if I'm going to interview a traditional, not a traditional chief. The local chiefs.

Now, when you're going to interview a local chief, there's a way you need to dress, for example, as a female journalist, there's a way you need to act.

Then you reach there. You greet them, you have to dress respectfully to them. If you don't, they will not even give you the interview. So it's like, yeah, you have to dress decently or you have to wear something long. For example, when I'm interviewing, they are called the chief. The root. When I'm going to interview such a big such a cultural chief? Hey, I make sure I wear a long dress, you know.

Yeah. Like I, yeah, I wear a long dress. You have to dress different. Why? You went out. When? Why? When. If I'm going with the chopper. I wear my jeans. Trouser. Yeah, because, for example, yeah. Jean's trousers. I found it very safe. The safest.

I tell you, for me during the war, so those are different from another safety. Another assessment. I will try to do, when, for example, this is still in relation to interviewing certain sources, for example the the Muslim during the war, the Muslim, all the religious, all the religions. But these different religious organisations like.

The Muslims, the Anglicans, the Christians, the Catholics, and English, and proud Christian, you let me say that Christian, the Muslim.

They played a big role during the peace process, so they they would would give a voice to all of them. You interviewed a Muslim leader, the chef. You interviewed the Catholic leader interviewed the Anglican. Then you are balancing your story. But now if you are going at that time, whenever I will be going to interview the chief from the Muslim community.

I have to dress differently.

No. Sometimes we have put on a scarf up there. You know, I come back to them, and then you find them. They are giving me that story because my call was to expose the war, but also to write about the efforts in line with peace-building in light of peace. What the peacemakers are doing to end the violence against the community. So I would go beyond. I assess this seriously.

Whom am I going to interview? What do I need? How do I need to dress for a Muslim when I'm interviewing a Muslim source? I wear just what they call a Hijab, I put it on my head. Cover yourself.

Like a Muslim girl. Yeah, yeah, yeah. You needed this too. Like, show them your respect so that they do the interview with you. Then also, in addition to if I have to add a little bit on.

Assessment.

I also consulted, by the way, I used to consult.

What best new sources where the business community? They would give you an honest response. So I would consult the business community. Unfortunately, I did cover the war at a time when we did not have mobile phones.

During the peak of the war, we did not have mobile phones, and we did not have Internet. Yeah, we didn't have mobile phones. We didn't have Internet. We still you're talking about using WhatsApp? No, they were not there. So we for example, we practically relied on pen

and paper, and then walk into the interview, you write everything, then there's still a camera that we can use. Then when you're finding your story now, you use the fax machine. I write neatly that you fax. So that was our era. So what does that mean? That means also the Business Contact, as you are assisting your movement, the Business Contact, who always sneaks, despite the war, they still sneak come to the town to buy merchandise, buy sugar. To take back to the villages, some come across bad vehicles, ambushes..

Children were abducted last night. Here. Some of them get to know all the rebels. We are cooking food in the next village, which means the rebels are about to attack another village. So the risk that they took became my assessment point of contact. And they give us very powerful insight into what is happening in the rural community, very important.

Yes, apart from the business people, we have the charges. They were rural, smaller churches, the Anglican churches, the Protestant, Anglican, and Catholic. They had, like for example, a Catholic priest, who is normally based in the rural area of a Ugandan rural community in Africa. Even the reverend fathers.

They are always best in the rural community, so they were also good news.

In case of each region, as time goes where, the rebels are also attacking these charges. So even when you plan to go and do your story, you should know which I would also make sure that, supposing an attack here, which route will I take? Which other area will I take? Just be aware of your surroundings and where to maybe escape.

Escape Route, I was told to find an escape Route. So, like I just planned my route very, very carefully. Sometimes there are rural women also help. Like the women. And NGOs.

To community mobilisation, they can also tell me the rebels were in this village this week, meaning they can't stay here. They're not the government soldiers, so I can go back to that village and do a story. But it means the rebels are close to another area.

So then, yeah, another example I wanted to give it. This is just an experience that I can share. When I was still in that during that peak of the war.

There was one time. There was one time when he killed like 66 rebels. But the rebels used to be just child soldiers, so the majority were child soldiers, young children, kidnapped and trained to kill using guns. All my teachers. So about six of them had visited. They had crossed in some community. But as they were crossing.

They were ambushed by the government soldiers. So all of them were killed. They had a commander. I still remember. The commander was called ANYWAR and the commander he was leading this small pocket of the rebels.

So they were ambushed and they were killed. So they came to our office, the government newspaper I was working for was called the New Vision.

Came to pick a journalist, and we were both videotaped for journalists who are picked. I was the only female journalist. So how do you work? Because we didn't assess. We didn't even

know where we were going. And the commander called us out. A commander called us. Our military government commander came to office and picked us, so I was one of the journalists who went on.

We moved up somewhere, and the Military Land Rover couldn't drive anymore. They told us it's time to walk in the jungle. So there was a route leading to that scene where the rebels were killed. But he told us he could not pass on that route because once the rebels have used their route, they plant landmines. He had to. So there were, like, about only eight soldiers in that Land Rover, eight soldiers and one commander, and about four journalists. So when we got out of the Land Rover, the Military Land Rover, he divided the journalists. One soldier in front, one soldier, a journalist, a soldier from the journalist, like that. So when you are stepping, you step where the soldiers have stepped. They were. We were opening our own group in the middle of the job and cut the three branches.

There are some strings of leaves. I don't remember the English very well, they have to cut it. They normally cut as you're working in the jungle. I don't know if you've ever been in the jungle.

You struggle to pass. You just don't know the jungle.

It's not, so it would cut. It would have had to. They had to cut the trees and the grass. They make sure we are able to walk. You couldn't pass through this thick forest. So they were cutting for us, you know. But that also shows the relationship we had with the military. So until after, like, one hour of walking.

We eventually reached the place of the scene and found the young boys who had been killed two days before; the bodies had decomposed. Now, why are they bringing us?

When we were coming back, this was another sad part of it. Why are you planning your routes and accessing where you're going? And we learned this also from the soldier when we were coming back. Me, I thought now since they get back to clear that route we would use that route to come back to the main route and board and go back.

No, they shouldn't. No, we can't use that. The rebels could have seen us, possibly. They could have again planted mines. We are going to tear another route again. So now if you're a journalist who does not cooperate with your military or you don't plan your journey well, or you don't learn about safety. You take a risk. You use the same route. The rebels used. And then you end up being blown up.

Sorry, that has been long.

Researcher

No worries.

The third question is how gender specific safety challenges or concerns shape your decisions when it comes to covering stories in dangerous regions? I think you almost covered it already.

Journalist 7

Yeah

Researcher

If you still have to add something, please do. Otherwise, I can also move on as you like.

Journalist 7

Right. I think we can move on.

Researcher

Then question 4. Have there been moments when safety concerns compelled you to adjust your reporting practices? And if so, can you share an example?

Journalist 7

Yeah, a lot. A lot, a lot of experience. That, yeah, example, I can say.

During the war or in my early days of reporting. I experience a lot. Whenever I would do a story that is not in favour of the government, that maybe the government doesn't agree with my story, I would flee or I would flee and leave their district. I used to. I remember several times I would come to travel to Kampala, and I would visit Kampala. Right now, I have moved migrated Kampala after the war. So I. Would travel that time. I was still based in Uganda, Uganda. But when I do such a story, I would flee.

That's exactly what comes and stays in Kampala. For about a week or two until the situation has gone down. Why? Because I have written a story.

Maybe that the government, the government soldiers, or the government itself did want the story written. I remember there was a story that I did.

I even got a clue from one of the military commanders. Oh, he told me. I don't want this story out. But you know, when you are young, you're not afraid. The story was such an important story to tell. And being young, I was so eager about reporting. So that through my reporting, we can end a conflict. You know, I was mostly focused. I mostly focused on exposing the finances. Then I write the piece aspect. Yeah. So I felt that that story shouldn't be kept quiet. So what I did, I start my own investigation on that story.

I did interviews like about 3-4 people. It was about a rebel attack. They had killed a commander on the side of the government. And they didn't want it highlighted. And when this guy, the commander, was killed.

So many child soldiers were also killed. Now my interest was more on exposing the killing of child soldiers because these are innocent young children, yeah.

And they were not giving us the exact figure. They only say, Oh, they killed soldiers but no, they were children killed. And then one commander from the government was killed. So I had to balance the story. I brought out those who are killed on the side of the rebels, who are mostly children. Then I also say a commander from the government side was also killed. So. In that process, just that they just started looking for me. So one of the journalists told me,

we had a very strong network or team of journalists. They are looking for you. So we had an office which was on the 2nd floor. So we would see when they are coming, one of the guys has been looking for you since yesterday. Use the back door.

I slipped out the back, and I just took the next bus, and I actually didn't go home. I stayed somewhere on the bus, waited because we would not use buses, would not travel without the military. So I just waited there. I didn't go back to my mom's house. I didn't go to our house. I didn't go back to the office.

I waited on the bus until morning, and they wouldn't know I had gone.

They went to my mom's house. They went back to the office. They didn't find me. So that was also another big risk. But I had to flee. And then that one thing that I would choose sometimes. I don't sleep in our home. I was living with my parents before we started sleeping on the verandas. We used to have a displaced house. So whenever I do something that was sensitive, I make sure I don't go back home. I can't stay with another relative or with another friend.

But one beautiful thing about that.

Everyone, even the military, was harsh on journalists. It came a time when they were all so tired of the war, so they really wanted the war to end. But without journalists exposing certain things. So everyone wanted peace. That is why I was telling you that whenever I want to interview the chief, the Reverend the

Priest, I dress differently because I want that story. A story that can expose the violence, but also look at the peace. So time came when everyone got tired of the war. The military.

Sometimes they look for that journalist for one or two weeks, then they leave you for a few days, they leave, but they don't follow it. The next day, they see you and they start teasing you. You get married. You stop being stopped on. Go on, get married right when they are teasing you to get married. It's because of the story you had written. And they look for you and fail to get you.

So those were fact challenges that we faced, and I always have to run and hide. to always run and hide here.

Researcher

Alright, so the 5th question is maybe also already a little bit covered, but I'll read it out anyways. How do you approach interactions with sources in environments where gender roles are more pronounced?

Journalist 7

Yeah, very, very careful because.

Women don't have it very well in Uganda here. Even the media let me start with the media. The media is still a male-dominated profession. So, meaning that approaching the gender roles and all these issues, I approach them in a very, very careful way, because if I don't, I'm

able. If I don't do that, I will not be able to get any story. I try as much as possible to maintain professionalism. I make sure I have facts in my stories. In my reporting, I use. I applied my three Cs to make sure.

The voices of the women me as a female journalist. I am able to report, and I'm able to bring out the voices of the women.

And this one also, there is a there's a question I think you'll ask later.

"Whereby the role of gender in covering" maybe it should have been a different question, "the role of gender in covering sensitive stories, for example, rape victims" rape victims. I found out during my experience that it was much easier for me as a woman journalist because of my gender. Interview rape survivors. I called them rape survivors because I feel calling them rape victims stigmatizes so I always, in my reporting, say rape survivors. So as a journalist. I found out that interviewing a rape survivor is easier for me. Some of my colleagues, sometimes when they are interviewing a rape survivor, they'll even say, please help me interview. So when I interviewed them, that's when we got collaboration.

Collaboration in news reporting. I interviewed and I gave him the raw material for his story. So that is how I used to approach the agenda. I will take advantage of my being a female journalist to give more voices to the survivors.

Yeah, we've been, we have been abducted and we've been to have been ripped. The women who have been, you know, who have lost education because of the war. So it was an opportunity for me to give a voice to them. So that they are. So that their stories are heard. But all this is like you do it only when you maintain professionalism.

And also when you need to work with other journalists.

Researcher

Have you encountered difficulties accessing information or sources due to your gender?

How have you managed to overcome these obstacles?

Journalist 7

Yeah, this challenge has been there. Yes, I have faced a lot of challenges, for example.

At one. OK, maybe just let me say that I've faced a lot of challenges, and this is due to my gender role. I already mentioned that they tell you holding a camera is not for a woman, it is for a man, not for a woman. However, in order for me to access information and be able to have to overcome the challenges, I maintain accuracy. Here again I use I use my 3CS. You know my own three series are not written anywhere. So, five pieces of the accuracy balancing, I make sure that I work, and I export facts. Every information I give, I want to report facts, and then also I rely so much on foot soldiers. You know the foot soldiers are these common soldiers without rank.

They were also like a businessman. The foot soldiers were our number one top and the best sources. They'll tell you exactly what has happened, which Commander has been killed, and

I would save their names for their safety and my safety. I would write their name in a notebook. I write their names in a notebook using nicknames. If you saw that, in case they get a notebook that they wouldn't know. So that was how I would access information from the foot soldiers. With the rebels, the best sources were the child soldiers, who tell you the truth. But again, on the side of the rebels, the worst one, where the spokesperson of the Rebels, because they would never. It was all about propaganda. They would never tell you the truth. There was a time when a few of the rebels started getting satellite phones. So they would call, they would call some registration and say I am the commander of the rebel army, want to speak life to the nation. I want to speak to the nation. Now, the majority of such calls were not rebel spokespersons, but they were opportunists. Opportunists who realised that they could make a pretty penny out of that work. Now, how do I assess this information? I rely more on the child soldiers.

These child soldiers are fighting as rebels. You might ask me how they would get them? They were at my church. There were so many rescued and brought to my district, my hometown.

And there were centres, schools. There were two centres for them.

There was a centre called World. Is it the trauma centre that was run by the World Vision, then we had the Hulu? I don't, I don't remember.

School. It was also a counselling centre. It was for rehabilitating these child soldiers. Now we used to go there to interview these child soldiers. So they would tell you the truth. They would even tell you about their Commander. The person calling is not a rebel spokesperson because we are trying to access facts to verify the so-called Rebel spokesperson.

Because when the speech started, many people realised they could make money out of the war. So we had someone seated in London.

And he's calling and saying, Oh, I'm the spokesperson for the rebels. Somebody is sitting in Nairobi, the neighbouring country. Oh, I want to speak directly. This is our position as the rebels. But most of the people wanted to be known to make money, I say.

The rebels had their spokesperson. Yes, but those spokespersons were never even in charge of the LRA. They were just opportunist who saw that they could take money. That's when I would now go to the child soldiers in that cancel, extends the trauma they were called the trauma center. Go there. Verify my facts. And these children were bodyguards, commanders. So they knew most of these people. And most of those who did ambushes used nicknames. I just want to explain.

This nickname belongs to Commander so and so example, you are from Brussels. You were kidnapped from Brussels. And you've become a commander. When you join the rebellion, they know that Lisa was kidnapped from Brussels. Now they will call you Commander Brussels.

So it's already shared. Soldiers who could now verify facts. They were more reliable, just like the foot soldiers under the government.

Researcher

And has it ever happened that you couldn't get access to a source because you're a woman? Did it ever happen that you could not, like, get any access to a source that you wanted to do an interview with or something because you're a woman, or did you always somehow manage to, like, get the interview or the information out of the source?

Journalist 7

That answer is a yes and a no. It has to depend on the situation. There were times when I was given stories. Because I was young, I was a young, beautiful girl. Would you give me that story? There are moments when they would not give me that story. Because I am a young girl. So it just depends. So sometimes it's an advantage and sometimes a disadvantage. For example. We had a Catholic priest. A very big person, I can't mention his name. He never liked me. He never liked me for even one bit. Whenever I was near him with my camera, I would turn his face away. He just never liked me because I had a camera and I wore trousers.

But yes, 10 years down the road, 15 years down the road, when peace talks started, that peace talks started in different countries like the UK, in Uganda, locally in Uganda, and in Juba, South Sudan.

To get coverage of the peace talks, I first went and covered them in the UK. I went to the peace talks in Juba. When I was covering the local peace talks in Uganda.

But why did I say no, yes? When I reached Juba.

He's very because at that time we didn't know, the media intermediary became the most powerful tool. In any report of the LRA conflict, the military tried and failed.

Peace talks, we try. It was not ending the war. The first group of elders who were sent to talk about peace was all killed by the rebels.

So the defence budget was increasing. The war was not ending.

Drama, drama, drama was being active until the end of the war.

The religious community was using public service on the radio.

I'm speaking to the rebels. Please abandon rebellion and come back home. Nothing until 2001, when the UK. Department for International Development (DFID),

They kept, and you know, before DFID, the military realised that.

We started thinking aloud, not realising started thinking aloud, Uganda said we have been fighting. That war is not ending. What next?

They decided to create the first peace radio. The first peace radio in Africa.

By the military. It was created in Uganda by Ugandan people th only the first peace, peace radio was created in Uganda. Not charity, not Facebook, but a military radio. The Peace

Radio was created in Uganda after realising that they were fighting.

The war was not ending. The stocks were not moving. So when they created this already, you call it radio freedom. It was broadcasting in a very in a few kilometres within that displacement of the city.

So what happened? They would now use this. They employed journalists. I had colleagues who were working in this radio.

They use entertainment, the journalist. They imagine the military starting a radio station to persuade the rebels to come back home. And they hire journalists to play songs, you know, to use entertainment. Entertain the rebels, bring the rebels. Who escaped. Talk on the radio. Because there was a lot of propaganda. So now, when the radio was established around 2002. They used it to persuade the rebels to abandon the rebellion and come back home.

They play songs, they dedicate songs, they dedicate songs to discharge. Soldiers will come and read. You are dedicating this song to Commander Lisa from Brussels, you know.

So that became a powerful tool and intervention by the military. A total of 3000 ex-combatants managed to come out of the rebellion.

