

Journalists safety in Colombia and monitoring of the 2021 National Voluntary Report

Foundation for Press Freedom

Introduction

The Foundation for Press Freedom (FLIP from now on) is a non-governmental organization that defends freedom of expression and promotes an optimum climate so those who practice journalism can satisfy the right to be informed of those who live in Colombia. Under this mandate, the foundation monitors the cases of journalists that are at risk due to developing their profession.

This report about the Colombian situation in regards to the safety of journalists and the National Voluntary Report (RNV from now on, for its acronym in Spanish: Reporte Nacional Voluntario), in particular about the Sustainable Development Goal (ODS from now on for its acronym in Spanish: Objetivo de Desarrollo Sostenible) 16.10.1, refers to a Free Press Unlimited as a deliverable so that our experience can source feed the production of a set of tools, designed for Civil Society, about how to manage and produce an optimum parallel report meant to supplement the national process of RNV.

The aforementioned ODS 16 pursues “To promote the advent of peaceful and inclusive societies to the effects of sustainable development, to ensure access to justice for everybody and build up, at all levels, effective institutions, responsible and inclusive”. In order to meet that goal, Nations are committed to lower, among other things, the “number of confirmed cases of murders, kidnappings, enforced disappearances, arbitrary detentions and acts of torture endured by journalists, mass media workers, unionists and human rights activists (...)”.¹

Thus, this report contains three sections: (1) Specific problems related to monitoring the 16.10.1 goal, (2) context, detailed data and numbers about threats to the journalists safety in 2020 and (3) to analyze the same ones along with recommendations of governmental actions meant to consider improving the situation, including recommendations to enhance the RNV process so that the civil society can be included in the future.

¹ ONU Meta 16.10, indicador 16.10.1 de la Agenda 2030 [en línea] disponible en: <https://sdg.data.gov/fr/16-10-1/>

1 Specific problems related with the follow up of the 16.10.1 goal

The United Nations General Assembly has structured a methodology to measure the 16.10.1 goal of the ODS; it's first indicator assesses murder, disappearance, detention, aggression, or torture when perpetrated by a state agent or any person who acts under the government authority or with its complicity, tolerance or acquiescence, or when the State doesn't investigate, punish, or redresses properly a crime committed by a third party, this will constitute a human rights violation. Its measurement focuses in three targeted stocks, human defenders, unionists and journalists.²



In addition, the qualified measurement of this indicator requires data to be broken-down by form of aggression and demographic information, such as profession, ethnicity, gender, age, income, geographic location, disability, religion, migratory status, sexual orientation and gender identity of the victim, and kind of perpetrator.³

Data reported by 2020 (annex 1) gathered through the FLIP efforts that has assumed the responsibility of promoting journalist's safety and freedom of expression, aligned with the success of the 2030 Agenda. This Annex registers pertinent information to the follow up of the ODS in mention of the methodology as described. **3 main limitations were found on its elaboration:**

² In 2017, the United Nations General Assembly approved a set of indicators to measure progress on each goal in A / RES / 71/313. There are two indicators to measure SDG 16.10: (1) Indicator 16.10.1. Number of verified cases of murders, kidnappings, forced disappearances, arbitrary detentions and torture of journalists, staff of associated media, trade unionists and human rights defenders in the last 12 months; (2) Indicator 16.10.2. Number of countries that adopt and apply constitutional, statutory and / or political guarantees for public access to information.

³ UN. Metodología metadata. Goal 16. <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/files/metadata-compilation/Metadata-Goal-16.pdf>

1 Adjustment of the recorded documentation of aggressions against the press to produce quality information and adjusted to the criteria of the indicator to ensure its usability for verification of the ODS 16.10. 1.

FLIP has been documenting the aggressions against the press in Colombia for more than 25 years. That labor has come through different challenges in regards to its recording methodology. In the moment of contrasting FLIPs documenting methodology and the one from Voces del Sur, who systemizes the regional information for measurement of the 16.10.1 indicator, the necessity for adjusting the recording methodology of cases internally in order to produce detailed information that can be re-usable for this matter. Although, there were significant advances to harmonize the methodology, there're still some differences that can have some impact in the quantifiable results about the aggressions.

In regards of that for mentioned adjustment, there was evidence that FLIP already counted the segregation of information according to certain indispensable criteria (aggression typology, location, date and aggressors). Nevertheless, the existence of some differences on the recording form and some variation among categories of aggressions was warned. (Annex 2).

