

Global overview

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Global Report	04
Context	05
The Survey	07
Experience of Sexual Harassment	08
Reporting and Barriers	10
Organisational Action	13
Witnessing	16
Perpetrators and Power Dynamics	17
Perceptions	18
Training and Policy	20
Recommendations	22

Sexual Harassment in the Media

This research is the product of a collaboration between WAN-IFRA Women in News, BBC Media Action and City St George's, University of London. It was produced thanks to support from the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), and the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (UK FCDO) under the Public Interest Media and Healthy Information Environments (PIMHIE) programme.

We are grateful to our colleagues and partners in the 21 countries of the study for their support in disseminating the survey to respondents.

Women in News is a media development programme of the World Association of News Publishers (WAN-IFRA). Its mission is to close the gender gap in news media. It works with 80 media organisations from 17 countries in Africa, the Middle East and South East Asia.

BBC Media Action is the BBC's international charity. With our partners, we reach more than 100 million people in need around the world, in more than 30 countries and 50 languages. We work to provide impartial, impactful, trustworthy media to people in need so that they can make informed choices to transform their lives.

City St George's, University of London has a mission to generate world-leading research on global social justice and inclusivity in journalism that brings lasting benefits to the industry through its Department of Journalism. We partner with journalists, think tanks, NGOs, and policymakers to explore how ethical, public interest journalism can be reimagined and protected for future generations.

Principal researcher: Dr Lindsey Blumell

Research lead: Molly Chimhanda

Editorial leads: Ellen Leafstedt and Valeria Perasso

Editorial support: Nadene Ghouri

Research support: Sofiene Omri, Neema Gupta, Keo Ranza, Zeinab Nehme, Sheila Chimphamba

Communications: Farah Wael, Carolynne Wheeler, Ateendriya Gupta

Website development and graphic design: Edit Gyenge

Copyeditor: Lorna Fray

Global Report

This report is part of a 2025 international study on sexual harassment in media workplaces¹, examining experiences of sexual harassment among women, men and gender non-conforming media professionals across 21 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, the Arab region, South East Asia and Ukraine.²

Conducted by the World Association of News Publishers (WAN-IFRA) Women in News (WIN) in partnership with City St George's, University of London and BBC Media Action, this is the largest study of its kind. It builds on research conducted in 2020 that identified persistent gaps in evidence on sexual harassment in media workplaces.

This report provides a global overview of how sexual harassment is experienced in media organisations, how often incidents are reported to employers, and how employers respond in those cases. The study also explores how media professionals' perceptions of workplace safety, equality and treatment of sexual harassment differ by their gender and job level.

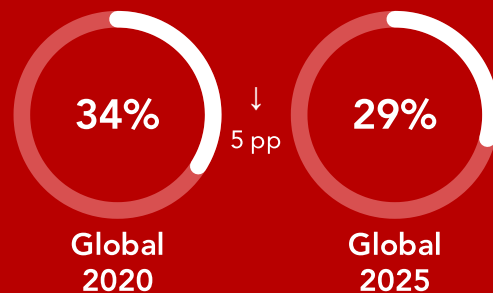
Findings show that the global prevalence rate of sexual harassment in newsrooms stands at 29%, compared with 34% in the 2020 survey.³ The 2025 findings present an updated global picture, drawing on a revised set of countries.⁴

”

“A female colleague reported [sexual] harassment by her direct manager. The complaint was withdrawn, and she was persuaded to resign. In my organisation, harassment and the importance of reporting are discussed verbally, but in practice the victim is punished.”

Female digital producer/manager aged 35–44, Jordan

Overall rates of sexual harassment in newsrooms



¹This study defines sexual harassment as “unwanted and offensive behaviour of a sexual nature that violates a person’s dignity and makes them feel degraded, humiliated, intimidated or threatened”. For definitions of specific types of sexual harassment, see the methodology page.

²Botswana, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe in Sub-Saharan Africa; Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine in the Arab region; Bangladesh, Myanmar, Indonesia and The Philippines in Asia; Ukraine in Europe.

³The global prevalence of sexual harassment is calculated as the mean average of the percentage of respondents who reported having ever experienced verbal harassment, online harassment, physical harassment and/or rape while at work.

⁴The composition of countries differs between the 2020 and 2025 surveys. Some countries included in the earlier study were not measured again in 2025, while several new countries were added. Differences in the global figures may therefore reflect changes in country coverage as well as changes in media professionals’ reported experiences.

Context

The five years since the 2020 survey in media workplaces have seen significant progress in legislation tackling sexual harassment across all regions covered by this study.

Governments in some of the survey countries have responded to public pressure and civil society advocacy with new laws, revised labour codes and strengthened criminal frameworks to cover sexual harassment at work.

Many countries are taking steps to align with International Labour Organization (ILO) norms⁵ and the Istanbul Convention⁶ through legal reform. Examples include Botswana's 2021 [Penal Code amendment](#), Ukraine's [Bill No. 8329](#) ratifying the Istanbul Convention in 2024, and Malawi's national [code of conduct on workplace harassment](#) from 2025. Other countries have made efforts to facilitate the reporting of sexual harassment incidents. For instance, survivors' [anonymity is now legally protected](#) in sexual harassment and assault cases in Egypt, with the aim of making it easier for them to come forward.

Labour reforms since 2020 have also helped to address workplace sexual harassment in several countries. These include measures giving workers the right to leave their jobs and retain their full compensation if they experience sexual harassment/assault at work (as in [Jordan](#)), and requiring all employers to establish sexual harassment reporting and case management protocols (as in [Indonesia](#)).

Strong legal frameworks are fundamental, as they define unacceptable behaviour, establish

employers' obligations and create the conditions for accountability. However, some countries like [South Sudan](#) and [Bangladesh](#) have no dedicated legislation against sexual harassment at work, and others like [Ethiopia](#) have limited workplace policy requirements. Even where legal frameworks exist around this issue, implementation challenges result in uneven protections and weak enforcement.