Abandoned rebellion. And that's it. It appeared for peace. Why? Because of that powerful radio station. Yet it was a small radio that went a very short distance. So they came out, and they would come and greet you and talk. I'm back home. The government has not killed us. They have not killed me, I am alive. Come on.

So the other international community realised the power of the media. Sorry for taking you back. They decided to amplify the reach of that radio, build it big. By bringing more posters, I think to DFID. Now that's when DFID did the UK's best charity can build a very big registration called Radio Mega.

Radio, A small community radio, because the military, I said, wants to use the radio for news to talk to their children. Who are in, who are in the bushes?

Waiting to come back home. There was a very powerful programme called Kabako. That's when the Department of International Development came and built Mega FM, and then other organisations like this one. They came in and trained journalists.

And even other journalists in print journalism focus on training the media on peace reporting. I benefited from that a lot. Things we're trained and focused on.

The NGO's were advertising for peaceful the media. Now that was in a time frame of 15 years.

That was when this priest, I'm taking you back to the story of the priest. How I faced that challenge. That was when the priest realised in the 15 years that people like, who are moving with a camera, are very important.

He met me again in Juba.

And he saw me and he called me. I went. And he said you keep my camera, take pictures

until the conference is over, you give the camera to me. He greeted me with respect because he realised the power of the media.

So I was writing. I was writing about the violence and the killing. I also bring the piece angle. That was when was an experience that I always share.

Researcher

So he was able to start trusting. He respected your work, huh?

Journalist 7

Yeah, he realised he trusted me. Really. Never liked me. Because I was carrying my camera and wearing trousers, and 15 years down the road, I became a hero to him. "Come here, thank you for the good work. You are the only one who can touch my camera." He was at the conference for about three to four days until we went back. "Keep my camera, take as many pictures as you want".

So. That is an example of what I faced as a female journalist.

Another example. When I went to cover and this I related to I related to peace talks in the UK, not a peace talk, a peace conference in the UK in London.

When we reached London, the rebel teams were there. The rebel supporters were at that conference. But you cannot team up there. We are the affected people. And I'm, I surely am a rural journalist. So about four, three journalists who came, who travelled from Uganda. Me. The only lady. The other two were male.

So when we reached the UK, when the rebels realised there were journalists from Uganda, they didn't want us to attend the peace conference. And this is not only an experience from a gender perspective, but an experience from a journalist, a general journalism experience when they didn't want us to be there. They didn't want the journalist from Uganda there, only foreign media.

To cover the press conference but not the journalists from Uganda. But the journalists who came from Uganda have been hired, and you know, with the Ugandan journalists, they can't just level everything, you know?

And you will not believe this. When I was staying in London.

My uncle, I had an uncle who was actually a rebel supporter.

And I was living in his house. You can imagine the guy. I was working for a government newspaper. I'm living with a rebel supporter. And I'm a journalist. And I'm a woman. So when we reached the conference room the first day, they said they didn't want the journalist from Uganda to cover their conference. They would not participate. We were feeling very uneasy again. I just remembered one thing I had. I had visited a certain displaced camp.

Before, a week before I went for my visa interview and I had printed some of those pictures, I did it unknowingly. I said maybe I should first carry some pictures just like that. So when I look at the first page, my first time to board a plane was in 1988. When I reached the Visa

office for the interview, the interviewing officer at the UK Embassy asked me. But you're very young.

What are you going to do to contribute to the peace process? I had no answer. I was young. Then I just rushed and remembered my camera, and I had a few pictures.

I pulled my pictures instead of answering her. I just pulled my pictures quickly. I said I want to show the people in the diaspora that there are problems at home.

These are children who were being rescued. And these are young people who are not going to school, but you can see they are just playing because of the war. But if I show all the pictures to the members of the peace conference, those in diaspora, somehow it will push them to talk about peace. She never asked me any more questions. And then I took the photos and I went with them to the UK.

OK, the peace conference. They told me and my other colleagues, the three of us from Uganda. The rebels don't want you guys there. But we are pleading with them. To allow for coverage of this event. Then I immediately remember my remembered my pictures. I got my pictures again. I went to him. He was called Doctor. He was called Doctor Patrick.

And I said, Doctor, can you show them that this is what is happening in Uganda. This are the same pictures.

Can't you show them that there's a problem? Can you show it to the diaspora community? Was that the time there was no war in other Uganda? The war in northern Uganda was propaganda. According to them, they were. You were brainwashed that they would think that Uganda was attacked by the government. There was nothing. The government was just dressing children in their uniforms, which was totally wrong. That was one of my goals. To tell the truth, to tell. Inform my people, my people in the diaspora, to get to know this problem at home. Then, when I remembered the picture I gave to him and he whispered to me. We can send it to central London. They can work on it. Then I said it's OK, but don't put my name in the caption, 'cause. I don't know. The children who are not going to school this year are 15 landmine victims. They are amputated children who have been rescued. About five or six terrible pictures.

No, no worry. And he took them when he went. So he dropped them during break when people went for tea, and he made sure he put them out. He put these pictures on the wall. So, as you are coming back from the break, they were seeing and reading these images fresh from Uganda, I think one of the rebels, I even remember his name. He asked the organisers who brought this picture?

Actually, that chairman said, "Oh, it's so important to have journalists on the ground. So they need to cover this conference." So that was how I managed to use my images to stay and access information during that process. So they wouldn't want to associate so much with us,

the rebels, but towards the end of their conference, they were our friends. They were they became now, like talking to us for free. But then later I discovered these were people who are living comfortable lives in the UK.

Some of them are just interested in making, you know, money, making money.

Researcher

What kinds of support or resources do you find essential for ensuring your safety while working in conflict zones? I think you also touched on that a little bit, but maybe.

Journalist 7

You can add that there's a great need for training.

Yeah, period. During our days, no training, no, no. We could have other training, like you might write a supporting piece of reporting. Different media trainings, but when it comes to the safety of journalists, nothing, nothing.

Here's an example which I would have given before my in my other examples, but I can also give it as a point of reference.

I experienced a situation where a soldier wanted to beat me, take my camera away. I ran, I was young, I ran, and he gave up. I was a youngster, but I don't. I can't say I was crazy, but I always want to bring out issues. You know, when you are young.

Researcher

What type of support or resource would have helped you in that situation?

Journalist 7

Training. Training, training. Yeah, especially the safety training. Yeah, safety training. And also, as you train me on safety, you also need to train a journalist on what shoes to wear. Because if I didn't have flashlights this low heel, the young girls of today, I was telling journalists recently.

You go to cover a variety when you're wearing high heels. Those high heels. Now you're going to dislocate your leg. Your legs are already going back to my experience; I was able to run somewhere. Yeah, because I had flat shoes. Yes. So those are tips that these young girls of today need. That is a project that I am planning to work on. They don't know anything about.

Safety. They don't know. Just because of that. And it's not only that safety covering while you're working in a hostile environment, no, but also the digital safety part of it.

Researcher

Yeah, yeah. That is another component, huh?

Journalist 7

Yes, yes. Again, they need to train. I was training about a month ago in eastern Uganda with a young German journalist. About your age. She's in Uganda doing her PhD. So she gave me a very good example; she told me they were trained on safety as young journalists.

To defend yourself. You fight, but you don't fight to kill the opponent. You throw him down and run. You kick to run, so that was something that I've never even been taught. And then our next training is in July. We want her to share some of those tips. So training. It's important.

The physical training for the journalist, then the digital training, is important.

Then, also, the other important thing is The Newsroom news organisation. They need to be trained as well. Capacity building.

Researcher

This is perfect because the net, that's the next question.

Do you believe news organisations are doing enough to support female journalists in these situations?

Journalist 7

Not really. Because even so, they don't have that, they don't have the capacity, you know, in Uganda. There are a lot of challenges when it comes to finance training. Financial aspect of it, much as they would want to see the journalist train, they want to support their female or in-house capacity building. They always lack that resources. So the financial part of it is there.

But also the lack of, you know, the poor attitude, you know.

Hey. So it's not just the financial issue, but it's also because, OK, so it's it is because people don't really care or like people in power positions.

They don't care, they don't care. And this is the reason some of the media organisations in Uganda, for example, the radio. On the radio are businessmen and politicians. Now the businessman is looking at just profit-making, not professionalism. You know, you're looking at how much money I can earn. So when they're focused on their money, they forget it as a part of creating awareness. They forget about it, which is very, very important, to create awareness about social harassment.

You also train the journalist, the female journalist, on how to navigate.

This demanding newsroom with sexual harassment and sexual harassment is not only for The Newsroom, it is also in the field where they go to the story. So it is the news organisations that are not doing enough. Not only because of the financial part of it, but also a poor attitude and the focus on making money. Some of them are owned by Politicians have political ambitions. They are interested in their areas of politics or business. Confusing the professionalism.

The same categorical politicians and businessmen who own most of the media organisations. It's within the family. They make it very hard to build a professional capacity.

Researcher

I've heard this a lot from, like, other journalists I talked to, that the news organisations are not doing enough at all.

So yeah, this doesn't come as a surprise.

Journalist 7

I still think that they are not doing enough. I want to go back to media schools. They send journalists to do an internship in a media organisation. So the media institutions are also not doing enough. This is because, for example, when I was at the university I attended when I was already in practising journalist. I went to get my degree. So I think I was the only one who could write news. They only focus on theory by the time they reach The Newsroom. That's when they're beginning to learn how to write a news story. Then you find out that it becomes a challenge in the long run, it goes back to their sources, and you know that the in House capacity building becomes lacking in a way.

A young journalist comes to The Newsroom, starts from zero to write, which becomes not only a challenge for the news media outlet. It has become now almost a general mechanism or a general problem.

Researcher

I can already imagine what your answer is for the next question is also the last question. So over time, have you noticed a shift in how the industry addresses gender specific safety challenges?

Journalist 7

There's some positivity now because, of course, things are not yet the way they're supposed to be. Yeah, but in the industry, there's a little bit of awareness

And some positivity in terms of capacity building.

It was OK because of the different training and different forms of teams of training given out. There's some bit of improvement, but a lot needs to be done. I noticed some bit of improve. In the past, you know. Like our period. Things were really, really bad. But now somehow there's improvement. I'll have an impact, which makes me so happy.

There is a female journalist. She's one of those young girls I mentioned. She was beaten in the last election, in 2020. She was beaten by a soldier, and she has been in a wheelchair for some time.

And now she's been using a walking stick for about two years.

Very bright female journalist. So they still are not done. Women journalists. They need to be trained. And this training must not stop, when it comes to the safety training on how to report in a violent situation. Yeah, I prefer it is from the university to The Newsroom.

Research

OK. So just one last little question

Do you want to add anything, if you think there's anything important to say?

Journalist 7

OK, as a female journalist, I just want to say.

News reporting.

In relation to gender, it is very important because to me, gender provides a better storytelling because we are not only women, but sometimes we understand. For example, remember I told you a story where the male journalist would ask me to interview an Arab survivor. And therefore, as women journalists, we are better storytellers

Because we have told you we are going to speak from experience, we are going to speak as mothers.

We are going to speak as journalists, and definitely we can report better and I think.

Gendering storytelling is a better approach. And for me, if I'm to recruit, I think I'll create, I'll try my best to have more women journalists.

Researcher

That's amazing. Yeah, I agree with you. Thank you!

Interview Journalist 8**Researcher**

So my first question would be.

Has there been any incidents where you faced a safety challenge challenge, specifically related to your gender while reporting in a conflict zone, and if so how did you navigate it?

Journalist 8

Yeah, there was one.

But it's seven times, but it's always the same thing. When I was working in Egypt. It wasn't in a war zone, but he was very tense because he was years after the revolution and the country was in transition. Or the President of the Government. And he was still in the army's power and there were a lot of protests in the city center in Cairo, on Tahrir Square, more specifically, and the thing over there is that when you are a woman. Taking part of those protests or covering protests.

You face a lot of sexual harassment, which means that you can be in the crowd and then you will feel a lot of hands on your, on your bump, on your ***. Or everywhere, and it can. It can become worse. There were worse situation. Luckily, I just had those. Hands touching. Touching me. My friends, two female friends. But there were other stories of women being harassed and raped on on this crowd. So yeah, so to face those things. Of course, it was better not to go along. Better to be with men.

Colleagues, but even that will not prevent you from feeling some hands on you. So my easiest way was to just disguise myself like a man. So I was using a cap to put my my. Hair inside and wearing large clothes. I was looking like a teenage boy.

Researcher

When preparing to enter a conflict zone, how do you assess the safety risks? Do you think your evaluations are different from those made by your male colleagues?

Journalist 8

But I think there's a perception according to to the person not only the gender.

There are common thing that we should think about, like to know which danger we'll face. What what we'll do in case we face this or that danger. I mean, the danger is still the same when you are attacked by. By machine guns. Shelling or now drones, because the biggest threat nowadays is really drones. So it doesn't matter. You may know a woman. Yeah, men or women. The danger is still on the face. The same. But if you woman, of course, you should maybe think about more with who you will be. Maybe not to stay alone with a man. But you don't know or you don't trust. That's the kind of thing we should think about as a woman, because you can easily be with the fixer or a soldier who brings you somewhere. You know much about this guy. So yeah, it's in this case, maybe it's better to work in a team or to have one already. A lot of discussion with this person or. Being sure that maybe you don't care. Yeah, just be aware that everything can happen, you know.

Researcher

How do gender specific safety concerns shape your decisions when it comes to covering stories in dangerous regions?

Journalist 8

On their side and we had to just stay away and hide ourselves just because we were women. So in this particular case, when it's like, this is not really in terms of danger, but it's just that I will know that if I'm a woman, I will not be able to work. And then, of course, there are some places like Afghanistan, where it will be more difficult as a woman to work. And so it's not really according to the danger ages that for me it's it will take so much effort, and I'm a freelancer and maybe so much money in those efforts that I just don't take the financial risk to go there if I'm not able to work properly like I want. Otherwise, yeah, no, it's just I don't think that I should think like a woman, will I be able to work because it's too dangerous for me.

In the war zone now, there are other particular cases where you know, in some it's not only in a war zone, it's just in some neighbourhood of any city.

As a woman with a camera, it will be dangerous for you. I don't think about the risk.

Researcher

Yeah.

Journalist 8

Because there's so much to lose and it's not worth it. But it's not in in war zone. It's, I think, in every city. You have some neighbourhoods where it's not recommended to be a woman alone and with the camera taking pictures, of course. No.

Researcher

So this may overlap a little bit, but have there been moments when safety concerns compelled you to adjust your reporting practices, and if so, can you share an example?

Journalist 8

You mean because of the danger? I changed my way of working?

Researcher

Yeah, it doesn't matter. I mean, if you have an experience for like a gender specific example, sure, but also generally.

Journalist

Oh yeah, generally, it's always our way of working always changes. According to the situation, and if, for example, I want to go somewhere like to do a story about civilians living in a war zone in a city that is constantly under attack, I can take Ukraine as an example. But then we have the information that that too many drones.

In the sky. And then it's not gonna happen. There are some areas where I cannot go.

Where I wanted to go, but then I decided not to go because we have this information that there are too many drones, and it's too dangerous if we go there by car, one of them can target us because it's chemicals, drones. And there are some days, the day before we decided to go to one place and then. And then we have again the information from a soldier from a press officer that there are too many shellings there, and then we cannot go. So that's

very often that it's like in Ukraine nowadays. And then. Yeah, there are some other things, like recently I was here in Egypt to cover the March to Gaza.

And the authorities over there forbade the March and any meetings. And there were some people still. Those protesters wanted to meet. And of course I needed to take pictures of those meetings. But I was like, come on. It's insane. The police arrests.

Just beat you. They can destroy your camera. So with my friend colleague, we decided not to go. Also, it's just a matter of assessing the situation before going somewhere. It's all the time, all the time. The plans can change. It happens often according to the security situation. And maybe another situation, I had a trip to Sudan in 2022, and I ended up cancelling it last minute, and I really didn't want to because I, you know, I'd worked hard to get that visa. I'd, you know, spent money on it that I wasn't going to get back. But I just had a gut feeling, and the person that I plan to go with, who was a trusted Sudanese person living in the US, things kept changing. You know the accommodation was uncertain. It was.

We're going to stay with so and so's brother, cousin, and as much as I trusted that person, I don't know that I can trust his brother's friends, cousins, or neighbor. And that's what it felt like to me. And I just. Something wasn't right. And I cancelled it, and I felt momentous relief in that which is unusual for me because I'm, you know, constantly wanting to kind of seek that interesting assignment. But this was a case where I just didn't feel safe. And maybe if I were a guy, I would have felt a little bit stronger about that decision. But that was a safety decision based on gender and just not knowing.

Researcher

How do you approach interactions with sources in environments where gender roles are more pronounced?

Journalist 8

Alright, I think the priority is always the safety of our sources, of the people we are interviewing or taking pictures of. The first question is always to ask is, Are you OK if I do this or do that? If you make an interview, OK to tell before if you don't want to answer it, it's OK. No problem. You can just tell me you don't want to answer. And of course. According to, if it's a female or if it's I don't know, transgender whatever. We always ask, I mean, I always ask if it's OK to take a picture of this or this. Sometimes I say I can show you after, and you tell me if it's OK or not, and also, sometimes people want us to take pictures or to tell the stories, but we realise ourselves that no, it's not OK. 'Cause they don't realise that you can put them in danger nowadays. It's not only newspapers, like the paper version; everything is online. So even if the person agreed to do this or that. Ourself. Our responsibility as journalists is to also think about ourselves. If Would we be OK if this person tells us this and we publish it. So yeah, it's the first thing is to always ask the person. And then, after thinking about it, seriously, if the topic is very sensitive.