Soon, our methodology was adjusted to: (i) reflecting in greater detail the age of the victims (by range), number of aggressors (individual or collective), kind of aggressor (from the state or other and individualization) and level of impunity; and (ii) integrating classification of some previewed aggressions in the Voces del Sur methodology such as enforced disappearances, torture, raids, identity theft.

The difference identified in relationship to the categories is the reach given by each organization, which requires a detailed analysis of the information in order to unify data facing the monitoring of ODS. For instance, Voces del Sur clusters different kinds of aggression categorized by FLIP (displacement, threats, harassment, espionage or invasion, year or destruction of attempted equipment, sexual violence) in one whole category (aggression). Also, foresees one about 'abusive usage of the state power' which is wider than one similar in the FLIP that it's reduced to 'pressure trough media guideline'. FLIP doesn't record as an aggression on their data neither the expedition of opposite laws to the international standards of press freedom, but it analyses it in the contexts. In that sense, there is a gap in data about this point.

Methodologic differences, among practices in civil organizations and requirements for the correct measurement of the indicator, it's placed as a precedent the urgent necessity of its harmonization for cleanness of data and adoption of new practices, in order to have results

that allow to provide a precise reading about the regional situation to create effective public policies.

2 Lack of public and official data about the matter in concern

According to the Social Prosperity Department, Colombia was the first country to include the ODS as the general frame in the formulation of the National Development Plan 2014-2018.

⁴This articulation along with the Agenda 2030 was retaken by the National Development Plan 2014-2018-2022, “Pacto por Colombia” (Law 1955 of 2019) which is oriented to lay the foundations for the government plan aligned with the ODS. The 16th goal appears as a transversal element⁵, but it doesn’t identify a measure or specific policy in the face of violence against the press as a freedom guarantee, even though that the violence pattern against the press in the context of the armed conflict in Colombia, just as the high rates of impunity, has been recognized at the Inter-American Court of Human Rights OAS⁶.

Currently, there are no production mechanisms of measurable data, of accountability that allow to assess the effectiveness of the State’s public policies directed specifically to the journalist population, in particular the measurement of violence against the press and the advances of the respective investigations.

In FLIPs experience, there are no public information archives that present complete and timely data about violence against the press and the existent information is not usually disaggregated in factors that allow to appreciate the real incidence against journalists, having into account their occupation, the impact of gender and geographic segregation at the least. An obstacle that explains this problem in great measure, is that in practice the presumption of the connection between the assault and the occupation still doesn’t apply, which causes the crime record to add up to general data bases and its identification is lost.

We know that information produced by the State about violence against the press is disjointed, in many occasions the aggressions are not characterized in data bases so it is possible to identify the impact of violence with a differential approach. As an example, the Attorney’s General’s Office, the National Police Department and the Protection Unit don’t have a unified data base about the aggressions, that consolidates verified and disaggregated information to identify the impact of the kind of aggression to journalists’ sort by gender. For

⁴ <https://colaboracion.dnp.gov.co/CDT/Sinergia/Documentos/Ficha%20con%20aspectos%20generales%20sobre%20los%20ODS.pdf>

⁵ Artículos 1 y 2 de la Ley 1955 de 2019. También ver: <https://colaboracion.dnp.gov.co/CDT/Prensa/Resumen-PND2018-2022-final.pdf>

⁶ I / A Court HR. Case of Carvajal Carvajal et al. V. Colombia. Judgment of March 13, 2018. merits, reparations and costs. URL: https://www.corteidh.or.cr/docs/canec/articulos/seriec_352_esp.pdf

this reason, in past years there has been evidence about the existence of discrepancies in their numbers, and even in comparison to the FLIP ones.

In February 2021, in recognition to this lack of articulation, the national government announced the creation of an intersectoral board to consolidate statistics to implement the Timely Action Plan (PAO for its acronym in Spanish Plan de Acción Oportuna) for the Social Leaders Protection, Human Right Defenders and journalists, in the year 2020, and the strategic plan for 2021. Therewith, it is intended to create a road map that allows to unify investigation methodologies and information related to murder in these focal groups. However, having taken into account what was foreseen this doesn't address other kinds of violence, therefrom that its reach glimpses limited.⁷

Added to this, the access to official information about the aggressions against the press has been hampered by the actions taken within the framework of the pandemic, therefore the response times were doubled. In light of the shortage of public information, FLIP required updated numbers about the quantity of threats to journalists in 2020 to the Attorney's General's Office (Fiscalía General de la Nación), after 47 days there has been no response at all. This makes it difficult to contrast and analyze the information gathered by FLIP.