Significant **public advocacy efforts have also had a positive impact in tackling sexual harassment** since 2020. Digital activism, high-profile cases and collective action by women journalists have shifted the conversation around sexual harassment. In Egypt, a [widely shared digital whistleblowing](#) case catalysed the country's [#MeToo](#) movement in 2020. Sector bodies including the [National Union of Journalists of the Philippines](#) and the [Indonesian Alliance of Independent Journalists](#) have worked in their respective countries to establish clearer newsroom policies around sexual harassment, including confidential reporting channels and support mechanisms for survivors.

Despite these positive developments, the gap between the law and people's lived experience of sexual harassment persists across multiple countries covered in this study. As [ILO Convention 190](#)⁵ makes clear, rights on paper must become realities in practice.

⁵ Adopted in June 2019, [ILO Convention No. 190 \(C190\)](#) is the first international treaty to recognise the right of everyone to a world of work free from violence and harassment, including gender-based violence and harassment.

⁶ The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, better known as the [Istanbul Convention](#), is a landmark legally-binding Council of Europe treaty signed in 2011 seeking to eliminate gender-based violence and end legal impunity for perpetrators.

The period since 2020 has also been defined by **conditions of conflict, insecurity and democratic erosion** that compound the risks faced by those working in the media sector, especially women and gender non-conforming people. These conditions **deepen the power imbalances that enable sexual harassment, and often cause institutions to deprioritise tackling the issue.**

In Ukraine, Myanmar, Somalia and Somaliland, South Sudan, Palestine and Lebanon, among other countries and regions, the media landscape has been fundamentally reshaped by civil and international conflicts that have led to acute safety and security issues. Journalists and other media professionals navigate displacement, exile and targeted attacks as part of their working lives.

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine has [altered the media landscape](#) in the region since 2022, with journalists facing trauma and often displacement. In Myanmar, the 2021 military coup has [pushed independent media](#) largely outside the country. [In Palestine](#) and Lebanon, journalists operate in what has been ranked as the deadliest media landscape in the world, with over 260 media workers killed since 2023 in Gaza, Yemen, Lebanon, Iran and Israel. In Somalia, women journalists have been the target of [escalating sexual and gender-based violence](#) during wartime.

Political upheaval and democratic backsliding have also created corrosive pressures on the safety of media professionals in some of the countries surveyed, such as Bangladesh, Indonesia and the Philippines.

In Bangladesh, [international media monitoring organisations](#) have documented widespread attacks on, and harassment of, journalists following political upheaval since 2024. In Indonesia, media freedom organisations have documented [escalating violence against women journalists](#), including individual threats, [cases of doxxing](#) and an alleged femicide. In the Philippines, attacks on journalists have been widespread during successive administrations, including the persecution of Nobel Peace Prize laureate [Maria Ressa](#) through rape threats and misogynistic abuse, among other means.

This is the landscape into which this 2025 follow-up study lands. Legal reforms have taken place. Public conversations have shifted. In some countries, media organisations have made meaningful internal changes. But the data that follows tells a more complicated story about how much change has actually happened in media workplaces and for media professionals, in a global context of a noticeable pushback on previously guaranteed rights.



“Verbal sexual harassment often occurs during editorial meetings, in forums and in groups. Many people don't recognise it as harassment because it's considered a joke... If someone warns someone, they're seen as being stern and not being able to joke around.”

Female senior digital media executive aged 35–44, Indonesia

The Survey

The global survey⁷ draws on a sample of 2,878 media professionals at various job levels (see Figure 1b) from 21 countries spanning Sub-Saharan Africa, the Arab region, South East Asia and Ukraine. Respondents include 1,630 women, 1,090 men, 67 gender non-conforming (GNC) individuals and 91 people who preferred to self-describe their gender identity (see Figure 1a).⁸

The largest samples came from Bangladesh (339 respondents), Sierra Leone (298), Zambia (251), Egypt (220), and Uganda (206). Some other countries had notably smaller samples, such as the Philippines (36), Somalia (39), Indonesia (38), South Sudan (44) and Lebanon (53).

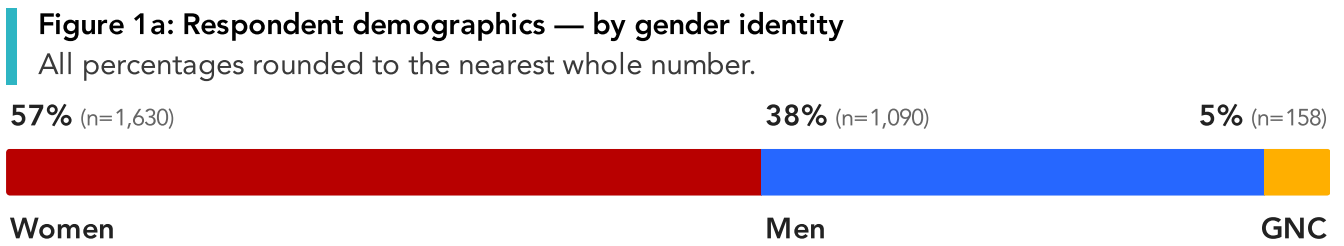
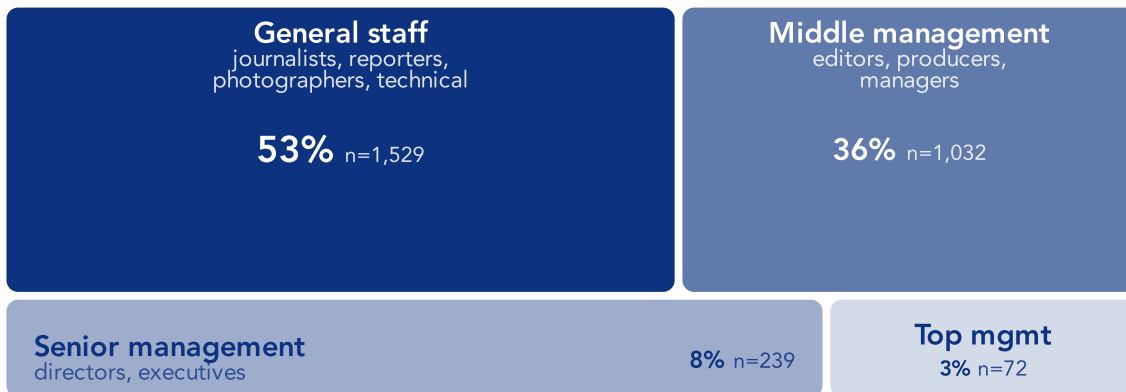


Figure 1b: Respondent demographics — by job level



⁷This study employed an online survey instrument comprising 33 closed questions and one open-ended question. The latter allowed respondents to provide additional comments, and was the source of the quotes included in this report. Respondents could skip any question if they wanted.