Researcher

Mm hmm mm hmm. I see. Yeah, I got it because it's mine. I mean, it's not gonna be deletable anymore once it's already online, I guess.

Journalist 8

Yeah, people share, and you know, it can be very fast on the social network or so nowadays. So yeah, we have to be very careful about that now.

Researcher

Yeah. Yeah, that's a big responsibility, I guess. Have you encountered difficulties assessing information or sources due to your gender? Have you managed to overcome these obstacles if that happened?

Journalist 8

Yeah, but as I told you, we have this. We had this event in Libya. Where we really wanted to cover the battle of Misrata. But with those militia that we met and we were supposed to work with, it was. It was very difficult because they didn't want to have a woman beside them. Just because we were women, if we were men, I think it would have been completely different. And literally, they told us to be hidden behind the truck and stay there. Well, we were a bit laughing about it because he was so absurd. But at the same time, he's so pathetic, you know, because, OK, we are also journalists and my friend's writer. I was taking pictures. And just because of this. No, no, no, it was impossible.

And then you have another kind of behaviour is like Oh, but you are a woman. You are so fragile. I. I don't want to take you on this frontline or this place. It's too dangerous. It's too dangerous because you are a woman.

Researcher

Yeah, which is crazy!

Journalist 8

And this is it. It gets me out of my nerves. Really. Because I don't want this guy to. OK. It's very nice. Right. OK, nice. Nice. But I don't want this guy to to, to be a responsibility of my to be responsible of my protection. I'm doing my job. He has to do his job, and it's not him to decide. If it's too dangerous for me or not, well, there are some situations like this.

Researcher

Yeah, especially when for a man. No, I mean.

Journalist 8

Yeah, they know they are press officer for that, you know, and usually some press officer, they know they work. If it's a man or a woman, it doesn't matter if it's too dangerous; it's too dangerous. But the fact that one day one of the soldiers was taking a man journalist to a position, but he decided not to take me because I'm a woman and I look too fragile. And that's I think it's even worse than the guys in Misrata because, because them it's ideology,

blah blah blah. And so this is this is this is terrible and you can face this a lot actually in Ukraine. Yes, now, but some are still thinking like this.

Researcher

OK, so now it's a little bit more about. Like the last three questions, a little bit more about the industry of journalism and how news organisations play a part in it.

So the next question is what kind of kinds of support or resources do you find essential for ensuring your safety while working in conflict zones?

Journalist 8

So as freelancers, we don't have much support. We need to organise this ourselves.

Well, the first thing, of course, is to have your gears like. Vests and helmets, and first aid kit.

Researcher

You organise for that yourself?

Researcher

Yeah, yeah, I bought it myself.

But of course, if I'm on assignment for a newspaper, then they will ask me, Do you have this and if not, then they will provide it. Which is sometimes cool because I don't want to travel all the time from 1 country to another with all my gear. So if I'm on assignment at the newspaper has it, then it's great. Then what's important nowadays is to have this training to know what to do. If you or somebody else is injured. Those trainings of five days a week, sometimes for one zone, a war zone. It's heat training.

There are several organisations now that can finance those trainings for freelancers, and I think it's very important that they should have.

Researcher

Mm hmm, the heat training they are done by the military, or who is doing them?

Journalist 8

Well, it's private companies that just hire. Most of the time, held by the military, yeah.

Security companies or so. So yeah, this and then what? We like the most, and what we should have is insurance. Insurance is so expensive for war zones, and it's almost impossible to when we are freelancers to pay it. So when I'm assigned, for example, lately I was for Le Monde here in Ukraine, then they asked me, Do you have insurance? I said I have just Ukrainian insurance. It's not like the best, but it's the only one I can pay and then they put me on a French insurance. And if they for the time I'm on assignment with them. Yeah, that's.

That's the support we have when we have an assignment. Then, when we are working for ourselves, we need to arrange to have a good fixer. That we trust because it's also a matter of security. That is not somebody whom I don't know. Take whatever roads without knowing

what's happening around. Do some crazy things when we are on the front line. The first question I always ask the Fixer, if I go on the front line, is Are you OK to go on the front line? Because if you're not OK, it's not a problem. I prefer that you tell me now rather than you panic when you are over there. It's very important, and I don't want to force anybody to go there if they don't feel it like this.

Or scared, but it will be very annoying that the day before, they tell me I don't know, I don't go because I'm scared. I will say OK, but I will be very annoyed. So I want to ask the question before. So yeah, as a freelancer, the support is a bit tricky. Yeah, yeah.

Researcher

So I mean I know you're a freelancer, but once you worked for news organisations like just as an like, for an assignment, Do you believe news organisations are doing enough to support female journalists in particular in these situations? Why or why not?

Journalist 8

Yeah. I mean, I think now the time is changing. More and more newspapers call men and women. It doesn't matter. I think it was not the case. Like maybe when I heard my colleagues maybe 20 years ago, if it was an assignment on a war zone newspaper, we'd rather call a man than a woman. And it's not such a long time ago. But now I see.

Well. I know more about French media, Belgian media, and American media. That's why I cannot talk about others because I don't know how it works.

But now I see more and more women on the field. I also see that the media realised that women can do some stories that men can't. For example, you need to have access.

To females or to women or families, it's easier. If you work in some communities, you know where it's a very. Like in, I don't know, very religious communities. And then the men cannot enter the home if the man of the home is not there for example. I think the media realised this. So in terms of being on the field, I think now it's it's OK. Inside the newsrooms, I'm not sure is the same. But now we are talking about conflict zones, so.

Yeah, I think the the support. I mean, I can just talk about the media, I know. But nowadays I think it's it's smallest. Yeah, it's OK.

Researcher

Over time have I mean you basically already answered this, but over time, have you noticed shifts in how the industry addresses gender specific safety challenges?

Journalist 8

Yeah, that's yeah, that's what I told you. I mean, but I can talk only about myself. I don't know. Maybe other journalists face other situations. I mean, if you talk in South American journalism, I think it will be different, or in Africa, or in the Middle East of course in the Middle East it will be different. But for me, I can just talk about French Americans, Belgium.

Researcher

OK, I only have one more question. If there is anything else you would like to say, anything that you think is important to add?

Journalist 8

Actually, if you'd ask for women, it was difficult when you're on the frontline and you're in trenches or something, and the difficulties for a woman are the bathroom, it's.

It's the bathroom. Because, of course, you know, you go with soldiers most of the time. It's men, and they don't think about this privacy when you have to stay in the position for several days. Yeah, it's a challenge.

Researcher

Thats it, thank you!

Interview Journalist 9

Researcher

OK, then I'll start. So the first question is, has there been an incident where you faced a safety challenge specifically related to your gender while reporting in a conflict zone? And how did you navigate it?

Journalist 9

I think it's a given that as a woman, regardless of your profession, we know this, right?

You're always going to be at risk. It's unfortunately just how the world works.

So I don't think. You are in any more danger because you're a journalist. It's simply because you're a woman. The only difference is that if you're a journalist, you have access to more dangerous places.

With more unscrupulous people. So in short, you put yourself in more difficult positions than other women might, but at the same time, there are women who just live in conflict zones, for example, or who live in societies that diminish them every single day. So that's the reality they face every day. And as a journalist who might go to those places to report on that condition, you're just participating in a reality that they have to contend with every single day of their lives, right? So.

Having seen what some of my colleagues have been through, I realise how fortunate I was to have not been.

In similar situations, I mean, I'm sure you have read of the reporters who were in, you know, Northern Africa and in the Middle East who have been sexually assaulted by groups or who have been taken, right? I mean, really awful. So I mean, compared to that knock on wood, I

have not had to go through that and I.

But all by the grace of God, you know that you're not in that position.

But yes, of course you go into put places and immediately they look at you and they think, oh, it's a woman journalist. Like immediately you're diminished immediately. They think you're you're powerless compared to them because in many of these conflict situations you are going to be dealing with angry men and their egos and their need to show that they are powerful. So you are already in a position of weakness as far as they are concerned.

Especially since you're coming in with a desire to speak to them and get to know them. Or into, you know, to interview them, to film them, whatever it is. So they see it as you need something from me. Therefore I am more power over you. You know.

Fortunately, because of the way the the news has changed and all the danger that previous journalists have been through, you know we stand on their shoulders. For example, when I was covering the Iraq war and that was 2003, you know, 20 years, you did not go anywhere. Without security along with you, you know, we call them security consultants and basically they were ex soldiers from either the British Army or whatever you might, you might, whatever backgrounds they might have had some were former policemen from Australia, from different countries. But they came as civilians working after their experience with their security force was over to offer you their advice. And their protection is basically how it worked. And they they they.

To blend in so they didn't come across as security people, except that sometimes you could tell because they were very buff, you know, or like you're there news team and suddenly this is very tall, giant Australian guy. So people could pick them out of the but they were meant to blend in and be part of the team and just jump in if they're needed to be physical protection provided, you know. So in the sense it gave you for some people, they were saying it gave you a false sense of security.

Because you felt like, oh, well, I have bodyguards, so I'm fine. I can do whatever I want and risk it. 'cause. Somebody's here to have my back, but.

No. In many ways, like for me, the more you felt like, oh, geez, I'm going into a situation where I have somebody with me to make sure that I get out of this alive.

And you know, you kind of have colleagues who don't get out of things alivd. And that happened to us when we were in Iraq at that time. And so you're, you're constantly. You're constantly aware.

And you know that each situation is different. So how do you navigate it? It's hard. There's no hard and fast rule. Yes. The only thing I always kept in mind was, and this was told to me by a senior, another senior female journalist whom I respected greatly. And she always said no story is worth your life, you know. So you go into a situation when you know that it's dangerous and your gut is telling you.

To not go forward, don't do it. I remember one time I was at, you know, everybody wanted an exclusive with.

A terrorist group in the southern Philippines, for example, the off, and they were known for kidnapping every single journalist that went to interview them ended up kidnapped and then held for ransom. And you know what I mean? And all sorts of things. So when I was in the southern Philippines doing a story on something else, right, word was sent to me that, oh, the Abu Sayyaf heard you're here, you know. And at that point, he's working for Al Jazeera. So obviously for them, it's like dollars.

International News Agency, right. So they sent word Abu Sayyaf would like to invite you to their camp. Right. And show you where they live and yada yada yada. And I'm thinking.

Researcher

Sounds very dodgy.

Journalist 9

At one point, I was like, it's an exclusive, like at that stage they hadn't spoken to anyone in quite a while, so I thought, oh, this is interesting.

But then at the same time I thought, am I really going to walk into a terrorist layer and think that they're gonna do, you know, but then. So I went back and forth. My cameraman was English, so he was like, well, I'm happy to go with whatever you say. You know, you tell me, what do you think

And we had we had a security guy with us who basically was like, it's kind of stupid. But if I understand, the journalists need to get an exclusive right. That was the whole point. Do we get an exclusive? Do we do it? Do we do it? And so I came up with this idea of, let's tell them we'll meet them halfway, so we're not going to go to their couch. We're just going to meet them somewhere, you know, halfway and whatever.

And as we were on the way, we were going further and further from the point that we had said we would meet them.

So you know at that point I kind of stopped and cause even my cameraman was like, I'm not feeling good about this anymore. Like, where are we headed? Yeah. Yeah. It's like we said, if we said we were gonna meet here, we were suddenly going here. And we're like, wait, hang on. So we stopped, and we didn't do it. You know, we didn't do it.

Researcher

And further in their direction.

Yeah, yeah.

Journalist 9

So we didn't get that exclusive at the end of the day, we got another interview with two former well. At that point, they were still part of the group and they decided they wanted. They desperately wanted to talk to the press because they wanted to get out of the group

and didn't know how.

So they agreed to meet us where we said, but this time it was just two of them, you know, they came to where we wanted, so I got the interview. I didn't get to go to their camp, but I was fine with that. I did not need to go to their camp. You know, I had no desire.

Researcher

OK. Yeah. You didn't get the exclusive, but you also didn't get kidnapped, so.

Journalist 9

Exactly. And the worst part was two weeks later, another journalist went in, was offered the same thing, and got kidnapped for two weeks.

You know what I mean? And I, and I remember I met. I sat down with her afterwards, and she was like, How did you not get kidnapped? And I said because I didn't go. I said it's as simple as that. You know, I said we all know we all talked amongst ourselves, and we all know any journalist they hears is there will get an invitation for an exclusive. I said you can't fall for it. You can't be that desperate for a story that you would put yourself in danger, and well. Very difficult lesson for her because she thought she was going to die. You know, she really thought she was gonna die.

Researcher

Yeah, yeah, just really listening to your gut feeling.

Journalist 9

Beginning to whip the protesters, some reporters will run towards it. I don't. I'm like, OK, getting violent. I'm gonna go high up to view it because I am not here to participate. I'm here to witness it, you know, but unfortunately, you will get people who'll be like, oh, I want to be in the thick of it because that way I might win an award. And so that's when.

Researcher

Maybe a little bit like an adrenaline junkie.

Journalist 9

Yes, exactly. And that's why it's it's very you get very different types, you know to go out there and become a journalist. And it's hard because.

Researcher

Yeah, of course.

Journalist 9

Depending on what type of person you get, you're also going to get a very different story at the end of the day, a very different will be put out. You know, for the public to consume. So it it's yeah, I think at the end of the day, we bring everything we are into the work that we do, and I that's not just as a journalist, it's for everybody, right. And so you really have to rely on your instincts at every point to be like, this is a dangerous situation. And especially for women, we go into everything already knowing we are somehow coming at it from. -0 you

know below 0, we're like negative in every situation be just because that's how we are perceived. So we have to find a way to make that work for us. If you know what I mean, in many situations, you come in as a woman, and they might trust you more because you seem less threatening. So you have to use that to your advantage to be able to then get to the truth of whatever it is you're covering. You know, one time in Gaza, actually we were. The camera, I was a producer then for CNN. The reporter was a man, but the camerawoman was Al mean. There was a woman, you know. And we were allowed in places that only women were allowed to go. And so they had at that point never seen an all-women team. And so we had access to things that we had never been able to film before because of that. So that's what I mean. It's really a balance. And at the same time, Can you imagine telling the story of from a women's perspective, very different, very different from just seeing the? You know Habas and the men and the whatever. When you're seeing widows and you're speaking to orphans and you're talking to the little girls and you're in the section of the mosque that's only for the women. You get a completely different perspective on the conflict. So it's, I think.

Researcher

Yeah. It really depends on the situation.

Journalist 9

Knowing. Yes, exactly, yeah.

Researcher

Yeah, yeah. OK. Great answer. So the second question is, when preparing to enter a conflict zone, how do you assess the safety risks? Do you think your evaluations differ from those made by your male colleagues?

Journalist 9

Yes, always because they don't see the dangers that women do simply because, again, as I said earlier, right, women are kind of born. And inculcate that with the fact that we are just automatically put in a more, more vulnerable position so men don't go into places, that there's a possibility they might be sexually assaulted or even just physically assaulted because they're perceived as having the potential to fight back, whereas women are seen as weak. Potential hostages. More fragile. You know, easier to break in a sense. But the women that go into journalism.

Are not the kind who will break easily. Like I see what some of the other women have gone through. And I think, how do you bounce back after that? And yet they do, and then they go back out there, and I am just gobsmacked by you know.

Like that, that person I know who was kidnapped, you know, I mean, she was shaken and she was horrified. I mean, she was. She really thought she was going to be beheaded.

And she went back out there, you know?

Researcher

This is unimaginable.

Journalist 9

Six months later, you know? Yeah, 'cause I'm like, I don't know. You know, each person, I'm sure, would react differently to these things. But, like, how do you, you know, trauma is a trauma, right?

Yeah. And then the thing is, originally there was a company assessment. So it's like people were sent into places that the company had assessed, like there would be a general, oh, this is considered this level of danger. This is considered this level of danger. And then it was up to you to decide according to what they might tell you if you wanted to expose yourself to that or not, you know. But the difficulty is.

If you say no like if they come to you and say we'd like to send you to wherever, and you say no. You have to understand that you might never get the break again.

They always say it's going to be fair and they're not going to take it against you, but believe me, they are going to take it against you. Like I remember the story, if there was a female correspondent. Who was in Jerusalem? You know, this was a while ago. And I think, you know, there was a lot of violence and a lot of, as usual, it comes and goes right. So she was exposed to that. And I think she had a bit of a nervous breakdown. In Jerusalem. So they had to pull her out, you know.

They never, they never quite trusted her to report again after that. It's fortunate you know. So obviously she needed help. The company was kind of forced to pay for her therapy and to give her a mental break and whatever. And presumably it's all done confidentially, right? You get the help. You go on sabbatical. They give you the break, and then you can come back and everything will be. As before. Except that she came back, and everybody knew that she had a mental breakdown or that she had a nervous breakdown. Everybody knew that she had to go and check into an institution. And so now, when she came back, everybody's treating her with kid gloves, and she was never sent out again. So what do people do when something happens? They don't say anything because they think it's the only way to keep their job. It's only in the last, maybe 5.

5-10 years that people more and more are speaking about the mental health needs of journalists. Who are out experiencing and right? It was not. It was not like that before.

Believe me, it was not like that before at all. Because the way it was seen is like, if you're not strong enough to take it, you're not strong enough for the job.

If you want to keep the job, you're not gonna say anything, you know.

Researcher

Which is horrible because this is crazy. These jobs are insane, yeah.

Journalist 9

Right. And the things this is just like this is, yeah, everything is the conflict is not just what you experience out in the conflict zones, but for many women they have to fight every day in their own news organisations because the sexuals harassment that happens is real. You know, it's there, it's like you. Yeah, yeah, yeah. And that's why I say, like, it's just a reflection of the world at large.