3 Lack of channels for participation to the civil society in the RNV from Colombia

While the government included the ODS to the National Development Plan, the strategies implemented to gather information from the civil organizations side has been limited, which forecasts a Voluntary National Report based principally in official measurement that had no feedback and effective participation from the civil society.

In 2021, as a part of the elaboration process of the third RNV that the country will present at High-level Political Forum (Foro Político de Alto Nivel) in July 2021, the technical Secretariat of the ODS Commission invited all the interested parties in sustainable development and the implementation of the 2030 agenda in Colombia to provide for the collective construction of the report, through an [online platform](#).⁸

However, this mechanism does not allow to submit information related to the monitoring ODSs that will be reviewed. Only allows to indicate whether the participant works towards

⁷ Presidency of the Republic. Intersectoral table created to strengthen protection of social leaders (2021).

⁸ Technical Secretariat of the ODS Commission - Colombia. 'We invite you to make your contributions to the third voluntary national report 2021' URL <http://ods.gov.co/es/news/dejanos-tus-aportes-para-la-elaboracion-del-tercer-reporte-nacional>

any OSDs development or if its work has been affected by the current COVID-19 emergency.



Photo: Cofradía para el Cambio, Medellín

In addition, it is worth to note that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Cancillería) does not report activities for RNV 2021, omitting its duty of maximum publicity. On its website, only a generic description of the national strategy for the 2030 agenda and existing mechanisms can be found, but there is no indication of how to participate in the RNV, even though it is under construction and should have the participation of all sectors.⁹

This is not the first time that Colombia has generated an RNV without the full participation of Civil Society. In 2018, the Technical Committee gathered information from those entities responsible for reporting the progress of the indicators and goals for 2030, which were complemented with sectoral management reports, other policy documents and diagnostic studies, along with the information collected from the private sector through an application created exclusively for this actor¹⁰. In contrast, civil society only had a place in five workshops with the objective of highlighting the power of alliances to advance in the fulfillment of the ODSs, but not to deliver the information gathered¹¹.

⁹ Website of the Ministry of International Relations, section for monitoring the 2030 Agenda. URL: <https://www.cancilleria.gov.co/rio/linea>

¹⁰ Technical Secretariat of the ODS Commission - Colombia. SDG CORPORATE TRACKER URL: <https://www.ods.gov.co/es/sdg-corporate-tracker>

With regard to RNV 2021, within the framework of the National Statistical System (SEN), created by the National Development Plan 2018-2022, the National Administrative Department of Statistics requested information from the FLIP in order to consolidate the measurement of OSD. However, the cooperation expected by the authority of civil organizations appears to be minimal, since it is limited to the information delivery and the entity would be the one to refine the data to frame them in to the categories and questions by the indicator. This results into a symbolic participation from the civil organizations, which is inconvenient when evaluating the systematized information.

2 Context and numbers on journalist's safety in Colombia in 2020

2.1. Violence against the press in Colombia in 2020.

Despite the signing of the Peace Agreement, the numbers of violent aggressions against journalists continue to be alarming, they have increased in the last four years and a worrying context of violence against journalists perseveres in Colombia. (Annex 3)¹².

Between 2017 and 2020, eight journalists have been murdered in the country and 618 threats, 26 displacements and 10 exiles have been reported; it is the second deadliest country on the continent, preceded by Mexico. In 2020, 449 aggressions were registered against 632 journalists.

During the pandemic year, and despite the general confinement, violence escalated. 193 journalists were threatened, 10% more than in 2019. Two journalists were assassinated (Abelardo Liz and Felipe Guevara) in the first case responsibility from the public force is questioned. The journalist's physical risk does not cease, in 2020, FLIP also registered a total of 152 threats, 40 harassments, 36 cases of judicial harassment, 30 assaults, and 4 cases of sexual violence (these latest, all against women journalists). Both the pressure and hostile environment have escalated to the point of causing 8 displacements and 4 exiles¹³; This indicates that the climate for practicing the journalistic profession is far from providing the minimum guarantees, so unfortunately self-censorship can continue to be perceived as a self-protection strategy.

¹¹ National Planning Department. Coordination and drafting team Technical Secretariat of the ODS Commission. Voluntary National Report (2018) p.11. Url:

<https://colaboracion.dnp.gov.co/CDT/Prensa/Reporte%20Nacional%20Voluntario%20Colombia%20ODS.pdf>

¹² See Annex 3. on the detail and analysis of the documentation of attacks against the press in 2020.