WIN and BBC Media Action regional media networks distributed the surveys. Each network aimed for a balance of respondents by gender, role and media organisation type. Response rates and sample sizes vary by country.

Given the sensitivity of the subject, the research team gave respondents access to relevant support resources in their country. Data was handled in accordance with City St George’s, University of London’s privacy policy and international data protection standards. For further details, see the methodology page.

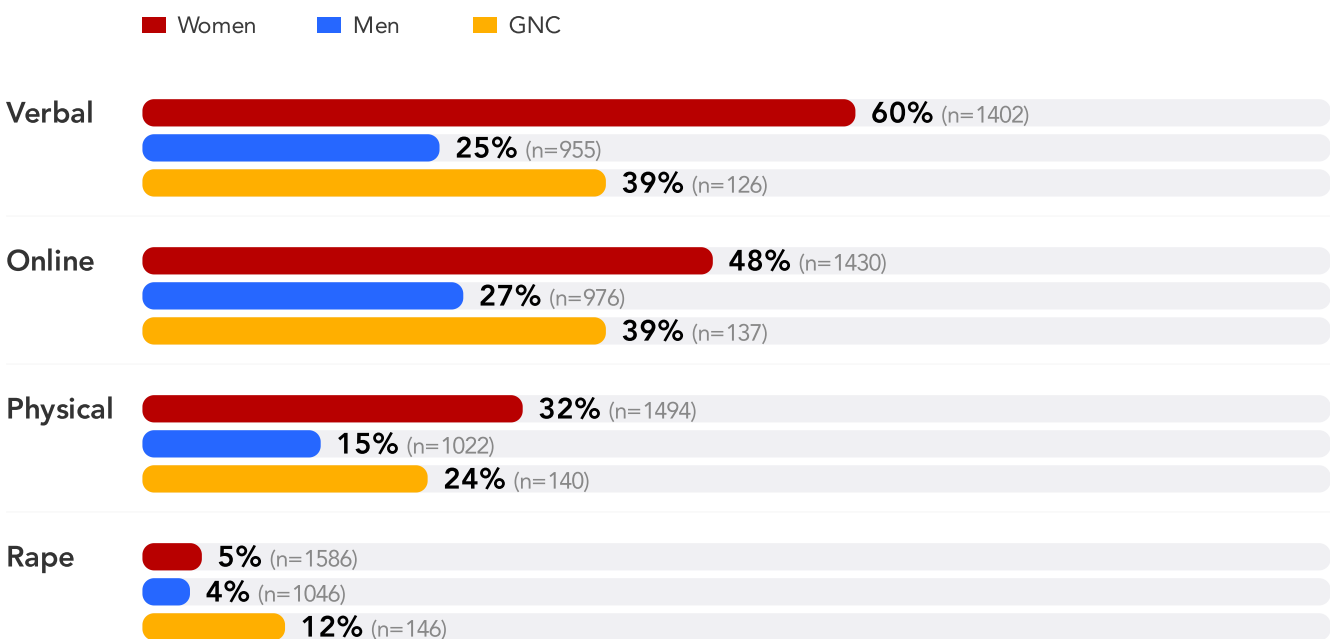
⁸In most of this report, people who described their gender as gender non-conforming or preferred to self-describe their gender identity are presented together as “gender non-conforming” (GNC). Data is not disaggregated for these respondents in country-level reports.

Experience of Sexual Harassment

In the 2025 survey, respondents cited verbal sexual harassment as the most common type of harassment in media workplaces, encountered by 45% of all respondents. However, there is a pronounced gender divide – nearly 60% of women respondents said they have experienced this form of harassment at work compared with 25% of men, making women 2.4 times more likely to face it (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Experience by type and gender identity

Base: all respondents excluding "I can't remember". All percentages rounded to the nearest whole number.



Similarly, **online sexual harassment** has affected almost half of all women respondents (48%) compared with 28% of men. Women therefore appear to be 1.8 times more likely to experience harassment of this kind.

While cited less frequently, **physical sexual harassment** remains significant across the

dataset – with a global prevalence rate of 25% across all genders, compared with 22% in the 2020 survey. The data indicates that women are just over twice as likely as their male colleagues to face physical sexual harassment at work – nearly one-third of women respondents (32%) said they have done so, compared with 15% of men.

Respondents' cases of workplace **rape** are less common than other forms of sexual harassment but remain present. Overall, 5% of respondents indicated that they have experienced rape. The gender difference is less pronounced than in other categories, with 5% of women respondents and 4% of men respondents saying they have been raped in the course of their work.

Across all forms of workplace sexual harassment, a consistent pattern emerges: women are more likely than men to have experienced it. This disparity is particularly pronounced in verbal, online and physical forms of sexual harassment. This points to a persistent and systemic gendered dimension of sexual harassment within media organisations.

The evidence suggests that **respondents who identify as gender non-conforming (GNC) are**

less likely than women to have experienced most forms of sexual harassment, but are considerably more exposed to all harassment types than men. Among GNC respondents, 39% said they have experienced verbal sexual harassment at work, compared with 60% of women and 25% of men. Online sexual harassment shows a similar pattern, experienced by 39% of GNC respondents compared with 48% of women and 28% of men. Physical sexual harassment follows the same trajectory – 24% of GNC respondents cited experiences of this, compared with 32% of women and 15% of men.