Researcher

Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. And coming from the inside. Also, sometimes, no. Yeah.

Journalist 9

It's not unique. Know it's just the way it's been. It doesn't mean it has to keep being like that. It doesn't mean it's accepted and it's the norm, but it doesn't have to be what we take, you know, so yeah.

Researcher

Mm hmm. Yeah, yeah, yeah, sure. OK, yeah.

How do gender specific safety concerns shape your decisions when it comes to covering stories in dangerous regions?

Journalist 9

It's that, for one thing, it's like if you go someplace and you know or you feel like there are areas where it's all just men, you're going to feel there, you're going to feel weird going there because, and that's that's the thing. You notice conflict zones.

Men in general, everywhere you look, and it's angry men who are looking to let that anger out in whatever way they can. So immediately, I will feel vulnerable. I will feel at risk. And so I might be able to go to certain areas, but I will stay in the periphery because being in the middle of it is a whole different experience. And you don't want to be there. You know, because even if you do have your security in, though, there really is only so much they can do. At the end of the day, so.

Researcher

OK, I'll continue. Have there been moments? Have there been moments when safety concerns compelled you to adjust your reporting practices? If so, can you share an example you kind of already said, but maybe something else comes to mind?

Journalist 9

Yes. Yes. Well, no, it's basically that it's, I think, because I had the experience of being in a war zone, and I was in Iraq for a year.

There were, oddly enough, there were quite a lot of women. And when I say a lot, I don't mean like, you know, scores of us because we were a very small team in the early days. But the majority of the team are women. So I learned a lot from them and how strong they were in the face of that.

You know. So yes, and it was working with them. That taught me, like at the end of the day,

no story is worth your life. So always trust your instincts. And at the end of the day, I listened a lot as well to the locals, cuz I wasn't local. I didn't know the language. You know what I mean? So I, you know, obviously you become friends with these with people who live there because that's your reality day-to-day and y,ou're sharing it with them, and it's their lives. It's their country. So when they're telling you up, this is not a good situation for.

Today I'm not there to be like, No, I want the exclusive. No, I don't care. It's not about that. You're not gonna put everybody at risk because you want to go and get an exclusive. It's silly, you know, because my thing.

Researcher

Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. You will also not get an exclusive when you're dead.

Journalist 9

Yeah, exactly. And at the end of the day, with the way things are, particularly now with digital, you know with digital media. Who's gonna get an exclusive? The person who's there? So the local will get it with their mobile phone. That will be the first thing that will be shared, be it on TikTok, on Instagram, on Facebook Live. You're going to see it. So it's not even about that anymore. So why are you going to risk the safety of everybody on your team to get something end of the day if it feels unsafe? Likely is. I'm not going to push it. I can wait. Until it feels a little safer to get out there, or if there's a different way to do the story, then that's what I will steer the team towards because no, it's just no, it's not. It's not worth it at all, no.

Researcher

It's not worth it. No, not at all. Yeah, yeah.

How do you approach interactions with sources and environments where gender roles are more pronounced?

Journalist 9

Very respectfully, do you know what I mean? Like it might not be. I don't wear a headscarf. Obviously I'm not, you know. But if you're going to places that you know are very, for example, conservative, be it a conservative Muslim situation or a conservative Christian, or even in areas that are very deeply, deeply Buddhist, you will respect the cost because that's just. That's just the respectful thing to do. You know, it isn't so much. Particularly yes, if, for example, I had to interview the head of a of a, it was a Muslim rebel group, and obviously they were a Muslim rebel group. So you can imagine they were quite conservative in their views. And the fact that I was a woman didn't particularly go down very well because it's like, oh, it's a girl like, you know, we're going to talk to a girl. And then especially since I was quite young then and they were older, so then it's an older man looking at you.

Like you know, but of course you go with the headscarf because at least in that sense, you are showing them respect, like I do not come here to question you, belittle your faith or

whatever it is. I'm here as a respectful person wanting to get to know your perspective, you know, and it was quite funny because.

So we ended up, you know, you have to chit chat with them first because before you can get the interview, they have to decide that they want to give you the interview on camera. So I had to sit there for quite a while with the cameras off and just have tea with them. So it's me, the cameraman, and all of these older men, right. And me with my wearing a head covering and whatnot. And by the end of it, you know, he just looks at me and he says, oh, I have a son. He is looking for a bride. And I was like, oh, you know what I mean? That is not where I thought this would go. You know what I mean? It's like

Because then it was like, oh, so then I I felt bad about it, but then I just kinda said I I have a husband, you know, then I think.

Yeah. And I was like, I have a husband, and of course, I did not have a husband. But what are you going to say?

Researcher

Yeah, but yeah, but that's the only thing you can basically say in a situation like this, right? Yeah.

Journalist 9

Wait, yes. And then it's the only way they can maybe leave you alone, 'cause. Then they think, oh, you belong to another man already. Oh, so. But then it was like, oh, and he lets you go and do these things. Yes, I was just saying. No, something, and I realise that 'cause he looked and I said I wasn't wearing a ring. And I remember after that I went and I bought like a ring. So that way I'm just asked again, you know, because I just thought, oh Lord, this this got weird really fast, you know, because then I was like, here's my son. And like, what are you going to say? I'm sorry. He's not my type. I don't like the AK-47 he's carrying. You know, I. What do you say? Right.

Researcher

But that's with the ring. I've heard that a lot also from other journalists, that is just something I mean, it's also not very difficult to do so. He just put the ring on, and then you don't have to answer weird questions anymore about that.

Journalist 9

Yes, yes. Yeah, yeah.

Yes, exactly. Yeah. Because really, it's like I say, it lets you do these things. And I'm like, yes.

Researcher

Yes, my invisible husband lets me do this right.

Journalist 9

Yes. Yes. Do you know what I mean? 'cause. Then it was like, and how weird. You're here

travelling with a man who is not your husband. And I'm like.

Oh, good Lord.

Researcher

Very different perceptions also. And like perspectives on, I don't know, marriage, I guess, or culture. Cultural differences. Yeah. Yeah.

Journalist 9

Yeah. Yes, exactly, exactly. Exactly. Exactly.

Researcher

OK. Have you encountered difficulties assessing information or sources due to your gender? How have you managed to overcome these obstacles?

Journalist 9

I guess yes and no, because at the end of the day, it's that every time I've interviewed a man, you're constantly aware that he is a man who is aware he is talking to a woman. So in many ways I think like, especially when I go out and.

I never, I never wore my gender as a badge. Do you know what I mean? Like not for anything. But I never went out and did interviews in a skirt or a tight-fitting blouse or a no. For one thing, I thought that was impractical, but also I didn't want to be. It's not to say that I was hiding my femininity, 'cause. That wasn't it at all. It was like I was comfortable here. I am wearing a suit. I have a jacket, I might wear slacks, you know, and I might wear boots. But their boots with a heel, you know, or a little something like that. But it I just. I know how some women are comfortable with the tight top and the whatever. And I'm. I just wasn't so 'cause. It's like it's hard enough. And when you're in situations where you want to be treated as an equal, you can't. I don't know. You know, I know that it might sound anti feminist, but you already know that.

Capacitated by their masculinity, whatever it might be.

Researcher

Yeah. And you may not want to put the focus on how you dress. Yeah, yeah.

Journalist 9

Yes, exactly. Exactly. So, yeah, and I, but I'm in no way saying that women who choose to dress differently are putting themselves at risk. But you just have to be aware. You know what I mean? You're just constantly aware. So yeah.

Researcher

Yeah. No, no, of course. Yeah. Yeah, especially when you're surrounded by men. And this is like just a very can be also tense situations now, and this might be a factor to disrupt the police in this, in this moment, you know, I see. Yeah. Yeah, yeah.

Journalist 9

Yes. Yes, exactly. Exactly.

Researcher

What kinds of support so this is now a little bit about the news organisation side of things.

The last 2-3 questions, What kinds of support or resources do you find essential for ensuring your safety while working in a conflict zone?

Journalist 9

Alright. For one, it was that I I I was very grateful for the security consultants.

That they now employ. And it's not just in like war zones, but if you're going anywhere that might seem remotely risky, they will send somebody with you. But again, that's only in the last going on 20 years now and it still feels new because before that you didn't have that kind of thing, you know.

It has become a bit of an industry now, so there are.

Guys will leave the army or the police force because they want to earn by working with journalists, cuz the networks will pay for you out there and protect them, but it.

Researcher

So they work as freelancers, you'd say for different news organisations or.

Journalist 9

Yes, yeah. But what happens is the user organisation will hire the security company, and the security company will then send you their people. And the thing is like before we go to any conflict zone, cuz like I said, locations are rated, news organisations will rate the location and the story. So if a story is deemed what they call hostile environment. Anybody who, before you're allowed to go to the location we all have to go through a course. There's a hostel environment course that journalists have to go through, and it's generally a week, and then they do refresher courses every two years or so. And you have to go through this. And it's literally 8:00 to 5:00, and you're camped out somewhere with, like, 10.

Researcher

Is this heat training or?

Journalist 9

It's no, it's basically they. They train you on weapons, they train you on what the situation might be in whatever area you're going to. Is it a war? Is it a?

Disaster zone. So whatever it might be, survival. They train you for survival. They teach you how to recognise what weapons are being fired. You know what to do if you're taken hostage, for example, and how to survive if you're in the jungle with no food, you know, and then you're taught first aid. So in case you're in a situation where somebody gets shot, you know how to respond. So until you do that.

Your network cannot send you to a war zone, I think, because if they do, they're also insured. Isn't valid. So for them to be able to ensure you're going into that zone, you had to have gone through this course.

When we were first out there and then they one time the the place we were in where the office was and everything was attacked, they fired missiles. You're right. And so I I'd never been more freaked out in my life, you know, because you just think this is it. This is the day we die and then you realise there is nothing you can do when a bomb comes at you. Right. And let me tell you everything they taught us in that hostile environment course. Out the window. Completely forgot.

And you're just working on instinct. For all of us, you know so. You might think you're prepared, but until you're there, you're really, really are not. You know you can't be prepared for those things you I don't know. You can't be because it all just flew out the window, and you're just, you know. Yeah. So.

Researcher

How do I survive in this moment? Yeah, yeah, I see.

Do you believe news organisations? This is also we covered this a little bit, but do you believe that news organisations are doing enough to support especially female journalists in these situations? Why or why not?

Journalist 9

No, not at all. Not at all, as I'm sure you've read in many of the organisations that do. You know what I think it is. Also, there aren't enough women in charge.

There aren't enough women in charge, and until you, The funny thing is, like I started my career in the Philippines and when I started my career in the Philippines, most of the a lot of the leading journalists here were women. So it was a very different scenario to what I discovered both abroad and and working internationally. Do you know what I mean? So it's it's. It was weird. Like I said, I was. Wow. It was really different when your boss is a woman. You know. And then suddenly you have these international organisations where you're dealing with.

White men, you know who have very set ideas and who think the world is the way they want it to be. So if a woman comes to them with an issue or has claimed sexual harassment or whatever, it might be, they're not going to fire the guy. Instead, what ends up happening is it becomes very difficult for the women who have complained. Does she get support? No. Why do you think nobody really comes out to say anything because then they're vilified and then they're run out of the industry

While the men are just baby transferred to a different location.

Researcher

None.

Journalist 9

So yeah, not at all. There's no support whatsoever. And I remember when we went through a particularly traumatic experience, again, it was a natural disaster. We had to sleep in tents.

It was just it was an awful situation where we were, you know, you're sleeping and you're surrounded by dead bodies. You're in the disaster zone. You can't get out. There's no there was no support. And after a while.

They kept wanting. Our mail boss kept wanting to keep us there and.

Was the female our female had editor who said you can't do that. We have to switch that out because exposing one person to all of that for longer than a few days is too much, you know? And if it wasn't for her, they would have kept us there for weeks on end. But she made sure we were rotated to get breaks in between, so we could just.

Researcher

Too much, yeah.

Journalist 9

You know. Even have a clean basket to shower in because we didn't even have that, you know? And it's if again it took a woman.

And she was the one who insisted after that that we be given emotional support, that there was a debriefing, that everybody who was involved in the coverage gather together for almost like a retreat where we could exchange stories, where we could get before her.

Researcher

Which is so important, I cannot believe that this is not common courtesy, because it's crazy to me. I don't know. Yeah.

Journalist 9

Exactly, yeah.

Yeah, it wasn't. Do you know what I mean? And then she made it a point to make sure everything was confidential, that nobody knew what anybody said. And you, you know, things like that. But again, if it wasn't driven by a woman, forget it, you know? Yeah.

Researcher

Nothing. Yeah, yeah. Over time, have you noticed shifts in how the industry addresses gender specific safety challenges?

Journalist 9

No. No, because again, like I said, until you put somebody in charge who is perhaps of a younger generation.

You know, those perceptions, the perceptions that have brought the industry to where it remains because the same managers are there, they're still there. It's not like the management has changed much. You know. So until that changes, you're not going to see much of A change, unfortunately. I am not directly involved anymore. I stepped away from Al Jazeera. I no longer work on camera. I train younger journalists now who are going into the lion's den right, which is why every time somebody writes me and says, can you talk to me about whatever I am happy to do it because for me, I think that's what

Can be useful after everything that I've been through; it's like I'm just gonna pass it on. It's like, let me tell you what happened. Or let me tell you how we got here.

Researcher

Which I think is so great. I also like within my previous interviews, I've talked to journalists and some of them were talking about these trainings, always given by men and also quite sexist and racist partially as well. So it's so important that there's also women teaching these things to other journalists, you know.

Journalist 9

Yes. Yes. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Exactly, exactly because the experience is so different, so different, you know. And so that's for me, it's like. Nope, I'll do it. I'll do it. So yeah, so you know. But then, I obviously I have colleagues and friends who are still actively involved, and nothing has changed. Nothing has changed. So yeah, no. And that's why some of us who have left or who left at the same time have slowly gone back, because as you know, the job market isn't great. So what does a journalist do after they leave journalism? Many of them might try different things for a while, but eventually they all kind of wander back. And I keep wondering, well, am I going to do the same? And I I just, I can't. You know, like one of my friends did exactly that, went back to Al Jazeera, and she's been in Doha now two weeks, and she's like, oh, my God, nothing's changed. You know what I mean? It's still the same managers. It's still the same men. And she's like, this is nuts. And I'm like, well, this is why I'm just glad I didn't do that. I didn't go back. I can't. I just can't stomach it, you know.

Researcher

I completely understand.

Journalist 9

Yeah, right. So. But I said if you can try to get my book, cuz I think you'll enjoy reading it. There is no falling.

Researcher

Yeah, I would love to read it. I would love to read it. I'm gonna look into it. Yeah.

Journalist 9

Yeah, 'cause, there's a chapter there, particularly Speaking of Baghdad and Gaza, you know, and that kind of stuff. So I think you might find it useful in that sense, yeah.

Researcher

Amazing. Yeah, no, for sure for sure. Last question.

Is there anything that you would like to add or that you think is important to say?

Nothing comes to mind. That's also fine.

Journalist 9

No, no, no, I do. I'm just trying to find a way to put it into words.

I think there should be more women in news, and I think there should be more women in front of the camera. Because, women just see the world differently because of the positions we have been automatically presumed to be in.

You know, we are generally sidelined, right?

Researcher

Yeah.

Journalist 9

Undervalued, right?

Ignored, but I think if we use that to our advantage, it makes us more powerful storytellers, because our powers of observation and our listening skills

Are generally greater than men, and I know that you know you're not supposed to generalise, but this is just kind of what you pick up and what I've learned just seeing how they work with men, journalists, a lot of them like to talk a lot. They will talk at you and to ask you a question here. I am just talking, talking, talking, talking, you know, and then it's like where is, where is the power of the woman is to listen.

Researcher

No, but I get what you mean. Yeah. Yeah. Mm hmm.

Oh, my God. Yeah.

Journalist 9

And to like let the other person keep going. What are you telling me? Keep going. I'm just gonna keep going, and you get more like that. I don't, and it's just maybe just because we're, I don't know. Yeah, we're built differently. Do I then think that men make lesser journalists?

No, I'm not saying that. We all have different strengths, but in no way are women weaker or in no way are women more vulnerable or less adept at doing the job. So we shouldn't see themselves like that, you know. The physicalities of it and the dangers we face, very different and and that is something we must always be aware of. But never.

To our detriment, like we should never let that hold us back That's yeah.

Researcher

Very nicely put.

That's it from me. Thank you so much. I really enjoyed talking to you.

Journalist 9

Thank you. Oh, you're very welcome.

Interview Journalist 10

Researcher

Haben Sie schon mal wegen Ihres Geschlechts ein Sicherheitsproblem gehabt?

Als Sie aus einem Konfliktgebiet berichtet haben und wie sind Sie damit umgegangen?

Journalist 10

Mhm.Ja. Wegen meines Geschlechts nie also im Gegenteil ich erlebe das oft so, dass ich denke, dass es möglicherweise auch ein Vorteil ist in als Frau da unterwegs zu sein, weil die Wahrnehmung der Menschen, mit denen ich spreche, ist.

Möglicherweise eine andere das kann ich natürlich nicht bei nee nicht wirklich so beantworten, weil ich ja nun nur diese eine schlechter Rolle habe, aber ich erlebe, sowohl wenn wir mit Soldaten unterwegs sind, wobei es da ja auch in der Ukraine zum Beispiel 10 Tausende Frauen gibt, die die.