¹³ These figures are FLIPs record for the period between January 1, 2020 and December 31 of the same year. However, it is recognized that it is possible that there is an under-registration since it is known that journalists do not always report attacks and because there is the hypothesis that in some regions there are no attacks since journalists avoid covering certain topics or dealing with silenced zones.

Violence in digital environments almost doubled between 2019 and 2020. The proportion of this type of aggression corresponds to 25.8% of the aggressions of the year, while in 2019 they corresponded to 13.5% of all aggressions. In 2020 there was a 40% increase in threats in digital environments compared to 2019¹⁴.

By the other hand, violence against women and gender journalists was made more visible, warning of a not more encouraging outlook. At least 8 of the aggressions reported by FLIP were related to gender issues coverage, originated in discrimination based on the journalist's gender or had a characteristic imprint of gender violence. Additionally, it was evidenced that women journalists suffer differentiated violence even in their workplace. So far this year, three reports have been published that account for an increase in the number of threats, harassment and discrimination based on gender, both in the offline and online world, which reflect serious problems of machismo in society. The vulnerability level of women journalists is clear but is not addressed by the media and the authorities: 98% of the journalists surveyed agree that women and LGTBIQ + people are the object of specific violence in social media due to their gender identity, 2 out of 10 women stated that they had been victims of sexual violence, 6 out of 10 said they had been victims of gender¹⁵ discrimination in work related environments¹⁶.

Note that one of the most affected scenarios is social protests. There, we registered 41 aggressions and 58 victims, out of which 75% of the aggressions are attributable to police abuse. Between September 9th and 21st (12 days), the Flip documented 33 assaults and 35 victims¹⁷. This spike in attacks against journalists is significant in both number and severity compared to previous years. Demonstrations carried out in November 2019 (40 days), mostly of a peaceful nature and some violent incidents that took place throughout the protests, are a turning point in police brutality, the Flip documented 76 aggressions and 87 victims, while in 2013 it registered 24 aggressions and 22 victims in 25 days of demonstrations.

It is highly worrying that the source of the most frequent risk falls on the State, which reliably fails to fulfill its duty to protect and promote an optimal environment for press freedom.

It is warned that 25% of the attacks are credited to public officials, while 7.5% to criminal gangs, 2.8% to paramilitaries and 1.5% to the guerrillas. Note that aggressions by criminal

¹⁴ En 2020 hubo 55 eventos mientras que en el 2019 se presentaron 33 casos.

¹⁵ Of the 8 attacks by gender, there are 3 threats, 1 forced displacement, 2 harassment, 1 obstruction and 1 case of sexual violence. Look at annex 1.

¹⁶ FLIP. [Pages](#) (2020).Pag. 56-57.

¹⁷ There is a wide range of types of assaults that include: physical assaults (16), obstructions (5), illegal detentions (4), threats (3), theft and disposal of material (2), damage to infrastructure (1) and sexual violence (1), others (1).

gangs increased 73.53% compared to the previous year. The most frequent aggression was threatening. Three of these threats resulted in internal displacement.

Furthermore, violence is still focused in regions that have traditionally been marked by armed conflict and the dynamics of violence in the border areas. Approximately 75% of the aggressions take place in only 31% of the departments. Mainly, they take place in Bogotá (147), Antioquia (51), Valle del Cauca (28), Magdalena (20), Córdoba (17), Santander: (15), Tolima (15), Huila (14), Atlántico (14), Norte de Santander (13), Arauca (13) and Cauca (13).



The foregoing occurred while the press coped with the pandemic, which added a direct biohazard and a risk of indirect censorship. As referred by Reporteros sin Fronteras on its annual report, "the pandemic has fueled censorship in Latin America and reporters have had great trouble finding out how governments in the region have handled the public health crisis." According to the RSF, "these limitations have been reflected in a spectacular worsening of the indicator that measures how difficult it is for journalists to access information held by the State." Indeed, in Colombia, the impact of covid-19 was evidenced in the high level of contagion among journalists (67% of those who took the PCR test in 2020

were positive) and the 21 deaths in 2020. In that year, 56 aggressions are related to some kind of coverage of the pandemic.

In addition to the above, it is of special concern that the illegal monitoring activities against journalists persist and constitute a serious problem that remains over time and in which officials from different State entities are dedicated to intelligence tasks. The context of press freedom at a national level has been seriously damaged because the state has been involved in a new scandal for profiling, through technologies usage for communications and social media illegal interception and monitoring, affecting journalists and the political opposition, 130 people, including 43 national journalists and foreign correspondents.