Rape appears to be a notable exception, with a stark finding. Some 12% of GNC respondents said they have experienced this most severe form of sexual assault at work – a significantly higher proportion than respondents who are women (5%) or men (4%).

”

“When I worked at a previous news organisation, I was sexually harassed by various colleagues and my boss on several occasions. The reason I didn't speak up was because I knew I wouldn't gain trust in the organisation.”

Female digital media editor, Ethiopia

”

“Ever since I started my journalism career I have never heard of any training which can empower journalists with the right knowledge on sexual harassment in the newsroom. I have also never seen the organisations I have worked with prioritising mechanisms and platforms where sexual harassment survivors can voice out their concerns whenever they face such experiences.”

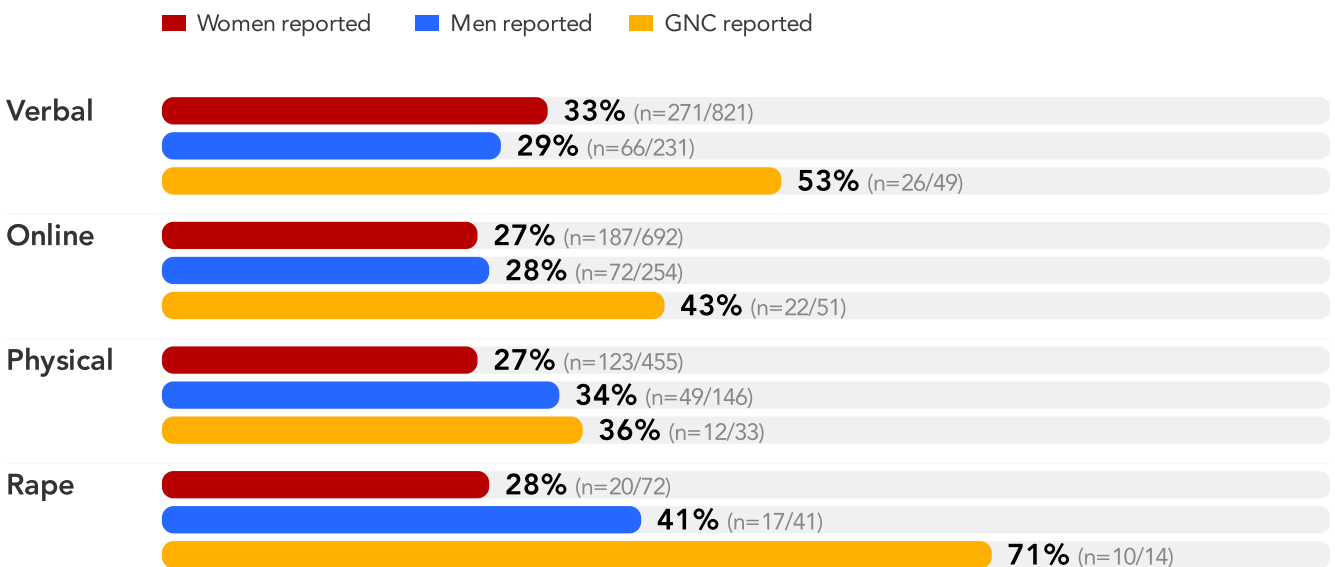
Female digital media intern aged 25–34, Malawi

Reporting and Barriers

The survey asked respondents who indicated they had experienced sexual harassment at work whether they had reported the incident to their organisation, and whether their employers had taken any action as a result.

Figure 3a: Reporting rates by type and gender

Base: those who experienced each type and answered the reporting question. All percentages rounded to the nearest whole number.



Across all forms of sexual harassment, around two-thirds of all respondents (69%) chose not to tell their employers (see Figures 3a and 3b).

While reporting rates vary slightly by gender and type of harassment, the overall trend is one of under-reporting to employers, pointing to a systemic issue rather than isolated behaviour. Men seem marginally more likely to tell their employers than women, particularly in cases of physical sexual harassment (34% compared with 27%) and rape (42% compared with 28%, although incidences of rape were a small sample globally).

Respondents who identify as GNC were more likely to tell their organisation about their experiences of sexual harassment at work, although this sample is smaller and more unevenly distributed geographically than those of men or women. Over half (53%) of GNC

respondents officially reported verbal sexual harassment at work – while 43% reported online sexual harassment, 40% reported physical sexual harassment and 71% reported rape incidents.

This widespread reluctance to report is not without reason. The data suggests a set of recurring and interconnected barriers that shape how individuals assess the risks and consequences of coming forward. These barriers are both structural and personal, reflecting organisational gaps as well as perceived threats to personal safety, career progression and concerns about not being taken seriously.

Respondents’ reasons for not reporting sexual harassment to their organisation are consistent across all sexual harassment types (see Figure 4). Three factors emerge most clearly for respondents who did not tell their employer –

fear that reporting would have a negative impact on their job (cited by 20%), a lack of workplace reporting mechanisms (19%), and the perception that the experience was not a big deal (18%).

Other barriers, while cited less often, have also stopped respondents from divulging their experiences of sexual harassment to their employer. These include fear of retaliation from the perpetrator (cited by 12%), not believing the organisation would believe them (11%), and fear of losing their job (10%).

Clear gender differences emerge in these barriers. Taking verbal harassment as an example,

women respondents are more likely to cite safety-related and organisational reasons for not speaking up, particularly the absence of workplace reporting mechanisms (20%, compared with 15% among men and 13% among GNC respondents). Men in the survey, meanwhile, are more likely to downplay incidents – over a quarter of male respondents (26%) stated they did not report a case of sexual harassment because they did not think it was a big deal, compared with 16% of women and 10% of GNC respondents. The latter were slightly more likely than other genders to worry about losing their job entirely, at 16% compared with 9% for women and 11% for men.