Tatsächlich auch als aktive Kämpferinnen dabei sind aber auch so in in so mit so Zivilbevölkerung, was ich ja fast noch wichtiger finde, also wenn man da in frontnahen Orten ist, glaube ich, dass mein Geschlecht eher ein Vorteil als ein Nachteil ist also. Mit Frauen ins Gespräch zu kommen auch die ja oft so, der ihre Familien tragen, die in diesen frontnahen Orten irgendwie bleiben, weil sie alte Eltern zu versorgen haben oder weil die Kinder nicht mit können. Und ich glaube, das ist tatsächlich eher ein Vorteil als ein Nachteil.

Researcher

Mhm ja, OK interessant habe ich auch schon ein paar Mal gehört tatsächlich in vorherigen

Interviews, aber es ist super spannend OK, ich mach weiter. Wie bereiten Sie sich vor, wenn Sie in ein Konfliktgebiet gehen, denken Sie, dass ihre Einschätzung von Risiken sich von der Ihrer männlichen Kollegen unterscheidet?

Journalist 10

Auch das kann ich nicht so ganz genau sagen, weil ich ja nicht in dieser anderen Rolle wieder bin, aber also jetzt zum Beispiel Ukraine heißt ja für mich, ich war da glaube ich jetzt seit Kriegsbeginn 9 mal ich werde.

Wieder jetzt, im Oktober ein 10. Mal hingehen und wir sind da auch immer 4 oder 5 Wochen also das heißt, ich hab da schon sehr viel Zeit verbracht und trotzdem ändert sich natürlich die Situation immer wieder und ehrlich gesagt.

Sobald man die Grenze wieder hinter sich hat und raus ist aus der Ukraine, ändert sich auch der Blick auf das Land und auf den Konflikt man verfolgt das ja natürlich immer. Also jetzt hier diese heftigen Angriffe auf Kiew in den in den letzten Tagen und Wochen. Natürlich gucke ich mir das an oder habe auch Kontakt.

Mit Ukrainern aber es fühlt sich halt jedes Mal anders an, ich geh da jedes Mal mit unfassbar viel Respekt rein, also auch da wieder dieses Überqueren der Grenze ist immer so eine einmal geschluckt und dann ist es aber auch schon.

Fühlt sich es wieder vertraut an, besonders wenn man dann den ersten Luftalarm auch wieder hinter sich hat? Aber das ist schon und natürlich haben wir so so so procedure, die wir im im im Team haben, also mein Team ist gemischt, ich habe auch auch Frauen im Team eigentlich fast jedes Mal also die Teams, die wirken sie immer so ein bisschen neu zusammen aber.

Researcher

Wie viele Leute sind da ungefähr in einem Team?

Journalist 10

Wenn wir unterwegs sind, sind wir so also wenn wir jetzt direkt drehen gehen, sind wir so 4 oder 5 Leute, wenn wir in sehr an sehr gefährlichen Orten sind, sehr nah der Front, dann minimieren wir das so gut es geht also. Ich brauch, meine Producerinnen sind oft Frauen, weil die für mich ja auch übersetzen müssen und weil die sich eben eben auskennen, aber ansonsten dann Kameramann und meistens noch ein noch ein noch ein Assi und dann ist das sozusagen das das das Wenigste was.

Also die kleinste Teamstärke, in der wir unterwegs sind, aber natürlich.

Ist ist, ist die Vorbereitung also wir alle haben haben Kurse hinter uns. Wie verhält man sich in Kriegs und Krisengebieten? Das ist manchmal so ein bisschen.

Na ja, das macht also ich hab das zum Beispiel in Deutschland gemacht mit der Bundeswehr in Hammelburg, das gibt es jetzt nicht mehr. Es gibt andere internationale Anbieter, aber natürlich ist es ein Unterschied, ob man jetzt in Israel ist und iranische

Raketen fliegen oder im Libanon oder in der Ukraine. Aber wir als Team wissen schon, dass wir auch Regeln haben.

Nämlich, dass wir als Team funktionieren müssen, das ist uns allen klar, dass man sich bedingungslos aufeinander verlassen muss. Wir besprechen auch immer noch mal bei jedem Einsatz extra wo gehen wir hin?

Machen wir das, ist das zu riskant? Ist es das Wert also, das sind Diskussionen, die wir immer im Team machen und tatsächlich ist die Regel wenn es jemanden gibt, der, der da nicht mitmacht, dann ist gilt dieses Nein fürs ganze Team ja, und das ist.

Auch auch völlig akzeptiert und das ist übrigens auch von von von meinem Sender akzeptiert, also das sind die Regeln ja und natürlich haben wir auch Kollegen in der Zentrale, mit denen wir jeden Morgen besprechen wie ist die Situation, was planen wir?

Welche Safety doppelten also so so so Netze haben wir noch also, das haben wir ja eben erwähnt. Wir gehen so halten das Team so klein wie möglich, wenn es wirklich sehr riskant ist, aber dann haben wir zum Beispiel die Kollegen, die in einem Art sicheren Abschied.

Stand aber eben doch nicht so weit weg sind die, weil man muss ja auch immer überlegen, keine Ahnung und wir könnten von Drohnen angegriffen werden. Unser Auto geht kaputt, einer aus dem Team wird verletzt. Das sind ja alles Geschichten, die wir durchspielen müssen und das machen wir auch. Also zum Beispiel Wir haben auch alle erste Hilfe.

Klasse natürlich und wir im Team also ich, ich find das ganz wichtig wir holen holen uns halt unsere kleinen Verbandspäckchen jedes Mal zu Anfang und sagen OK wie ging das noch mal? Wie würden wir das Benutzen in der Hoffnung, dass wir es natürlich nie brauchen aber.

Researcher

Ja. Aber es ist halt auch noch mal ganz gut so sich das kurz in Erinnerung zu rufen und gibt einem vielleicht ein besseres Gefühl, aber so grundsätzlich ist es eher so, dass jeder so eine also jeder hat irgendwie so eine Vorbereitung schon mal gehabt oder hatte irgendwie diese diese Trainings oder was auch immer und dann setzen?

Sie sich im Team zusammen noch mal jedes Mal bei einem bestimmten Einsatz und besprechen und vorbereiten das oder bereiten das gemeinsam vor?

Journalist 10

Ich. Absolut ja, jeder von uns muss diese Vorbereitung also diese diese Kurse gemacht haben, sonst lässt unser Arbeitgeber uns überhaupt nicht dahin, wohin wo wir hingehen, aber dann wie gesagt ist es ist es ist es halt immer anders und wir besprechen. Sehr genau was machen wir also, welche Straßen nehmen wir? Was könnten das Risiko sein? Es ist jedes Mal so, dass wir alle ein bisschen schmunzeln, wenn wir bevor wir losfahren, vorm Auto noch mal noch mal kurz so so eine Art Checkliste durchgehen und der Satz, der dann immer fällt.

Die Gefährlichste, die der gefährlichste Teil liegt jetzt direkt vor uns. Das ist nämlich die

Autofahrt, weil immer noch auch in diesen Krisen und Konfliktregionen die meisten Journalisten bei Autounfällen sterben. Also wir, wir gucken uns an über welche Brücken müssen wir, müssen wir da schneller fahren?

Wie nah sind wir an der Front? Da muss man zum Beispiel drauf achten, dass, dass man, wenn man mit mehreren Autos fährt, nicht zu dicht hintereinander ist, weil man dann die Gefahr dass, dass die uns mit Drohnen angriffen, noch größer ist, also das wird sehr, sehr, sehr detailliert durchgesprochen, ja.

Und das gibt mir finde ich immer die Freiheit, dann auch vor Ort, mich komplett auf die Geschichte konzentrieren zu können, weil ich weiß, wir als Team haben diesen ganzen Background abgesprochen und wir.

Verlassen uns darauf, dass das funktioniert und ich bin mir auch sehr sicher, dass das funktioniert, weil wie gesagt, das ist so so ein so ein Ritual auch ja.

Researcher

Ja. Ja, ja und das ist dann auch immer unabhängig vom Geschlecht also, dass es dann einfach grundsätzlich wie sich vorbereitet wird auf Einsätze, ja.

Journalist 10

Absolut genau das machen, das machen die männlichen Reporterkollegen ganz genauso genau Mhm.

Researcher

Mhm alles klar OK haben geschlechtsspezifische Sicherheitsfragen Einfluss darauf, ob oder wie sie über gefährliche Orte berichten?

Journalist 10

Mhm wie meinen Sie das? Also, als ob ich als Reporterin Geschichten anders erzähle als männliche Reporter?

Researcher

Mhm ja, also ja.

Journalist 10

Ah. Ah also gerade wenn ich jetzt so auf meine Ukraine Stücke gucke, mir ist es immer sehr wichtig.

Ich sag das immer gerne ob die 82. Merchandise Brigade irgendwo 100 Meter Geländegewinn gemacht hat, das Glaube ich ist nicht die Geschichte des Kriegs. Ich glaube, dass das die Geschichte, also die Geschichten, die ich erzählen möchte, ist. Welche Auswirkungen hat dieser Krieg und was bedeutet Krieg? Und?

Und ich stelle doch sehr die Menschen in den Mittelpunkt meiner Berichte, das können auch durchaus Soldaten sein. Also ich hab Stücke über traumatisierte, versehrte Soldaten gemacht.

Die Gliedmaßen verloren haben. Das ist auch eine gesellschaftliche Frage, ja was passiert

mit denen? Aber ich stelle auch immer wieder fest, dass ich sehr viele Stücke auch über über Frauen, Kinder, Familien mache.

Weil das eben auch Teil dieses Kriegsalltags ist, ja also die Mutter, deren Sohn von den Russen entführt wurde, die entführten Kinder. Da hab ich mit einem Achtzehnjährigen sprechen können, der 2 Jahre von von den Russen in diesen besetzten Gebieten entführt war. Menschen, die über die grüne Grenze versuchen, wieder aus den besetzten Gebieten zurück in die Ukraine zu kommen, und da war unfassbare Gefahren auf sich nehmen Menschen, die in den besetzten Gebieten noch leben, wo wir den Kontakt hatten über über Geflüchtete innerhalb der Ukraine also das finde ich sind so. Sind so Geschichten, die mir wichtig sind, und ich glaube, das ist auch wichtig zu erzählen. Ich habe mal eine eine eine Story gemacht aus Hasson diese Stadt, die ja eigentlich die Stadt wurde befreit von der von der Ukraine in einer dieser ersten Offensiven. Aber die liegen so nah an der Front, dass das Leben da eigentlich unfassbar schwierig ist, also größte Gefahr sind jetzt eben ständige Drohnenangriffe, ständige Raketenangriffe, aber auch da überall, wo wir hingehen, da leben ja Menschen also wenn ich Helmut Weste trage, treffe ich trotzdem auf eine. Raum mit 3 kleinen Kindern, die schnell noch irgendwie in den Supermarkt geht, um einzukaufen und auch das ist eben dort eine Realität, die man sich hier nicht vorstellen kann, und ich finde, das ist wichtig, das auch zu zeigen ja, das ist vielleicht. Das ist zumindestens mein persönlicher Ansatz, ob ich das jetzt mache, weil ich eine Frau bin, das weiß ich nicht, was ich, was ich immer wieder feststelle, ist ich hab hab ja eben schon gesagt, ich kann ja nicht wirklich ukrainisch also natürlich schnappt man so ein bisschen was auf.

Researcher

Vielleicht auch nicht die einfachste Sprache zu mir.

Journalist 10

Das heißt, ich bekomme das übersetzt, aber ich stelle immer wieder fest, dass gerade wenn ich mit Frauen rede ich auch oft den Eindruck hab, man weiß, was die erzählen, wenn man in deren Augen guckt. Und das, ich kann das ganz schlecht beschreiben, aber das ist.

Researcher

Gibt noch mal n anderer Zugang auch irgendwie?

Journalist 10

Ja, es ist vielleicht auch die Art und Weise der Fragen wie gesagt, ob das jetzt ich als als Person bin oder ich als Frau das das finde ich dann immer schwierig zu sagen, aber das ist so das über, was ich manchmal auch nachdenke ja.

Researcher

Den Bild. Ja ja. Mhm, Mhm ja, ich mach weiter.

Journalist 10

Ja.

Researcher

Mussten sie ihre Art zu berichten schon einmal verändern, weil sie sich unsicher gefühlt haben? Und wenn ja, können Sie ein Beispiel nennen?

Also von der Praxis oder den normalen Abläufen her, ob da irgendwas verändert werden müsste aufgrund von Sicherheitsrisiken?

Journalist 10

Das ist tatsächlich für mich so ein ganz bisschen schwer zu sagen, weil ich im Grunde genommen bei uns im Sender heißt, das Reporterpool und diesen Job mache ich seit zweieinhalb Jahren und davor hatte ich eigentlich immer Jobs. Die.

Dann weniger Reporter konzentriert waren also ich hab vorher schon auch auf Stücke oder Dokumentationen gemacht, aber immer nur so so kurz und natürlich gewöhnt man sich seiner Art an und man kommt vielleicht ist das die Antwort natürlich in Situationen also.

Ich glaub, ich bin zum Beispiel jemand, der schon sehr stark versucht, auf Menschen zuzugehen. Das ist natürlich in verschiedenen Kulturkreisen auch anders also und ich finde da ist dann doch eben auch Frau und Thema also ich sag es auch schon.

Bei der Beduinen Familie im Süden von Israel. Das war in dem Fall ein Mann mit seinen Söhnen. Natürlich behalte ich mich da als Frau anders als ich das normal tue, wenn ich im Libanon bin und beim Freitagsgebet.

Dann hab ich natürlich auch n Tuch überm Kopf, wenn ich, wenn ich draußen vor der Moschee stehe um mit den Männern zu reden, also das ist das ist schon.

Da versucht man sich drauf einzustellen ja klar.

Researcher

Ja ja, OK die nächste Frage ist geht genau in diese Richtung vielleicht ist das auch schon genug Antwort gewesen ich lese einfach mal vor. Wie gehen Sie mit Gesprächspartnern um, wenn sie in Ländern arbeiten, in denen die Rollen von Frauen und Männern sehr unterschiedlich sind?

Oder sehr ausgeprägt?

Journalist 10

Na ja, ich glaube, man muss. Immer mit den Gesprächspartnern mit mit Respekt umgehen, egal in in in, in welcher Rolle man die auch sieht, ja und ich glaube.

Es ist auch ich versteh das nur n bisschen als meine Aufgabe ich mein, ich hab das Privileg, deren Geschichten erzählen zu dürfen ja.

Also ich nenn ihnen mal n Beispiel ich hab letzten Sommer in in der Ukraine einen Mann getroffen, der an einem der ersten Tage des Kriegs in russische Gefangenschaft gegangen ist und nach fast zweieinhalb Jahren erst wieder freigelassen wurde?

Und wir haben den getroffen mitten in Odessa, mit seiner Frau und seinem kleinen Sohn, den er tatsächlich erst nach seiner Freilassung überhaupt gesehen hat. Seine Frau war

vorher schwanger mit dem.

Und es war jemand, der auf die Knochen abgemagert war, total tief eingefallene Augen hatte und wie gesagt, Wir haben mit dieser Familie gedreht und irgendwann wurde der total nervös und sagte zu mir über die Producerin.

Wann ich denn die richtigen Geschichten von ihm hören wollte, und dann habe ich so gesagt, die will ich hören, aber ich will die jetzt nicht hier am Strand und im café also ich glaube, das ist da auch so eine Situation, die möglicherweise auch für ihn traumatisierend ist oder so.

Und dann haben wir hinterher bei ihm in seiner Küche gesessen und ich hatte so, wie sie jetzt ein paar Fragen natürlich hat man so im Kopf und ich glaube, das Gespräch hat ich weiß nicht zweieinhalb Stunden oder so gedauert und da hatte ich zum Beispiel auch das Gefühl.

Ich kann ihn jetzt nicht unterbrechen, das geht gar nicht. Das geht nicht, das muss ich mir jetzt anhören. Und. Ja das, das war so was, was mich auch nachher lange beschäftigt hat. Also klar könnte man sagen als Profi ja, Entschuldigung, jetzt steht da das Team zweieinhalb Stunden in der Küche rum. Wir machen daraus in 2 Minuten 30 fürs heute Journal.

Aber ich hatte so ganz stark das Gefühl, das geht jetzt nicht diese Zeit, diese Zeit.

Researcher

Das kann man nicht machen, weil das auch dann respektlos gewesen wäre vielleicht vor allem, weil er ja das auch geäußert hat, dass er das erzählen möchte vielleicht ne.

Journalist 10

Ja ja ich ich ich, ich wollte mir das anhören und und mein härtester Moment war eigentlich, als er mir das Bild gezeigt hat, was doch irgendwie seine Frau auf dem Handy hatte einen Tag bevor er in Gefangenschaft gegangen ist und da stand ein total gutaussehender Zweiunddreißigjähriger und ich.

Konnte das überhaupt nicht zusammenbekommen? Also, das war, das war schon krass da natürlich hat er von Folter und und und Gewalt erzählt. In diesen russischen Gefängnissen also ja, das war sowas, wo ich dachte, da muss ich mich jetzt drauf einstellen das ist. Noch n Witz ja, oder auch?