The risk level is so high that the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights granted precautionary measures to the journalist who revealed these systematic interceptions¹⁸. Noting that there is a situation of imminent risk related to the exercise of journalistic work that has lasted for several years, which may trigger other violent acts or lead to self-censorship, the Commission asked the Colombian State to urgently adopt the necessary measures to protect the journalist's life and personal integrity. However, in practice, the acts aimed at compliance show the inability of the UNP and the Prosecutor's Office (Fiscalía General de la Nación) to articulate on the implementation of suitable measures in a timely manner.

The illegal surveillance activity described would have been targeted at journalists, especially those who investigate possible irregularities or human rights violations from the State security forces. This implies that the communicators risk is in the same State, therefore, they distrust institutional security mechanisms subjecting them to a higher level of vulnerability and discourage any allegations.

The FLIP has expressed concern about this situation, due to the serious history of interceptions of journalists' communications in the country. What happened between 2003 and 2009 inside the Administrative Department of Security (DAS for its acronym in Spanish Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad) and its illegal activities constituted one of the most serious aggressions against press freedom in the country's recent history. During that period, FLIP documented 16 cases of journalists who were victims of surveillance, persecution, interceptions, and threats. However, it is estimated that more reporters could be affected.

The lack of institutional trust regarding the journalist's protection system stems from this situation's type and is also based on the lack of capacity in the institutional response to

¹⁸ http://www.oas.org/es/cidh/decisiones/pdf/2021/res_6-2021_mc-207-20_co.pdf

journalists' safety problems. The lack of articulation between the Unidad de Protección (Protection Unit) and the Fiscalía General de la Nación (The Prosecutor's Office) makes it impossible to disjoint the risk, this adds up to the lack of risk assessment and investigation of crimes with a differential approach by kind of occupation and gender. In the Colombian context, the study of the risks of journalists is analyzed from the physical safety perspective, in which the Police and the National Protection Unit (Unidad de Protección Nacional) must intervene, but not as a necessary labor right in order to practice journalism, therefore the risk associated with the occupation is unknown, restricting risk analysis. This translates into serious deficiencies in the design and implementation of protection measures.

Despite the fact that thousands of millions of pesos are invested in a protection mechanism, it is ineffective and increasingly loses legitimacy, still waiting for the promised reengineering plan. Added to the budget crisis is the crisis in decision-making, hardship in assessing risk levels and streamlining procedures; unjustified delays in the implementation and delivery of protection schemes; Corruption, among other situations developed in these reports, show numerous problems.

Numbers comparative for the first quarter of 2020 and 2021 respectively

Murders and threats

In the 2020 and 2021s first quarter, there were no murders; however, in 2020, threats against the press increased by 10% compared to 2019, and since 2016, this aggression has been increasing. Also, there was a 40% increase in threats in digital environments compared to 2019.

In 2020, FLIP registered a total of 152 threats, affecting 193 journalists. The place with the highest number of registered cases was Bogotá (30), followed by Antioquia (16), Córdoba (13), Arauca (9) and Santander (8). Regarding the alleged aggressors, in 47% of the cases the alleged perpetrator was unknown, in 29% they were private actors, in 16% they were criminal gangs and in 7% they were dissidents. The coverage topics most frequently related to threats were corruption, politics, public order, Covid-19, drug trafficking, and micro-trafficking.

In the 2021 first quarter, FLIP registered 41 threats, affecting a total of 43 journalists, while in the same period last year there were 29 threats. The departments with the highest number of threats registered in 2020 have been Santander, Bogotá, Arauca and Antioquia. As for the alleged aggressors, in 13 cases the perpetrator has been unknown, in 10 cases they have been criminal gangs, in 8 cases guerrilla groups (FARC-EP) and in 3 cases, they have been

dissidents. The topics of coverage that have most frequently been related to threats have been corruption, criminal gangs, drug trafficking and threats and murder of social leaders.

Other aggressions in 2020 and 2021s first quarter

In the first quarter of 2020, there was 1 case of sexual violence, 2 displacements, while there is no record of these aggressions in the same period in 2021. By the other hand, there were the same number of exiles in that period both in 2020 and in 2021.