TOP REASONS PEOPLE DID NOT REPORT SEXUAL HARASSMENT

20%

I was afraid it would negatively affect my job

19%

There are no reporting mechanisms at my organisation

18%

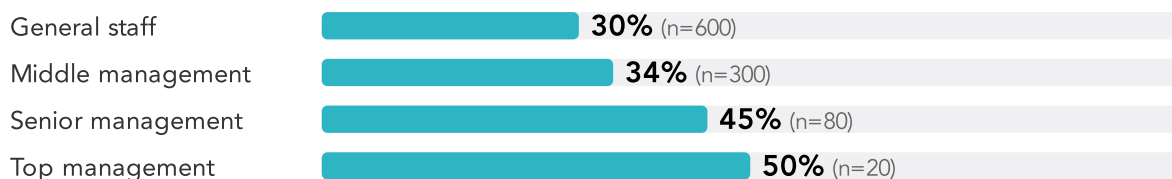
I didn't think it was a big deal

Figure 3b: Reporting rates by harassment type and job level

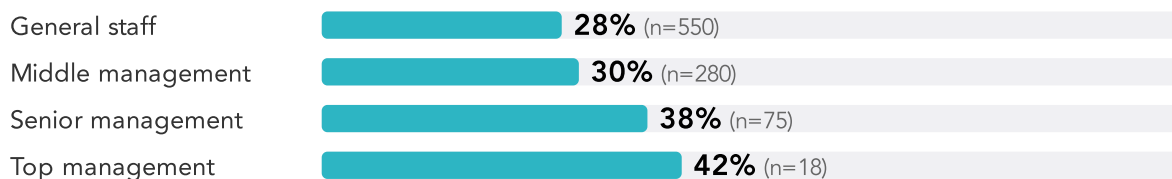
Base: those who experienced each type and answered the reporting question. All percentages rounded to the nearest whole number.

% who reported the incident to their employer

Verbal



Online



Physical

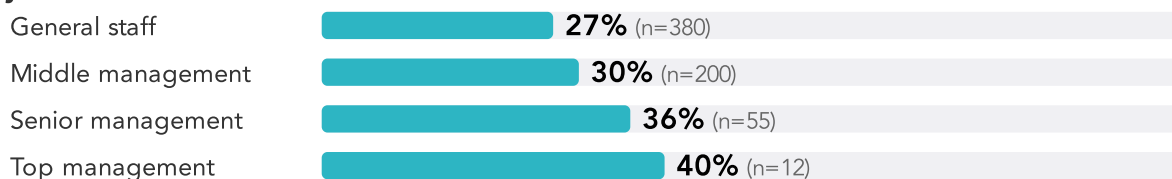
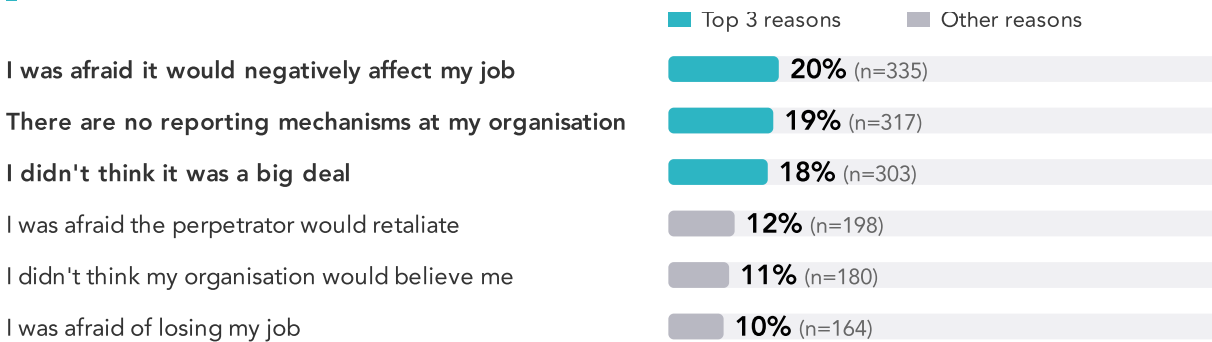


Figure 4: Top reasons for not reporting

Base: respondents who did not tell their employer. Counts show total mentions (n). All percentages rounded to the nearest whole number.



Overall, **the global findings suggest that under-reporting of sexual harassment is due to workplace systems and cultures.** Where people perceive reporting to be risky or ineffective, or see the issue as not being taken seriously (see Perceptions section), workplace grievance and reporting mechanisms alone are unlikely to drive change. Addressing under-reporting requires both stronger systems and greater transparency and trust in how those systems function in practice.

The UN advocates a [survivor-centred approach to encourage reporting of sexual harassment](#) by building survivors’ trust and confidence in reporting systems. This incorporates several principles: respect, non-discrimination, safety, confidentiality, informed consent, support and prevention.



“It’s usually hard to identify harassment because it comes from people you know, like colleagues you trust and people in the newsroom you share ideas and stories with – they can start to flirt or sometimes touch inappropriately... I found out recently that a lot of the things I go through at work are actually harassment.”

Female radio journalist aged 25–34, South Sudan



“I don’t know much about sexual harassment, but I want to understand it. By taking training I will be able to have the right information.”

Male media worker aged 18–24, Bangladesh

Organisational Action

Organisational responses to reported cases of sexual harassment varied across the global sample, yet some clear trends emerge from the 2025 dataset. Across all forms of sexual harassment, half of respondents on average (51%) said their organisation took action in response to reports of sexual harassment only “sometimes or mostly” rather than “always” (see Figures 5a and 5b).

Figure 5a: Action taken by organisations on reported sexual harassment — by gender

Base: those who reported harassment and answered the action question (excluding "I can't remember"). All percentages rounded to the nearest whole number. Per-row n shown next to the gender label.