Hör mal, wir sind mal in so ne Soldatenbeerdigung gekommen in der Ukraine und das ist da meistens immer noch was wir waren in in so einem Ort, wo sich wirklich quasi die ganze Kleinstadt von diesem Mann, der damals in Bahmut gefallen ist, verabschiedet hat und das ging über Stunden und auch da war das so. Wir waren eigentlich wir. Gerade mal gehalten oder ah ja, drehen wir ein bisschen und dann müssen wir weiter nach Kiew, aber auch da. Sagt einem dann so ein bisschen der Reporterinstinkt, das ist jetzt eine andere Geschichte, das müssen wir da da bleiben wir jetzt dabei ja, Menschen, die am Straßenrand knien,

während dieser Sarg kilometerlang durch diesen Ort getragen wird. Fünfundzwanzigjährige Witwe am Grab also das ich meine, das ist Halt Krieg ja und das ja und da müssen wir uns auch auch drauf einstellen auf Situation und vielleicht um das jetzt dann auch noch mal zu sagen die Gefahr besteht natürlich auch wenn man so in so sehr gut geplante Sachen. Geht also zum Beispiel, wenn wir in Frontnähe sind und sagen Ah, wir drehen jetzt Evakuierungen in Kubjansk und dann hat man ja auch ungefähr so ein Zeitplan, weil man versucht ja auch, sich möglichst kurz in diesen absoluten Gefahrenzonen aufzuhalten, also das ist meistens so ein bis zu 10 Kilometer.

An der Front, weil da die Gefahr halt von Artillerie und und Drohnen auch eben noch mal größer ist, aber das ist dann auch so immer so ein bisschen da muss man dann oft so ein Spagat machen zwischen.

Wir können jetzt hier nicht länger bleiben und da da also da da da bin ich manchmal so ein bisschen im Zwiespalt, wo, wo wir sagen jetzt, da müssen wir tatsächlich jetzt auch ein bisschen auf auf unsere Sicherheit achten, ja aber.

Researcher

Bauchgefühl manchmal.

Journalist 10

Ja, und es ist natürlich auch so ein so ein Gefühl vom Team, also da passen wir glaube ich alle miteinander auf zu sagen, da macht jeder sehr konzentriert seine Arbeit und wir wissen alle ganz genau OK und.

Researcher

Hm. Ja, Mhm, ja, ja, okay.

Journalist 10

Jetzt müssen wir weiter genau.

Ach, mir fällt aber noch 1 ein. Ich weiß jetzt gar nicht, ob das die Frage war, aber ich glaube schon auch, dass dieses diese Geschlechterrolle, also Reporterin zu sein. Ich meine in der Ukraine, ich war auch in Butscha und und hab natürlich auch dort mit mit Frauen gesprochen.

Den Tellern gegessen haben und?

Die mir zumindestens gegenüber angedeutet haben was, was ihnen da passiert ist also ich glaube, dass das möglicherweise die gegenüber männlichen Kollegen nicht tun würden.

Also von daher kann das sogar ein Vorteil sein keine Ahnung, ob es ein Nachteil ist und ob die Soldaten dann meinen männlichen Kollegen andere Geschichten auch erzählen? Ja das, das kann vielleicht auch sein, aber ja.

Researcher

Ja. Ja, Mhm, ja, ja das das habe ich aber auch tatsächlich. Das gleicht sich auch sehr mit der Literatur tatsächlich ab also auch was andere oder Interviews oder so also jetzt gar nicht

mal nur meine die ich geführt habe. Wobei da habe ich das auch viel gehört, aber das darf tatsächlich oft auch ein.

Vorteil sein kann in manchen Situationen, dass Frauen sich manchmal auch wohler fühlen, mit Frauen zu sprechen, gerade wenn es um so ich weiß nicht schreckliche Ereignisse geht, die ihnen irgendwie widerfahren sind oder so, dass sie.

Journalist 10

Ja. Hier ja, und und ich meine, man muss ja auch dieses Traumatisierte, der des Gegenübers ich in Jasson als ich dieses Stück gemacht hab, hab ich so einen Vox Pop gemacht also wirklich da haben wir ja auch versucht, dann kurz und die Leute vorm Supermarkt?

Und dann hat so eine Frau mir gesagt meine Kinder sind irgendwie in Sicherheit, aber ich kann hier nicht weg, weil wenn wir hier auch noch weggehen, dann hat Putin gewonnen und das war wirklich nur so 2 Fragen wirklich ganz kurz und dann waren wir fertig und dann ist sie mir einfach so um den Hals gefallen.

Researcher

Heftig.

Journalist 10

Also on camera. Und also weil sie ich weiß gar nicht ja, man würde denken, das ist ja eine total merkwürdige Situation. Diese Frau sieht mich jetzt zum ersten Mal. Aber.

Researcher

Ja, aber manchmal es ist ja auch vielleicht eine Ausnahmesituation, ne für sie sowieso und für euch also als Team dann irgendwie auch.

Journalist 10

Gut. Ja. Ja.

Researcher

Hatten sie schon mal Probleme an Informationen oder an Quellen zu kommen, weil sie eine Frau sind?

Journalist 10

Denke nein, aber das hat auch damit zu tun, dass ich eben nicht als als Frau da alleine unterwegs bin, sondern ein Team hab und wir da tatsächlich.

Uns gar nicht so sehr Gedanken über unsere Geschlechterrollen machen würde ich jetzt mal so sagen, also da steht, glaube ich.

Würde ich denken, auch bei meine männlichen Kollegen ist das eher so im Hintergrund und wie gesagt da kommt es drauf an gute Producer zu haben, die an an Geschichten dranbleiben, ein gutes Gespür zu haben, weil manchmal.

Uns ja sozusagen auch Geschichten vor die Füße fallen, wo wir dann einfach noch mal

nachfragen oder sagen Ach, guck mal, da da so, das ist ja auch ein ein Teil wie wie unsere Geschichten zustande kommen vor Ort, ja.

Researcher

Mhm. Mhm, Mhm ja, OK, die nächsten die letzten Fragen sind so ein bisschen in Richtung Nachrichtenindustrie und so und Sicherheit die nächste Frage wäre welche Unterstützung oder Hilfe ist für für sie besonders wichtig? Um?

Journalist 10

Wie?

Researcher

Um in Konfliktgebieten, sicher arbeiten zu können?

Journalist 10

Das Allerwichtigste ist das Team absolut und

Das ist, haben sie wahrscheinlich auch schon gehört, da kann der beste Kameramann und die tollste Producerin und die die beste Reporterin unterwegs sein, wenn wir als Team nicht funktionieren, dann wird das nicht und das ja vertrauen und, und, und, und auch das wissen, dass es, dass es mal schwierig werden kann, weil wir ganz ehrlich, wenn sie 5 Wochen in der Ukraine unterwegs sind, davon ziche Nächte haben, wo sie schlecht oder überhaupt nicht schlafen oder im Bunker sitzen und dann trotzdem noch mit dem Morgenmagazin die erste Schalte machen und fürs heute journal noch mal, das ist wahnsinnig anstrengend und wenn wir dann als Team nicht funktionieren, ist es schwer und ich meine die Herausforderung in dem Job ist ja auch, dass wir immer in anderen Teams unterwegs sind. Also jetzt zum Beispiel ich im Libanon war damals als letztes Jahr, als die Israelis. In Libanon einmarschiert sind, da war ich mit dem Team aus dem Studio Kairo ja, aber auch da war das so, dass es völlig klar war ja funktionieren als Team und haben das auch ja. Schon schon wichtig ja.

Researcher

Ja ja, schon auch irgendwie. Dann darf also die Zusammensetzung von dem Team oder das Vertrauen im Team wenn das nicht gegeben ist, würden sie dann auch sagen mach ich nicht oder so?

Journalist 10

Ich glaube schon also wirklich, wenn man so so so ein einen im Team hat, der das Ganze sprengt, der gefährdet alle, das fängt bei checkpoint Situationen an, oder?

Auch keine Ahnung Angriffe wir gehen in den Bunker ja, wenn ein Kollege sagt er bleibt oben ich meine, es ist, können wir also ist das ja trotzdem unser Problem, ja das das geht so nicht also wir wir, wir müssen uns einfach blind aufeinander verlassen können.

Und ich mein Natürlich ist es für mich auch unendlich wichtig, dass ich, dass ich ein Backup

habe, bei bei bei uns im Sender die sich halt auch wahnsinnig kümmern, dieses sich logistisch Gedanken machen.

Ich sag mal so bei uns hat sich die Situation auch noch ein bisschen verändert, weil vor 2 Jahren war das glaube ich oder anderthalb ja ein Team von uns in Rakif im Hotel war, was die Russen mit Raketen angegriffen haben und da gab es auch vernetzte.

Dann geht es Gott sei dank allen wieder gut, aber natürlich ist das auch was.

Was Spuren hinterlässt, bei denen, die eben nicht mit dabei waren. Ja, und das ist auch immer noch mal so die Gewissheit, dass wir nicht stur an alten Regeln festhalten, sondern auch Situationen neu bewerten müssen. Also wenn es neue.

Neue Taktiken der Russen gibt oder so da muss man natürlich auch gucken, was bedeutet das für uns? Also die Wahl unserer Hotels, die die Entfernung der Hotels von der Front das wird immer wieder evaluiert. Und ganz ehrlich?

Ähm. Ich finde, es tut auch gut und das das hab ich durchaus auch, dass meine direkte Chefin mir auch häufiger mal eine whatsapp schreibt oder oder in ich weiß, dass wenn es wirklich kritisch ist oder wir Dinge noch mal besprechen müssen.

Dass ich sie da auch immer direkt anrufen kann, ja und auch auch die Chefredakteurin persönlich, das wäre überhaupt gar kein Problem und es ist auch so und mir beim letzten Mal auch passiert, da wollten wir zum Beispiel nach.

Konstantin Nifka. Im im Donezk und haben dann relativ in letzter Minute gesagt das ist heute geht das nicht, da haben wir sind, als wir losgefahren sind, haben wir gehört heftige Angriffe und so und dann haben wir relativ schnell gesagt.

Wir gehen nach Kramatorsk, das ist halt noch mal weiß ich nicht 1015 Kilometer weiter weg und das ist auch absolut akzeptiert. Da wird von niemandem gesagt ihr müsst aber und wir hatten doch besprochen und so auch mit den mit den Planer, Kollegen oder so in in Deutschland die.

Von denen man auch merkt, dass sie natürlich sozusagen noch mal vielleicht ein bisschen anders gedanklich mit dabei sind, als wenn ich jetzt hier in Washington bin oder im Studio London oder so, ja Mhm.

Researcher

Mhm, Mhm ja, okay, ja.

Finden Sie, dass Medienhäuser genug tun, um Journalistinnen zu unterstützen? Warum oder warum nicht?

Journalist 10

Also für mich persönlich kann ich sagen ich, ich fühl mich gerade sehr unterstützt, ich bin zu einem Zeitpunkt in diesen Reporterpool gekommen, wo sich bei uns eine weibliche Doppelspitze angebahnt hat. Also, wir haben eine Chefredakteurin und eine stellvertretende Chefredakteurin. Und ich glaube schon noch, dass ich.

Das auch auswirkt. Ich finde es durchaus mutig, ich mein ich früher waren meine Kolleginnen im Reporterpool Anfang 30 und und haben das irgendwie ein paar Jahre gemacht. Ich bin Mitte 50 also auch das finde ich eine mutige Entscheidung sozusagen. Jemanden auszusuchen, der ja auch entscheiden und so und als Gesicht auf dem Schirm präsent ist zu sagen Mach das, wir finden das gut, wir wollen das so. Ich glaube, dass es natürlich jahrelang.

Sehr schwer war also gerade auch in diesem Job und sag mal so, das ändert sich und es wird auch hat, dass es sich ändert also ich glaub schon, dass ich auch auch Kolleginnen hab, die da lange kämpfen mussten, um um das machen zu dürfen, was sie jetzt machen. Aber ich hab zum Beispiel auch eine Kollegin, die in diesem Reporterpooljob ein Kind bekommen hat und den Job jetzt trotzdem weitermacht und was heißt das trotzdem jetzt klinge ich auch schon so, also ich finde, dass ich dann ja.

Researcher

Ja, aber ich versteh schon was sie meinen

Journalist 10

Also die Entscheidung diesen Beruf auszuüben ja, sollte meiner Meinung nach nicht vom Geschlecht abhängen, sondern das darf jeder gerne individuell entscheiden ja so toll, dass das jetzt, dass das jetzt so ist. Ja, ja, ist eben jetzt auch schon fast ein bisschen beantwortet die nächste Frage ich stell sie trotzdem haben sie das Gefühl, dass sich im Laufe der Zeit etwas verändert hat im Umgang mit geschlechtsspezifischen Sicherheitsproblemen im Journalismus also vielleicht noch mal ein bisschen der Sicherheitsaspekt? Aber.

Ja das, das kann ich tatsächlich nicht so richtig gut beurteilen, weil wie gesagt diese diese dieses permanente.

Reisen in in Kriegs und Krisenländern? Das hab ich halt erst seit seit ungefähr zweieinhalb Jahren, aber ich war ja natürlich lange Jahre in in, in in den Nachrichtenredaktionen, in in, in der Außenpolitik, und ich sag mal die die die Frauen die diese Jobs gemacht haben, die konnte man oft an.

Also da gab es nicht so viele und also bei uns ich glaub auch nicht bei anderen Sendern ja, ich glaub auch, dass wir in Deutschland da vielleicht so ein bisschen hinterhergehängt sind, wenn man sie jetzt Christiane Armatour oder so anguckt also ja. Dann, glaube ich, ist das eine Entwicklung, die gut ist, dass sich was tut ja, und ich glaube auch, dass es für für viele ein langer Kampf war so.

Researcher

Mhm ja, auf jeden Fall eine letzte Frage eigentlich nur, ob sie noch irgendwas dazu hinzufügen wollen oder irgendwas als wichtig befinden, dass Sie gerne noch sagen, wo ich möchten, finde ich auch total OK, aber falls Ihnen noch irgendwas einfällt was Sie wichtig finden.

Im Zusammenhang mit der Thematik?

Journalist 10

Mit mit Frau oder nicht?

Researcher

Mit Frau, mit Sicherheit, mit Journalismus, irgendwas in diese Richtung?

Journalist 10

Na ja gut, ich meine am Ende und das sehe ich auch immer in der Art und Weise, wie mein Sender jetzt die Ukraine behandelt also die ARD hat ja ein festes Studio in der Ukraine. Wir haben das nicht, sondern wir wechseln sozusagen uns immer ab einer unserer Kollegen.

Ständig da und da gibt es jetzt muss ich mal nachdenken im Grunde genommen Alisa jung, manchmal Katrin Eigendorf, aber es gibt sehr viele Männer, die sozusagen da auch mit drin sind und ich finde aber, dass natürlich jeder von uns so.

Eine eigene Herangehensweise hat Geschichten zu machen und Geschichten zu erzählen und diese Vielfalt und diese das das gefällt mir eigentlich gut und ich glaube, das ist auch wichtig und richtig für Journalismus und.

Und das finde ich das ist ein Gewinn und ich glaube, das sieht man auch auf dem Sender hoffentlich.

Researcher

Sicherlich sicherlich toll, das war es vielen, vielen Dank.

Interview Journalist 10 - Translation

Researcher

Thank you very much again for taking the time. Maybe we can just start with the first question. Has there ever been a situation where you felt unsafe because of your gender? And how did you deal with it?

Journalist 10

Yes. So, never because of my gender on the contrary, I often experience it in such a way that I think it might even be an advantage to be traveling there as a woman, because of how people perceive me when I talk to them.

Maybe someone else would see it differently I can't really answer that properly because I only have this one specific role. But I do experience, especially when we're out with soldiers and in Ukraine, for example, there are tens of thousands of women who are actually involved as active fighters but also among the civilian population, which I actually find even more

important, especially when you're in places near the frontlines, that my gender is more of an advantage than a disadvantage.

Getting into conversation with women too who often are the ones carrying their families, who somehow stay in those frontline areas because they have to take care of elderly parents or because the children can't be brought along. And I think that really is more of an advantage than a disadvantage.

Researcher

Yes, that's very interesting. I've heard similar things in other interviews. Then let's move to the next question. How do you prepare when entering a conflict zone? Do you think your risk assessments differ from those of your male colleagues?

Journalist 10

I can't really say that exactly either, because I'm not in that other role again. But take Ukraine, for example by now I think I've been there nine times since the beginning of the war. I'll be going again in October, for the tenth time. And we usually stay four or five weeks each time. So I've already spent a lot of time there, and still, the situation keeps changing, honestly.

As soon as you've crossed the border and left Ukraine, your perspective on the country and the conflict changes too but of course, you still follow what's going on. Like now, with these heavy attacks on Kyiv in recent days and weeks. Naturally, I follow that or stay in contact. But with Ukrainians, it feels different every time. Every time I go, I go in with an incredible amount of respect. Even crossing the border again it's always like swallowing once hard, and then it's done.

Then it starts to feel familiar again, especially once you've been through the first air raid alarm. But we've got our procedures in the team we really do. My team is mixed; I also have women on the team.

Almost every time, actually, the team or rather, the teams are put together a bit anew, but...

Researcher

How many people are there in one team, more or less?

Journalist 10

When we're out in the field so, if we're going out to shoot directly, we're usually around 4 or 5 people. When we're in very dangerous places, very close to the front, we minimize it as much as possible.

I need my producers often women because they also have to translate for me and because they know the area well. Then there's usually a cameraman and often an assistant, and that's basically the smallest team possible.

So that's the minimum team size we go with. But of course, preparation is key—we've all taken courses. How do you behave in war and crisis zones? That's sometimes a bit... well,

for example, I took such a course in Germany with the Bundeswehr in Hammelburg, though that no longer exists. There are other international providers now. But of course it's a big difference whether you're in Israel with rockets from Iran, or in Lebanon, or in Ukraine. Still, as a team, we know we have rules.

Namely, that we must function as a team that's clear to all of us. We must be able to rely on each other unconditionally. Before every assignment, we go over it again: where are we going? Are we doing this? Is it too risky? Is it worth it? These are the kinds of discussions we always have within the team. And the rule is: if someone says no, that no applies to the entire team. And that's fully accepted.