2.2. Impunity

Impunity on crimes against the press is not overcome, there are structural factors that make this critical situation persist fostering self-censorship, such as the lack of investigation about the line of connection of crimes with the occupation, the lack of diligent investigation and in accordance with inter-American standards for the investigation of crimes against the press. In this regard, although in 2018 the Office of the Attorneys General's Office (Fiscalía General de la Nación) issued a Resolution 0339 that consists of the implementation of strategies to address the investigation of threats against human rights defenders - including journalists -, to this date its results are unknown. It has been known, only through statements, that the Fiscalía (Prosecutor's Office) advanced with the conviction of 2 cases of threats that occurred in 2018 and 5 cases entered the trial stage¹⁹. However, when comparing these convictions with the 200 cases of threats registered in 2018 by FLIP²⁰, it is concluded that the impunity rate is 99%. Furthermore, prosecution and sanctions often do not progress and access to information on investigations is hampered.

Impunity in relation to murder against journalists is alarming and shows the deficiencies in justice regarding crimes against the press. This undoubtedly generates an inhibiting effect due to the lack of sanction.

Between 1977 and 2020, FLIP has registered 161 murders of journalists in Colombia. Only in one case the entire criminal chain was convicted, in four cases the determiners have been convicted, in 29 cases the perpetrators have been convicted, and 127 cases (78.8%) are in impunity. As of today, 92 have been prescribed, that means that the Fiscalía General (Prosecutor's Office) has already closed the investigations. Out of the 92, 8 cases were prescribed in 2020 and another 9 cases are about to be added up, since they meet legal term in 2021 (Annex 4 and 5).

¹⁹ Office of the Attorney General of the Nation. Three convictions for threats against journalists, human rights defenders and social leaders. September 3, 2019.

²⁰ Foundation for the Press Freedom. Cornered Press: A Game of the Violent and Powerful. Report on the state of press freedom in Colombia 2018. February 2019.

On the other hand, impunity is visible with regard to disciplinary processes for aggressions on journalists in the framework of social demonstrations. Out of eight disciplinary proceedings initiated for assaults in 2020, no investigation was opened in four of them and the remaining are still in preliminary stages. From the year 2019 we have that out of 14 aggressions reported to the police and of which efforts were initiated to find disciplinary responsibility, 11 were filed and three are in the preferential power of the Procuracy (Procuraduría). In other words, 65% of the complaints were filed.



3- Recommendations for the government in order to consider how to improve the RNV process so that it includes civil society in the future.

The 2030 Agenda seeks to strengthen universal peace in broader freedom and the goals are the commitment to be "people-centered" and to "leave no one behind." In particular, the 16th commits countries to "promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all, and build up effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels."

To ensure the people's orientation of the SDGs, their implementation must be driven by partnerships and collaborations in all sectors and segments of society and should not be concentrated in the state. Goal 16th appears as a transversal element of the National Development Plan 2018-2022²¹, in which some directives are built such as: improving the effectiveness of participation spaces, strengthening social organizations for the defense of

²¹ Articles 1 and 2 of Law 1955 of 2019. Also see:
<https://colaboracion.dnp.gov.co/CDT/Prensa/Resumen-PND2018-2022-final.pdf>

common interests. In this sense, it is essential to enable the participation of civil organizations in a robust way in the process of monitoring and evaluation of this goal.

Therefore, some strategies meant to improve RNV are:

- 1 To stimulate a broader sense of public ownership of the final objectives and goals, provide the space for dialogue for civil society participation in the RNV.
- 2 To reaffirm commitment to human rights, justice, accountability and transparency, ensuring access to official information to properly monitor the objectives of Goal 16.
- 3 To specifically include journalist safety in the National Development Plan as part of the 2030 Development Agenda and the need for measures to guarantee an environment conducive to freedom of the press and the right to information.
- 4 To produce public statistics from the State - in particular from the General Attorneys of the Nation (Fiscalía General de la Nación), the Protection Unit (Unidad de Protección), the Office of the Ombudsman, the General Procuracy Office of the Nation and the National Police - so that it produces figures segregated by the office of victims - of journalists - and according to the type of effects on freedom of the press, which are included in the indicator 16.10.1 SDG.
- 5 To train civil organizations on technical aspects of monitoring the SDG by DANE, so as to promote the use of adequate documentation methods so that their information can be used for the monitoring and evaluation of the indicated, according to the methodology of The United Nations.²²

In the face of the serious situation of violence against the press, some priority recommendations are:

- 1 To reform the Protection Program (Programa de Protección) represents a significant step for press freedom in Colombia to:
 - 1.a Train UNP officials in risk analysis from a human rights perspective and in accordance with the jurisprudence of the Constitutional Court, so that the analysis responds to the particularities of the case and takes into account the journalistic profession, as well as the context.
 - 1.b Redraft the concept and methodology with which risk levels are established, as well as the criteria with which protection measures are granted including gender perspective.
 - 1.c Restructure the administrative chain to guarantee a rapid and adequate response to the risks faced by journalists.