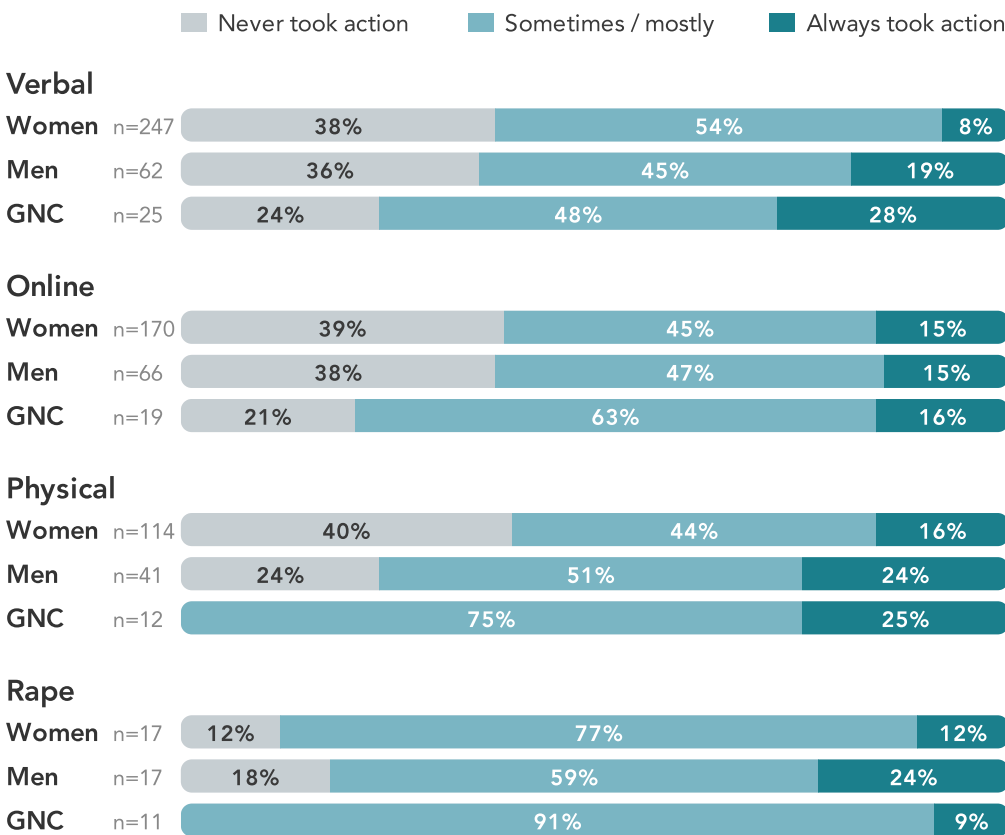
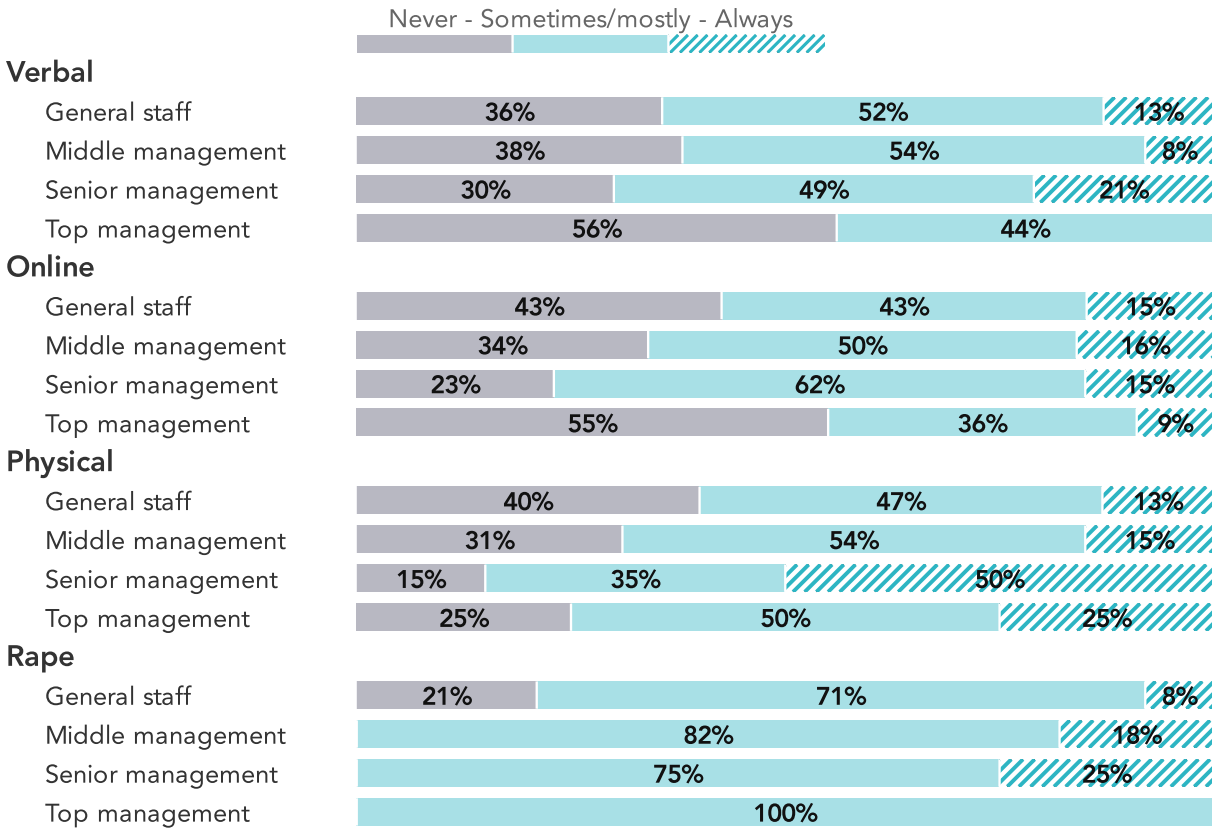


Figure 5b: Action taken on reported sexual harassment — by job level

Base: those who reported harassment and answered the action question (excluding "I can't remember"). All percentages rounded to the nearest whole number.



Around one-third (35%) of respondents who told their employer about experiences of sexual harassment said the organisation took no action as a result (see Figure 6), although organisational reaction was more common in response to reported cases of rape. In contrast, only a small minority of respondents (14%) said that their employer “always” took action when sexual harassment was reported.