And that's also accepted by my broadcaster, by the way. So these are the rules. And of course, we also have colleagues in the central office, with whom we check in every morning: what's the situation, what's the plan?

What kind of safety nets do we have? We've already mentioned that we keep the team as small as possible when it's really risky. But we also have colleagues who remain in a kind of secure backup position.

Still, they're not that far away either, because you always have to consider: who knows, we could be attacked by drones. The car might break down, someone in the team might get injured. These are all scenarios we run through and we really do that.

For example, we all know first aid. That's important to me we go over our little first-aid kits at the start every time and say, "Okay, how does this work again?" How would we use it? In the hope, of course, that we never have to.

Researcher

Yes.

But it's also quite helpful to briefly remind yourself of it it can give you a better feeling. But in general, it's more the case that everyone has already had some sort of preparation at some point, or has done one of those trainings or whatever.

Do you sit down together as a team before each specific assignment and discuss and prepare everything together?

Journalist 10

Absolutely yes, every one of us has to do this preparation—these courses—otherwise our employer won't even allow us to go to the places we're going. But as I said, it's always different, and we discuss it thoroughly.

Very specifically: what are we doing, which roads are we taking, what might the risks be?

Every time, we all smile a bit when, before departure, we stand by the car and go through a sort of checklist, and then someone always says the same line:

"The most dangerous part is right ahead of us."

That's the drive, because even in crisis and conflict zones, most journalists still die in car accidents. So we look very carefully what bridges do we need to cross? Do we need to drive faster there?

How close are we to the front?

You have to pay attention, for example, if you're driving with multiple cars, not to drive too close together because then the risk of being attacked by drones increases. We go through all of this in extreme detail yes.

And that, I think, gives me the freedom to really focus completely on the story when I'm on the ground, because I know that we as a team have gone through the whole background together.

We rely on that system working, and I'm very confident that it does because, as I said, it's a kind of ritual for us.

Researcher

Yes, yes, and that is always independent of gender it's simply about how one prepares for assignments in general, yes.

Journalist 10

Absolutely, exactly that's exactly what the male reporter colleagues do as well.

Researcher

Do gender-specific safety concerns influence whether or how you report from dangerous places?

Journalist 10

Ah, especially when I look at my pieces on Ukraine, it's always very important to me.

I always say whether the 82nd Mechanized Brigade gained 100 meters of ground somewhere I don't think that's the story of the war. I believe the real story, the stories I want to tell, are: What are the consequences of this war, and what does war mean?

And I do put people at the center of my reports. That can absolutely include soldiers I've done stories on traumatized, injured soldiers who've lost limbs. That's a societal issue too: what happens to them?

But I also realize time and again that I do many stories about women, children, families.

Because that's also part of the daily reality of this war. For example, the mother whose son was abducted by the Russians. The abducted children. I was able to speak with an 18-year-old who had been kidnapped by the Russians and held for two years in the occupied territories.

People trying to cross back into Ukraine through the green border from the occupied areas, taking unbelievable risks. People still living in those occupied areas—people we've had contact with through internally displaced persons within Ukraine. I think those are important stories to tell.

I once did a story in Kherson that city was liberated by Ukraine during one of the first offensives. But it's so close to the front that life there is incredibly difficult. The biggest danger now is constant drone strikes, constant missile attacks. But wherever we go, there are still people living there even when I wear a flak jacket, I still encounter people. Like a mother of three small children who quickly goes to the supermarket to get groceries. That's a reality there you can't imagine here. And I think it's important to show that too. Yes, that's perhaps... that's at least my personal approach.

Whether I do this because I'm a woman I don't know. What I keep noticing and I've said this already is that I don't really speak Ukrainian. Of course, you pick up a little.

I get translations, yes, but I keep noticing that especially when I speak with women, I often get the feeling you know what they're telling you just by looking into their eyes.

And that I can't really describe it, but that's how it is.

Researcher

Is it somehow another way of access?

Journalist 10

Yes, maybe it's also the way the questions are asked. As I said, whether it's because I'm a person or because I'm a woman, I always find that hard to say. But it's something I do think about sometimes, yes.

Researcher

Have you ever had to change the way you report because you felt unsafe? And if so, could you give an example?

Also, in terms of practice or normal routines was there anything that had to be changed due to security risks?

Journalist 10

That's actually a bit hard for me to say, because at our broadcaster I'm basically part of the reporter pool, and I've been doing this job for about two and a half years. Before that, I had different jobs ones that were less focused on reporting.

I had worked on feature pieces or documentaries before, but only briefly. Naturally, you get used to your own style, and maybe that's the answer it depends on the situation.

I think I'm someone who really tries to approach people. Of course, that can be very different across cultures. And I do think that being a woman plays a role in that yes, I do.

For example, with a Bedouin family in southern Israel it was a man with his sons. Naturally, as a woman, I behave differently there than I normally would. The same when I'm in Lebanon and there's Friday prayer.

Of course, I wear a headscarf when I'm outside in front of a mosque, trying to talk to the men, that's just part of it.

You try to adjust to those things yes, of course.

Researcher

How do you deal with conversation partners when you're working in countries where the roles of women and men are very different or very pronounced?

Journalist 10

Well, I think you have to.

You always have to treat your interview partners with respect, no matter what role you see them in. Yes, I think so.

And I also see it as part of my responsibility I mean, I have the privilege of being able to tell their stories.

Let me give you an example: last summer in Ukraine, I met a man who had been taken into Russian captivity in the first days of the war and was only released after almost two and a half years.

We met him in the middle of Odesa, with his wife and young son whom he had actually seen for the first time only after his release. His wife had been pregnant with the child when he was captured.

He was extremely emaciated, with deeply sunken eyes. We filmed with the family, and at some point, he got really nervous and said to me via the producer:

When do you want to hear the real stories from me?

And I said, I do want to hear them, but not here at the beach or in the café. I felt like that was a situation that might also be traumatizing for him.

Later, we sat in his kitchen, and I had some questions in my head of course, you do. I think the conversation lasted two and a half hours or so. And in that moment, I really had the feeling:

I can't interrupt him now. That's not possible. I have to listen to this.

Yes, and that was something that stayed with me for a long time afterward. Of course, you could say, professionally, "Sorry, the team's been standing in the kitchen for two and a half hours now, and we'll cut it down to 2 minutes and 30 for the evening news."

But I really strongly felt: that's not okay right now. This time, his time matters.

Researcher

You just can't do that because it would have been disrespectful, especially since he had expressed that he wanted to tell his story. Maybe, right?

Journalist 10

Yes, yes, I wanted to listen to it, and honestly, the hardest moment for me was when he showed me a photo, something his wife had on her phone taken the day before he was taken into captivity. It showed a very handsome 32-year-old man. And I just... I couldn't reconcile that at all.

That was really intense. He spoke about torture, about violence. In those Russian prisons yes, that was one of those moments where I thought: *I need to prepare myself for this now.* Listen, once we ended up at a soldier's funeral in Ukraine. It often happens we were in a small town where the entire community was saying goodbye to a man who had died in Bakhmut. The ceremony lasted for hours. And again, we were actually just stopping briefly "let's shoot a bit, then we have to move on to Kyiv."

But then that reporter instinct kicks in: *This is a different story. We have to stay.*

People were kneeling along the roadside as the coffin was carried for kilometers through town. A 25-year-old widow at the grave. And I mean, that is war. And yes, we have to adapt to these situations.

And maybe this is the moment to say: yes, there is real danger even with carefully planned things. For example, when we're near the front and say, "Ah, we're going to film evacuations in Kupiansk," then we usually have a rough timeline. You try to spend as little time as possible in those extremely dangerous zones usually we're talking about a 10-kilometer range from the front. Because the risk from artillery and drones increases drastically there. And that's where you constantly have to walk this line finding a balance between: "We can't stay here any longer" and

"I'm in a bit of a dilemma now, because we do actually have to think about our own safety, too."

Researcher

Gut feeling sometimes.

Journalist 10

Yes, and of course, there's also this kind of team feeling I think we all really look out for one another. Everyone is very focused on their work, and we all know exactly: OK, now we have to move on.

Oh, but one more thing comes to mind. I don't even know if that was the question, but I do think that this gender role being a female reporter, also plays a part.

I mean, in Ukraine, I was in Bucha, and of course, I spoke there with women as well.

Women who had been sitting at the table and who, at least to me, hinted at what had happened to them.

I believe that's possibly something they wouldn't do with male colleagues.

So in that sense, it might even be an advantage I don't know if it's a disadvantage.

Maybe soldiers tell different stories to my male colleagues?

Yes, that might also be the case but yes.

Researcher

Yes, mhm, yes I've actually experienced that too. That really aligns closely with the literature what others have reported or said in interviews, not just my own. Although I've also heard that a lot in the interviews I've conducted.

It can actually often be an advantage in some situations that women sometimes feel more comfortable speaking with other women, especially when it's about, I don't know, terrible experiences they've gone through or something like that.

Journalist 10

Yes. So here, yes and I mean, you also have to consider the trauma of the person you're speaking to. When I did that piece in Kherson, I did a kind of vox pop really just quick interviews with people in front of the supermarket.

And then this one woman said to me, "My children are somehow safe, but I can't leave because if we also leave, then Putin has won."

And that was literally just two questions really very short and then we were done, and she just threw her arms around my neck.

On camera.

And I mean I don't even know. You'd think that's a totally strange situation. This woman is seeing me for the first time. But...

Researcher

Yes, but sometimes it might also just be an exceptional situation for her anyway, and in a way for you as a team too.

Journalist 10

Yes. Yes.

Researcher

Have you ever had trouble getting access to information or sources because you are a woman?

Journalist 10

I don't think so, but that also has to do with the fact that I'm not out there alone as a woman, but part of a team — and we really are a team.

We don't really think that much about our gender roles, I would say that's just not a big factor, I think.

I'd say even for my male colleagues, it's more in the background, and like I said, it really depends on having good producers who stay on stories, having a good instinct because sometimes, stories just fall into our laps, and then we ask again or say, "Oh look, that there," that's also part of how our stories come together on location, yes.

Researcher

The next and last few questions are a bit more in the direction of the news industry and safety. The next question would be: What kind of support or help is especially important for you in order to be able to work safely in conflict zones?

Journalist 10

You've probably heard this before it doesn't matter if you have the best cameraman, the most amazing producer, and the best reporter out in the field if we don't function as a team, it's not going to work. It's all about trust and, and, and, and, and.

Also knowing that things can get difficult because, let's be honest, when you're on the road for five weeks in Ukraine, with countless nights where you sleep badly or not at all, or you're sitting in a bunker and then you still have to do the first live hit for the morning show and for the evening news. And again, it's incredibly exhausting. And if we don't work as a team in those moments, it's really hard. I mean, another challenge in this job is that we're constantly working in changing teams.

For example, I was in Lebanon last year when the Israelis marched in. I was with the team from the Cairo studio, and even there it was completely clear we function as a team, and we did. Yes. That's really, really important.

Researcher

Yes yes, kind of. So then, if the team composition or the trust within the team isn't there, would you then say, 'I won't do it' or something like that?

Journalist 10

I really do think that if you have someone on the team who disrupts everything, who puts everyone in danger, that starts with checkpoint situations, right? Or with attacks, we go into the bunker, and if a colleague says he's staying upstairs I mean, it's still our problem. That doesn't work. We absolutely have to be able to rely on each other blindly.

And of course, it's also incredibly important for me to have backup from our editorial office, where people really take care of things, who think through the logistics. Let's put it this way, things changed a bit for us I think it was two years ago or maybe a year and a half when one of our teams was staying at a hotel in Kharkiv that was hit by Russian missiles.

Everyone fortunately made it out okay, but of course that leaves its mark especially on those who weren't there. And it's a constant reminder that we can't rigidly stick to old rules we have to reassess situations. So if the Russians adopt new tactics, we obviously have to consider what that means for us like how we choose our hotels, how far they are from the front. That's constantly being re-evaluated.

And honestly?

I think it's really reassuring and I definitely feel that that my direct supervisor often sends me WhatsApp messages or, I know that if things get really critical or if something needs to be discussed, I can always call her directly.

Same goes for the editor-in-chief I could call her personally without any problem. That's just how it is. It even happened to me on the last trip we had planned to go to Donetsk, and then at the last minute we decided it wasn't going to work that day.

When we set off, we heard about heavy shelling and pretty quickly we said, okay, let's go to Kramatorsk instead, which is maybe 10 or 15 kilometers farther out and that's completely accepted. No one says, 'But you have to,' or 'We agreed,' or anything like that.

Even the planning colleagues in Germany you can tell that they're mentally engaged in a different way than, say, if I were in Washington or in the London studio.

Researcher

Do you think media organizations do enough to support female journalists? Why or why not?

Journalist 10

Speaking for myself personally, I can say that I feel very supported right now. I joined the reporter pool at a time when a female leadership duo was emerging in our organization we now have a female editor-in-chief and a female deputy editor-in-chief.

And I do think it has an effect.

I actually think it's quite bold I mean, in the past, my female colleagues in the reporter pool were in their early 30s and did the job for a few years. I'm in my mid-50s, so I also think it was a brave decision, so to speak, to choose someone like me someone who also takes decisions and is a visible face on screen and to say, 'Do it, we support this, we want it that way.'

I believe that for many years, especially in this job, it was really difficult.

Let's say: that's changing now, and it's good that it's changing. I do think I have colleagues who had to fight for a long time to be allowed to do what they're doing now.

But I also have a colleague, for example, who had a child while in this reporter pool position, and she's continuing in the job.

And what does "still" mean, even? I'm already catching myself sounding that way I think the decision to pursue this profession shouldn't depend on gender.

It should be an individual choice for anyone, and I think it's great that it's now becoming that way.

Researcher

Yes, yes the next question is almost already answered, but I'll ask it anyway: Do you feel that over time there has been a change in how gender-specific safety issues are addressed in journalism? Maybe just to revisit the safety aspect a bit more?

Journalist 10

Yes, I honestly can't really judge that very well because, as I said, this constant traveling to war and crisis zones is something I've only been doing for about two and a half years.

But of course, I spent many years in newsrooms, in foreign affairs. And I'd say that the women who did these jobs there weren't that many of them. You could almost count them. At our organization and I don't think it was much different at other broadcasters either. I think that maybe in Germany, we've lagged a bit behind in that regard. If you look at someone like Christiane Amanpour, for example then I think it's a positive development that things are changing now.

And I also believe that for many women, it's been a long struggle.

Researcher

Just one last question really is there anything you'd like to add, or anything you consider important that you'd still like to say? If not, that's totally fine too but in case there's something that comes to mind that you find important.

Journalist 10

Well, I mean in the end and I really see this in the way my broadcaster covers Ukraine the ARD has a permanent studio in Ukraine. We don't have that, so we take turns, one of our colleagues is always there.

And if I think about it, essentially it's Alisa Jung, sometimes Katrin Eigendorf, but there are quite a few men who are also involved.

But I think each of us has our own approach to how we create and tell stories, and I actually really like that diversity. I think it's important and right for journalism.

And I think that's a strength, and hopefully that comes through on our channel as well.

Interview Journalist 11

Researcher

So my first question would be, has there been an incident where you faced a safety challenge specifically related to your gender while reporting in a conflict zone?

Journalist 11

No, I mean, so far it hasn't been an issue. I think that sometimes without being conscious, I end up making some decisions that try to avoid these security issues.

Which I think that is something that is worth talking about. For instance, I travel a lot to many of these places with a colleague and what we try to do is that he.

Sometimes mentions that he is my boyfriend or my partner or like something like that. So for the people that we are interviewing is like information that maybe it's going to protect me.

We we try to do that.

Like a protection measure. That's weird, but but I mean, if I think about it right now, it's something that we should not be doing, but we do it because it's it's information that maybe can protect.

Me from, I don't know, like an assault or some type of, I don't know, na inappropriate behaviour or whatever. So that's something I do sometimes when I go with this colleague when I travel by myself I mean, no, I haven't faced any like, no, I I have. I'm trying to to recall, like, but no, so far no. Maybe some type of interaction that you know that maybe they are talking to you.

Like if they some some sources like like flirting or like but you try to I I try like to put a limit since the beginning and that's it. But it hasn't evolved into a security issue.

Researcher

OK. Yeah. The next question is a little bit going in the same direction. Maybe you also already answered a little bit of it. I'll ask it anyways, when preparing to enter a conflict zone.

How do you assess the safety risks? Do you think your evaluations differ from those made by your male colleagues?

Journalist 11

No, I mean the only thing that that I do is this, this thing that I told you before. Like maybe, maybe just let's let's say that you are my girlfriend and that's and that's it and I think that I don't have any measure that specifically thinks about. I am going to a war zone as a woman and I'm many of my trips are by myself.

And I think that I take like the same measures as any other journalist, men or whatever. I try to contact some sources at the field, let them know that I'm going, but I mean it's it's weird and I think it's very interesting for you to ask these questions because it's something that you don't think about and you should, you should think about. I don't think about that a lot. It's more like I'm going there and whatever.

And let's do like the checklist. Normal checklist.

Researcher

Sure. I mean, in the situation, I guess it's also not relevant because you're like in the situation, right? But if you look at it from the outside, it can be interesting if you compare it. But actually I have a lot of people that I've interviewed that answered similar to you.

Journalist 11

Anything. Yes, I mean it's it's and when you think about it, many of the armed groups here in Colombia. They are led by men. Um.