²² Actualmente la Procuraduría General de la Nación cuenta con el Índice de Transparencia y Acceso a la Información - ITA, que mide exclusivamente el grado de cumplimiento de las obligaciones de publicar o 'Transparentizar' su información derivadas de la Ley 1712 de 2014, Ley de Transparencia y Acceso a la Información Pública. cfr. <https://www.procuraduria.gov.co/portal/ITA.page>

- 1.d Train the UNP staff, in charge of security issues, on freedom of information issues.
 - 1.e To guarantee participation of the Attorneys Office (Fiscalía) in the protection program, so that the risk is deactivated.
 - 1.f To establish mechanisms and measures that promote protection from a preventive perspective. Preventing and promoting a safe environment for the press is the best way to protect it.
2. To articulate, through the National Defender's Office (La Defensoría Nacional) the creation of an early warning system on risk and violence against the press, in conjunction with the contextual information produced by the General Attorney's Office (Fiscalía General de la Nación) of and the National Protection Unit (Unidad Nacional de Protección).
 3. To train the Attorneys General Office (Fiscalía General) staff and the judges of the Republic so that: (i) they know the inter-American and universal standards on the investigation and prosecution of crimes against the press and (ii) have media literacy and a deep understanding of the journalist's labor, including online, and the importance of the issue of security and impunity for society. In this regard, establish a mechanism for measuring its implementation.
 4. Ensure the implementation of the judicial orders of regional and national sentences regarding the protection of journalists, as well as widely disseminate the standards of.
 5. To promote the Attorneys General of the Nation establishment of an indicator on access to information, in particular, that makes visible the fulfillment of the obligation to deliver information in legal times by the national authorities and publishes information on existing disciplinary processes by the breach of this obligation by public officials.
 6. To create an intersectoral table to assess the context of violence and current press freedom challenges in Colombia, with the participation of control bodies, entities in charge of protecting journalists, academia, the media union and journalists, as well as civil society - among others - to analyze the different sources of risk for journalistic work and to establish an action plan.

ANNEX 2: Analysis of the FLIP and Voces del Sur's documentation methodology 2021

This document explains the elements that were extracted from the Voces del Sur alert system, which so far are not part of the FLIP documentation process and are intended to be adapted, according to convenience, to the Foundation's methodology.

ACTORS

Range of age from the victims.

The documentation carried out in Voces del Sur includes the age range of the victims. This will be incorporated by FLIP to the extent that it nourishes the Foundation's database, contributes to the analysis of the patterns of attacks on journalists, and is information that is sometimes requested by some organizations and has not been able to supply.

Number of aggressors

VDS monitors -to the extent possible- the number of aggressors who committed the attack. This can contribute to the analysis of attacks against the press in terms of the proportionality of the force that an actor exerts against a journalist and the possible intentionality and organizational capacity with which it acts. Taking into account that determining an exact number of aggressors complicates the documentation process or can lead to uncertain data, this item will be incorporated with the Individual or Group categories.

Type of aggressors

The VDS documentation categorizes offenders into two parts: general and specific. In general it is determined what type of actor or aggressor he is and in the specific one it is mentioned which one he is. For example, if the attack was committed by a senator, the type of aggressor will be 'State' and the 'name' that determines who the aggressor was, will be a public official.

FLIP will incorporate this in the documentation methodology to consolidate the classification of aggressors. In this sense, the proposals that are handled in VDS for aggressors in a generic way are the following:

- **State:** government authorities and officials linked to the powers of the State at the local and national level. They also include state-owned companies as well as public Internet providers.

- Parastatals: individuals, groups, organizations or agencies that, despite not belonging to the public administration, collaborate with the State in economic, social, political and even criminal acts.
- Non-state: protesters, union members, private actors, businessmen, private companies, media directors, union leaders, organized social groups.
- Groups outside the law: organized crime groups, drug trafficking, guerrillas, paramilitaries, militias.
- Unidentified: subjects or groups in which the aggressor cannot be determined. This category also includes organized crime groups that cannot be clearly identified, as well as trolls, trolls-centers and / or unidentified citizens.