Gendered differences were minimal when it came to seeking employer’s action. Men and GNC respondents were more likely on average to say that their employer “always” took action after they spoke up – at 21% and 20% respectively, compared to 13% on average for women.

When looking at the data by job level, respondents in more senior roles were more likely to report that their employers took action in response to reports of sexual harassment. In contrast, general staff and mid-level managers were more likely to report that action was “never” taken following a reported incident. This sug-

gests that organisational responses may be experienced differently depending on levels of seniority, with people in relatively junior roles less likely to see effective follow-up. However, this pattern is less clear among respondents at the highest managerial level, which has a smaller sample.

These findings indicate a critical gap between reporting and resolution – that when employees report sexual harassment incidents to their employer, they are not guaranteed a consistent and effective organisational response. Low-level, occasional action taken by employers in response to employees divulging their experiences of sexual harassment may also help to shape a workplace culture in which these incidents are not considered a priority or a serious problem, which in turn may deter positive behaviour changes and case reporting.

Yet gender and power dynamics are likely to be factors that are key to organisational responses and will need to form part of any efforts to prevent and address sexual harassment – as survey findings indicate that women are much more likely than men to have experienced sexual harassment while also globally are less likely to hold the kind of senior roles whose reports of incidents are taken more seriously, according to the research.

When employers did take action, the single most common action stated by survey respondents was warning the perpetrator, which accounted for 36% of actions when averaging across sexual harassment types. The next most common reaction was dismissing the case after review (15%)

and transferring the perpetrator to a different department (14%). Disciplinary measures were more commonplace than preventive and survivor-centred support measures. Providing professional and/or emotional support and sexual harassment training for staff were less frequent, accounting for 12% and 10%, respectively.

Findings from this research also reveal that organisational responses to sexual harassment reporting are often insufficient, and that workplace systems fail to protect and support survivors whether or not they report their experience. [Recommended measures](#) include access to confidential help services, networks and safe spaces for survivors, and practical adjustments to line management or working practices.

MOST COMMON ACTIONS TAKEN BY MEDIA EMPLOYERS

36%

The perpetrator was warned

15%

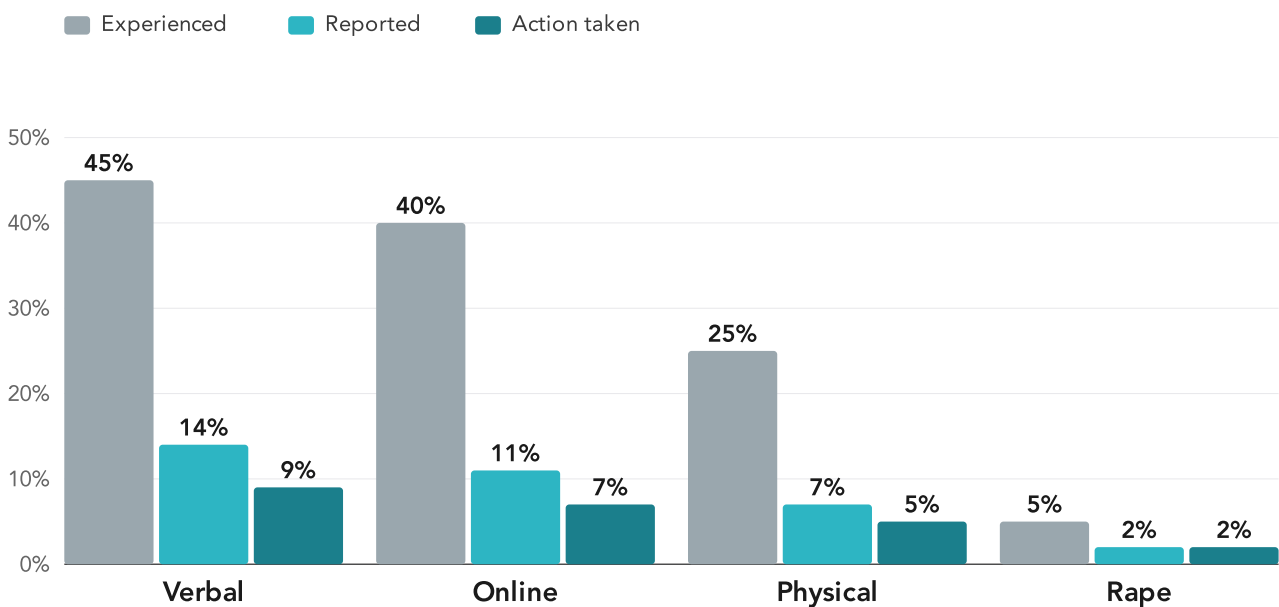
The case was dismissed after review

14%

The perpetrator was transferred to a different department

Figure 6: Response pipeline — experience → reporting → action

Base = all respondents, excluding “I can’t remember”. All percentages rounded to the nearest whole number.



Witnessing

The survey asked all respondents whether they had witnessed sexual harassment affecting colleagues in their workplace – and 28% said they had. Of those, only a third (34%) told the organisation about the incident they had witnessed. When they did so, employers took action under half of the time (43%) (see Figure 7).

The two-thirds of respondents who did not tell their employer about the sexual harassment they had witnessed cited various reasons for this. The most common, mentioned in nearly a third of cases, was that they were worried about what would happen. A further 20% said they did not think the incident was important, while another 20% said that the person being harassed had asked them not to report the incident.