And you sort of like enter in these territories and you are under the rules, you know, but I don't know, I guess I should do it. I guess it's it's interesting for you like to ask it because. I don't take that into account at all. I mean me. It's like, OK, like whatever. And this issue that this thing that I am telling you about that my colleague tell me it was his idea. It was not my idea. He was the one who told me like.

I think it's better what? There is a particular region in Colombia that's the the Pacific region where I don't know how to say this word in in English. Machista. Do you know what this means? OK, OK, so.

They live in a very machista society where women, they are sort of like cooking and men are in the field, you know, and it's very like defined the roles. So in that particular region, he was the one who told me like, hey, if we're going this place, we were interviewing a commander of an armed group and he was like, let me, if they ask something about you and me, I'm gonna tell that you're my girlfriend.

And I was like, why? I mean like, and now I I realized that it it it may protect me, you know?

Researcher

Yeah, OK. Thank you. I'll continue. How do gender specific safety concerns, if you have any, shape your decisions when it comes to covering stories in dangerous regions? I mean, this

also a little bit falls into what you already said, but if you have anything else that comes to mind.

Journalist 11

No, no. I mean, I I guess that if I have or had these gender concerns, maybe I wouldn't go to some places I go

That's not something I think about. It's just like that there's the story I'm going whatever, it takes. Like obviously I take into account security challenges, but not because based on gender things more like.

It's it is. I mean, if there are two armed groups in dispute or they are confronting between each other or we are in the middle of a confrontation, maybe we're not going there tomorrow, you know, or those type of things. But never it's like, OK, maybe these guys, which many of them.

Of them have these cases of sexual assault, for example, or it's like, no, I mean, I'm going. I think that there is something that at least that I think protects.

This is a belief. I have not proven. I mean, I'm going to tell you the idea, but it's more like I believe like when I do this, this field work like.

Nothing's gonna happen to me because I'm not. I'm not a local journalist. They they threat more than local journalists. They are harder with them, and I have like this. Imaginary shield where I think, I mean, it's not going to happen to me. I think that's a mistake at the end because obviously you are at risk, but it's more like, OK, security, let's take into account security issues.

In general, but not thinking about gender. And again, I think that if I would take that into account, maybe I wouldn't go to some places. I don't know if this may help you, but recently I did an investigation for the International Crisis Group. I don't know if you have heard about them. They are like this NGO that they investigate, or think organized crime and armed groups in Latin America and other places.

And I went, I did these trips to three regions and the topic was a how armed groups behave, if they behave differently or not with LGBTQ community.

And that was like my this happened last year and that was like my first experience thinking about war and armed conflict with those lengths, you know, like with those glasses like.

And I started to be more aware like, OK, obviously I have been covering a lot of violence against women, particularly by disarm groups, and I know it's different than that that man and I've.

I've been interviewing a lot of women who were, who are sorry, ex combatants of the FARC or other guerrillas, but doing this was like my first.

OK, this is something different. They behave very different with these people. And I am a woman too, and I never think about these things, you know, which I think it's.

It's pretty interesting like to ask to myself like why I never think about this, you know and and yes, the the honest answer is is is not present.

Researcher

Yeah, I see. I see. I think the next question is also going in this direction. Afterwards, it's going to go a little bit different direction. If you feel like you also already answered it, you can just wave it, but I'll ask it. Have there been moments when safety concerns compelled you to adjust your reporting practices?

And if so, can you share an example?

Journalist 11

OK, yes, I mean, I've been. There's a lot of times where I travel to some place and you have everything arranged and you have spoken to the leaders and to the sources and you're going to enter to this place like to interview someone who is.

A commander or a member of an armed group or whatever, and something happens, and all the trip you have to arrange it again because the commander didn't want to talk to you that day or there was a conflict or a dispute, an armed dispute in the place. So sometimes those types of things make me rearrange everything. It happens, I remember...

OK, I remember an 11 experience where I felt a little bit like in not in danger, but like.

Wow, I crossed a limit, and without knowing it that I'm going to share with you one like two years ago we went to a village where the far TP dissidents, they in the Amazon, they ruled this village.

They are the ones who impose everything, control, and everything. And we were sleeping in a place where they told us not the dissidents, but the only place to sleep there. OK, so I was sleeping there.

The next day I woke up and I brushed my teeth and there was this big guy who brushed the teeth that his teeth with me in the bathroom. And I was like, good morning, good morning.

And like 10 minutes after I encounter with a girl. She was a minor. She was a child. She was 1415 years old. She was part of the group, and she told me, hey, the commander wants to talk to you.

And I was like, OK, I didn't know who the commander was. So I went out the hotel and it was the guy that was brushing his teeth with me. And I was like, OK, I have to make a lot of connections. So I was like.

Wait, this guy sleeps here and then we understand that yes, that we sleep with them in the same place without knowing that he was there and that I remembered that episode as.

I thought like, oh, I didn't know this. And if I know this, I wouldn't sleep here because maybe a lot of things would happen. It didn't happen, nothing happens. But sometimes I think that. Like knowing this information before would be helpful. I didn't know it. So yeah, like those

are some security issues that have happened to me, but nothing like risking.

Till now, and I hope not till the future.

Researcher

Mhm, yes. Knock on wood.

Yeah, yeah, I see. OK. How do you approach interactions with sources in environments where gender roles are more pronounced?

Journalist 11

I think a good example could be this one. I was already talking to you about the Pacific region, where, as I told you, there are very machistas. I mean, I try to have like the same way of asking things and regardless of their.

The region where I am, but sometimes when you encounter people or men specifically that you know that are...

Sometimes you don't feel as hurt or as, yeah, as like.

Some of these commanders, some of these people, if you are a woman and you are going to ask them things that are serious, like I'm going to talk to you about your good armed group and the crimes that you have committed,, and those types of questions.

They sort of don't take you as seriously. That's something I have experienced, and sometimes I have, and they ask like and there's there's your bosses. Are you alone or are you or do you come with?

Someone else or and I tried like to reaffirm like no, I'm I'm alone and I'm going to do this and sometimes when you encounter these type of people.

I think that what works better is like to show yourself as sure and as confident as possible, and like, yes, I'm a woman and I am asking you these things.

Sometimes it has happened to me that they don't want to talk anymore. Sometimes they keep doing it, but I don't have like a specific guideline, regardless, depending on who the person is. In terms of stereotypes of gender, I try like to go the same way and yeah.

Researcher

Yeah, it just really depends on the person and the situation that you decide how you proceed.

Journalist 11

Yes. Yes, exactly. Yes. Sometimes I try to question them like, OK, so you have this speech about women being important in your organization and and that is important for all people in the society.

To have the same rights, that's something that you said in your public speeches, but you don't see women leading any of your groups. Or I try to do those types of questions sometimes.

You're gonna hear very, uh, surreal answers. Uh, but.

I do think that doing this previous job that I talked to you about, the International Crisis Group investigation, that helps me to incorporate more gender-based questions in my work.

I do not ask that at like commonly, but after doing that I was like, no, let's ask this more because it's important, you know?

So yeah, that's it.

Researcher

I see. Yeah, yeah. Have you encountered difficulties accessing information or sources due to your gender? How have you managed to overcome these obstacles?

Journalist 11

No, I haven't. I mean maybe this, this thing that I was telling you about, like sometimes I, if you like, push and say yes, I'm a woman and I'm going to ask these questions, or hey, why do you say in public speeches that you..

That you protect women and whatever, but you assault women you buy. I mean when you do these types of difficult questions, sometimes they don't want to ask or to answer.

Um, but it's.

No, it's not something that happens commonly, I mean.

Researcher

Yeah, yeah, that's all right. OK, what? So this is going a little bit more in a different direction now. What kinds of support or resources do you find essential for ensuring your safety while working in conflict?

Journalist 11

I mean, I think you have to always, when you go to these places, having a network of people in the field who you know previously and who you can alert that you're gonna be there. It's important. I always try to do that if it is the first time that I'm going, I try to leave one or two days previously from going to the workplace to like arrange like to talk to these people and like to say, Hey, I'm going to do this like to.

Make people aware that you're going to be those days in in the field. I think that it's very important to do that.

Obviously, depending of the on the media, you work or in the yeah, right now I am doing freelance work with a newspaper that's called El Pais.

When I travel, I have to talk to the editor and to be like in constant communication with him and like telling him my where I am and whatever. If that's not possible, we have. Like this protocol of security where you have like a time where you have to contact the editor. If that time passes and they don't know anything about you, there are like some alerts that are active.

And they call like two different authorities if if that's like the case. And there's also here in

Colombia a foundation that's for journalists.

That it's called Flip. I will send you the name later or or let me let me tell you the name. So what they do is that they also support.

Without you fundacion para vivir de prensa. So, without paying anything, they offer this service where you tell them, hey, I'm going to this place, I I'm going to be for one week, whatever, and they.

Have like this again, these protocols of the same with the media, the same with them. Like if you're going to the to these places, we're gonna be in contact and that's like the things you I normally, I normally do and.

My mom calls me like three times per day and and my boyfriend and but sometimes I have to tell them like with my boyfriend, is very funny because sometimes he's already like he knows so I'm like.

I'm not. I'm not going to appear in 24 hours and that's gonna be fine. After those 24 hours, you worry, but not before. So yeah, that's like the the sort of things you do. I think it's not so institutionalized like. We need to have more.

I mean, there are protocols and there are like paths for your security, but

It's not something that working as a journalist in Colombia and specifically war issues, we should take it more seriously. I know that, for example, La Philippe, La from the foundation I was telling you about. I'm not sure, but I guess they have. They have like this gender thing. When I have contact them for travels and whatever, I think that they follow like the same protocol as as as if a man, as if a man were.

Researcher

OK, yeah, there's no specific training or anything for women.

Journalist 11

No, I mean. I haven't experienced it like you just what I have to do was like you feel like this data thing with your information. You have one or two calls with someone in the foundation and they are they are like aware of where are you going.

But there's no training.

Researcher

OK, yeah, I see. This also goes a little bit in the direction of news organisations. Do you believe news organisations are doing enough to support female journalists in these situations? Why or why not?

Journalist 11

No, I mean, I think that for media, there's still like this vision of a reporter, regardless of their gender. I mean what I was telling you before, like they have this. I mean it's not even a security protocol established like I mean I have worked in.

Three media outlets here in Colombia, a magazine first, then La Silla, this media outlet and now I'm with El Pais. I think that any of them have like a gender security perspective for journalists, uh. It's sort of like security is viewed. I don't know if is perceived as something that doesn't necessarily involve any gender concern. It's more like.

Security is you being in the middle of a bomb or military confrontation or but there's no guidelines about, hey, you're a woman, you are sleeping in the same hotel of the this guy. Every time as I have worked these topics, you have like the freedom to.

Pick the story you're going to write about, the sources you're going to write about, and sometimes the your editor doesn't know all the details. You do know the details, you know, and sometimes by not sharing those details.

The media is not aware at the end of where are you going to, right? Do you get it?

Researcher

Yeah, yeah!

Journalist 11

But I think that at the same time, regardless of you sharing or not enough information, media medias in general need to have like a gender protocol for a spec, I mean for this job that I do, I think it is important and not only in war zones, I in general, in general, in whatever place you go, you're gonna find these stereotypes and you're gonna find these type of risks.

What is at stake in these specific cases is that when you're going to a war zone, your life is more in danger. But there's no specific, I don't know. Yeah, like no specific concerns about. About doing so I I feel like no.

Researcher

Yeah, yeah. OK. So the next question is also going this direction. Over time, have you noticed shifts in how the industry addresses gender specific safety challenges?

Journalist 11

No, this is going to sound a little bit funny or I don't know, but I think that media outlets are super aware of covering media issues now.

And I mean, not all of them, but some independent media outlets in Colombia are incorporating in their agendas the gender perspective, the gender issues. That's great indoors. There is also in some of them, and I'm going to say like the minority, there is this concern of how many women work in our media and how these?

Influences the way we talk about some issues or like this, this, this indoor concern of gender. I think it's it's like evolving but I don't see an evolution in the security-specific concerns for reporters. So it's funny because I say it's funny because we are trying to cover this more to be more aware of violence against women.

Be more aware about how conflict affect women how the issues of war and violence against women we are talking about as the same issue, and we have to.

Address it in different ways but but that's there's this concern but it is very like I don't know if the word is funny is more is is more like paradox that we have like this concern but in terms of how do you protect your journalists.

When they are doing the reporting, there's zero

Researcher

It's ironic, no? It's a little bit ironic because they're like covering it and talking about it all the time. But then at the same time, nothing happens within their organization, yeah.

Journalist 11

Exactly. You said the word. The word is ironic. It's like a paradox. It's like, hey, we know it outdoors and we are covering and we are talking about me too. We are talking about a a feminicidios. We are talking about all these issues.

We are talking about how armed groups behave differently with women and with LGBT community and why. That's great, but for the women who are covering these issues, there are no security protocols specifically for us.

In the newsrooms that I have worked, and I am telling you that they, for example, Lasillavasia, the media, it is a great media. I love working there. It is run by a woman. And we are, we were a lot of women. I mean, the majority were women. It's funny because we have these, for example, J. L., the which you should, if you can, you should also talk to her. She's super feminist in many things. So for example, she was like, we we would never talk about a woman as I I mean like the way to describe someone is not saying. She's the wife of or those types of things. We started when I was 22 years old and I started 23 years old and I started working there. I start. She was. That's not an identity of anyone.

Or not the first thing to identify someone. We have this cheap, you know, like this. But now that you ask me those questions, which I think I am questioning myself a lot and very and it's very interesting, it's like.

Yeah, that's great. But sometimes I travel to places where there are a lot of different risks because of being a woman, and I never even thought about it, you know? And she never thought about it too.

This media, La Silla, is one of the most innovative media in Colombia and I think it is like, sort of a mirror of if a that ishe most innovative media or one of the most innovative media and this is the reality.

You cannot imagine what you can experience being a journalist in a local village in a rural municipality in Colombia and covering these issues. I mean, if I suffer, I haven't suffered these things, but.

If I have these risks, you cannot imagine.

What these women face, and there is now I have a very good idea and and that is to I'm going to if you will, if you like.

There is a journalist that lives in Guavare, which is a right now it is a war zone. I cover it a lot. I travel there a lot. But there is a woman that she's a journalist there. She appears in radio all. All days. I mean, she's super brave. She covers, she we help each other a lot. And many times I ask myself, like, how this, how does she do this? Because she lives there. I mean, I go back to Bogota. I mean, I I obviously do this work and I am. There's a lot of years doing it, but sometimes I feel the Privilege. I am a journalist living in Bogota and I go to these places, I spend 2 weeks, come back, you know, but for those living there, it's harder and they're they're.

Researcher

I only have one more question. It's if there's anything you would like to add or anything that you think is important to say concerning this topic.

Journalist 11

We cover many things. Um. I'm thinking. I'm thinking, obviously there are a lot of important things. Um. I think it is important for us as journalists to.

Cover this issue we are speaking about.

Outside, but let's talk more about what happened, what is happening indoors, like cover ourselves, you know, like try to expose more of these issues we were talking about, I think it would be interesting to gather some women journalists and try to think about how to write a story or to visibilize this reality.

Because I think this is not something that only happens in Colombia. I guess that in all the other interviews you have done so far you can see many similar concerns.

Researcher

There are a lot of differences sometimes, but a lot of similarities actually. Like, it's it's actually crazy how many. And I tried to interview people from all continents more or less. So I've talked to journalists from, I mean, you're the first actually from Latin America. A lot of things turn up again and again and those things you can actually compare, and some are really disturbing. Also, the concerns, yeah.

Journalist 11

Yes, I mean, I imagine that this gender perspective, like thinking about gender perspective, security measures, it's something that it's not so normalized, no, it's like.

Researcher

No, especially not from news organizations. Like, I feel like everybody except for one or two told me that they don't think news organization are doing enough to support women and like female journalists working in conflict zones.

Journalist 11

OK. It's. No, no, I mean, no, no, no, I don't see that. I don't think it is intentional, but I think that it's something that hasn't been part of the equation, you know.

And right now I am thinking about I worked in La Silla with I mean my boss she she was a who is a great journalist and I and she runs this place and

I am sure that she has these concerns in the way we were reporting, but not in the way we were working, you know, which I think that's something that we should really, really, really take into account. So yes, I think that.

For the media and for us as journalists, it would be worth to.

Cover this as a story, you know, not for us to become the story, but for the reality to unfold.

I'd like to talk more about this because I don't know if you have seen these Reuters reports, the Oxford reports of the Reuters Institute.

They have these reports about gender-based, OK. And the focus of those report of those reports, which I think it's interesting is like when you think about the composition of your news, of your news media out

Like if you are the head of a media and you think about the composition of your media, you have to think about if that composition is really showing the diversity of the society you are reporting about. So you have to.

You have to include the perspective of not only women, but I I don't know, in the case of Colombia, indigenous communities, Afro Colombians and having people in in the newsroom who come from these backgrounds is important for these issues to be covered differently, you know, and they do like these worldwide measures about how the newsrooms are thinking about these indoors, which I think it is very important to ask

But for example, this specific question that you are asking, I haven't seen maybe there are reports, but I haven't seen something serious like that takes into account what are the news media are doing in terms of security.

And again, not only for women in war zones, but for women in general working in newsrooms. So I think that's something very important and it is not, not, not, not not the other thing that you see, and maybe you have seen it more than me, but.

There's this question about how many women do you have in the media. So then you have to do like 50/50. It's not about that. I mean, it's not about 50/50. So I think that these types of questions are very interesting because they like show that this is more complex and we should be asking ourselves these type of questions, not the questions about if your newsroom has two women and eight men. Yes, OK, but.

That's not going to change a lot, you know.

Researcher

Thank you so much!