Impunity

Based on the inclusion of an impunity characterization within the VDS documentation, FLIP considers it is pertinent to include it in its database. This way it will be possible to track whether an aggression has been sanctioned or not. For this, it is necessary to construct a clear concept, what is the scope of the concept of impunity (criminal or if other areas are to be included, for example, impunity due to lack of disciplinary investigations) and to know that there are certain processes to monitor.

AGGRESSIONS

The attacks presented by VDS that FLIP would include within the categories it handles for the documentation and classification of press freedom violations will be exposed as it follows. We will stick to the definitions provided by VDS to ensure consistency.

FORCED DISAPPEARANCE

These are arrests, kidnappings, detentions, detentions or transfers or any other form of deprivation of liberty that are the work of government agents, or groups or persons acting on behalf of or with the support of the State and who refuse to reveal the fate or the whereabouts of these persons or to acknowledge that they are deprived of liberty

TORTURE

Any act by which journalists are intentionally inflicted pain, intimidation, coercion or serious suffering, whether physical or mental. Its purpose is to obtain information or a confession from her/him, or to punish her/him for an act or publication that has carried out, or is suspected of having done. Any method that seeks to nullify the personality of the victim or diminish her physical or mental capacity shall be understood as torture.

AGGRESSION:

Within this broad category, VDS has gathered several aggression reported separately by FLIP:

- Displacement.
- Threats.
- Harassment.
- Espionage or invasion.
- Damage or destruction of equipment.
- Attacks
- Sexual Violence.

SEIZURE

VDS distinguishes this aggression as a separate element. This new category will be included in the categories of the FLIP, with definition provided: Violent entry to a medium with the purpose of investigating any fact with or without a court order and / or attacks against the communication media infrastructure such as burning of their headquarters, attack with explosives, etc.

ABUSIVE USE OF STATE POWER

It is considered that this category fits the main topics the Study Center investigates . For now, CODAP handles it as ‘pressure through the finance’.

Definition

Actions planned, proposed and executed by the State that, abusing its condition of power, are imposed without any logic or reason to be, contrary to international standards of freedom and press and expression, and that harm the media and journalists economically or prevent the elaboration of their work. This indicator includes the following actions:

- 1 Actions aimed at financial suffocation, including: withdrawal of the official financing of independent media for the purpose of affecting stability; abuse and constant imposition of official resources in said media; pressure exerted from the state against economic groups with the purpose of removing advertising from a certain communication medium; and / or fines or taxes specifically directed at the media
- 2 Concession of frequencies avoiding control mechanisms, omitting recommendations, favoring concentration and preventing independent media from having access to part of the radioelectric spectrum.
- 3 Administrative and economic sanctions as acts that consist of a kind of sanction as a consequence of illicit conduct.
- 4 Restrictions on access to supplies, such as, for example, impediment to access to paper and ink. This may also include impeding access to electricity or other items necessary to carry out journalistic work.
- 5 Arbitrary closure of communication media and / or abandonment of community media that are not recognized as such by governments because they do not comply with the regulations and, therefore, are in a situation of vulnerability, including the occupation of facilities of media

- 6 f) Abusive withdrawal or rectification of content without a court order and that are not covered by local laws.
- 7 g) Electoral Harassment. Initiation of actions before electoral authorities (at the electoral juncture or not) that may or may not include the use of public resources. These may include, but are not limited to: a) Precautionary measures that order removal of content; b) Sanctions for electoral closure

LEGAL FRAMEWORK CONTRARY TO INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS OF FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND PRESS

These is not been handled as an assault properly to document within the daily process, but it is something that is taken into account in FLIP's work for advocacy.

Flip is considering to consolidate the legislative monitoring for this purpose. For instance, at the end of each legislature, the corresponding data would be added to the database.

Definition: Proposal and / or approval of standards, which may include laws, decrees, regulations, resolutions, ordinances, and / or regulations, which restrict freedom of the press, expression, access to information and / or generate censorship. It includes legislative measures that endanger the lives of journalists, and that eliminate measures that guarantee the safety of journalists, as well as proposals for the elimination of trusts or resources for the protection of defenders of freedom of the press and expression and of journalists.

Impersonation of identity (INTERNET)

The VDS documentation includes Internet attacks that FLIP has already categorized. However, impersonation of identity is not one our categories, despite we have recorded some cases. Thus, we will create this new category separately.

The definition provided by VDS will be adopted for FLIP's documentation: Identity theft is understood as the usurpation of the name used by cyber criminals to commit illegal acts on the Internet. To this, it would be added that it is an act committed in order to delegitimize media, create false content on behalf of a media outlet or journalist and put them at risk.