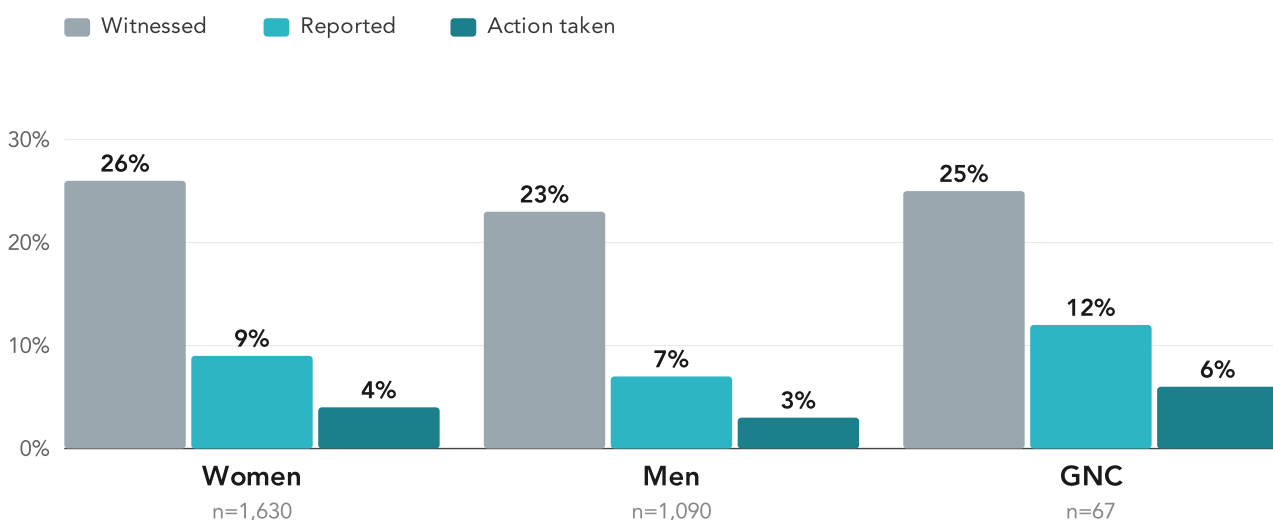
Gendered differences were also visible here. Men respondents were most likely to say they had not reported harassment they had witnessed because they did not think it was important (28%, compared with 15% of women and 8% of GNC respondents). But women and GNC witnesses were more likely to say that they had been asked not to report by the person being harassed (22% of women and 34% of GNC wit-

nesses who did not tell employers, compared with 14% among men in the same group).

These findings indicate a problem that goes beyond gender identity differences. Very few witnesses to sexual harassment reported what they saw. And, even when they did, employers' responses were inconsistent. The fact that two-thirds of witnesses stayed silent, and their primary stated reasons for this, suggest that media work environments do not feel safe or trustworthy for many people. Barriers to reporting are widespread, shaped by organisational culture as much as interpersonal dynamics. Access to training on sexual harassment, robust workplace policies to prevent and tackle the issue, building trust and accountability in associated workplace systems, and visible support for sexual harassment survivors within workplaces remain essential.

Figure 7: Witnessing pipeline by gender

Base = all respondents, excluding "I can't remember". Per-gender n shown under each group label. All percentages rounded to the nearest whole number.



Perpetrators and Power Dynamics

The survey results show that sexual harassment in the workplace is shaped by both power dynamics and everyday working relationships, with peer-to-peer behaviour forming a significant part of the picture alongside uneven dynamics based on gender, job level and workplace systems.

Across all forms of sexual harassment, respondents most often identified the perpetrators as fellow employees, accounting for a third (34%) of all mentions (see Figure 8a). As Figure 8b shows, workplace sexual harassment is not limited to hierarchical relationships but often takes place between colleagues working at the same level.

Additionally, direct supervisors and higher management together account for 29% of perpetrators overall, confirming that power and seniority play a significant part in media workers' experiences of sexual harassment.

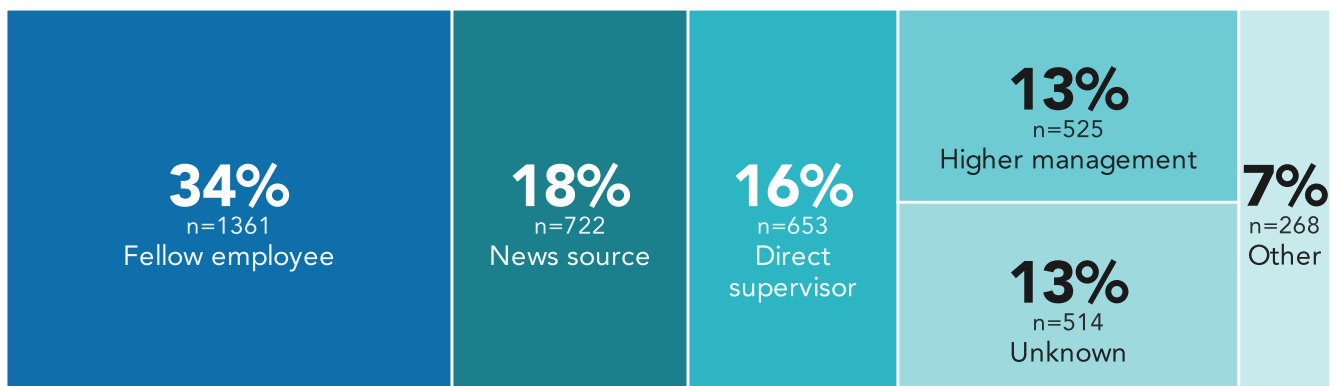
News sources also account for a notable share (almost 18%) of perpetrators, highlighting that workplace sexual harassment is linked to day-to-day field reporting as well as internal workplace interactions.

A further 13% of perpetrators were unknown to respondents. These numbers rise to 20% from news sources and 29% from unknown perpetrators when looking at online harassment specifically, by virtue of the publicly available online tools and social media platforms that are used to carry out this type of harassment.

This pattern is broadly consistent across job levels. Among respondents who have experienced sexual harassment at work, 35% of general staff, 34% of middle managers and 31% of senior management identified fellow employees as the perpetrators, making colleagues the most commonly reported source of harassment across all staff levels except top managers. Among this latter group, 23% identified news sources as the perpetrators, followed closely by fellow employees at 22%.

Figure 8a: Sexual harassment perpetrators by working relationship to survivor

Share of perpetrator mentions across all harassment types. Respondents could name multiple perpetrators per incident, so totals reflect mentions rather than survivors.

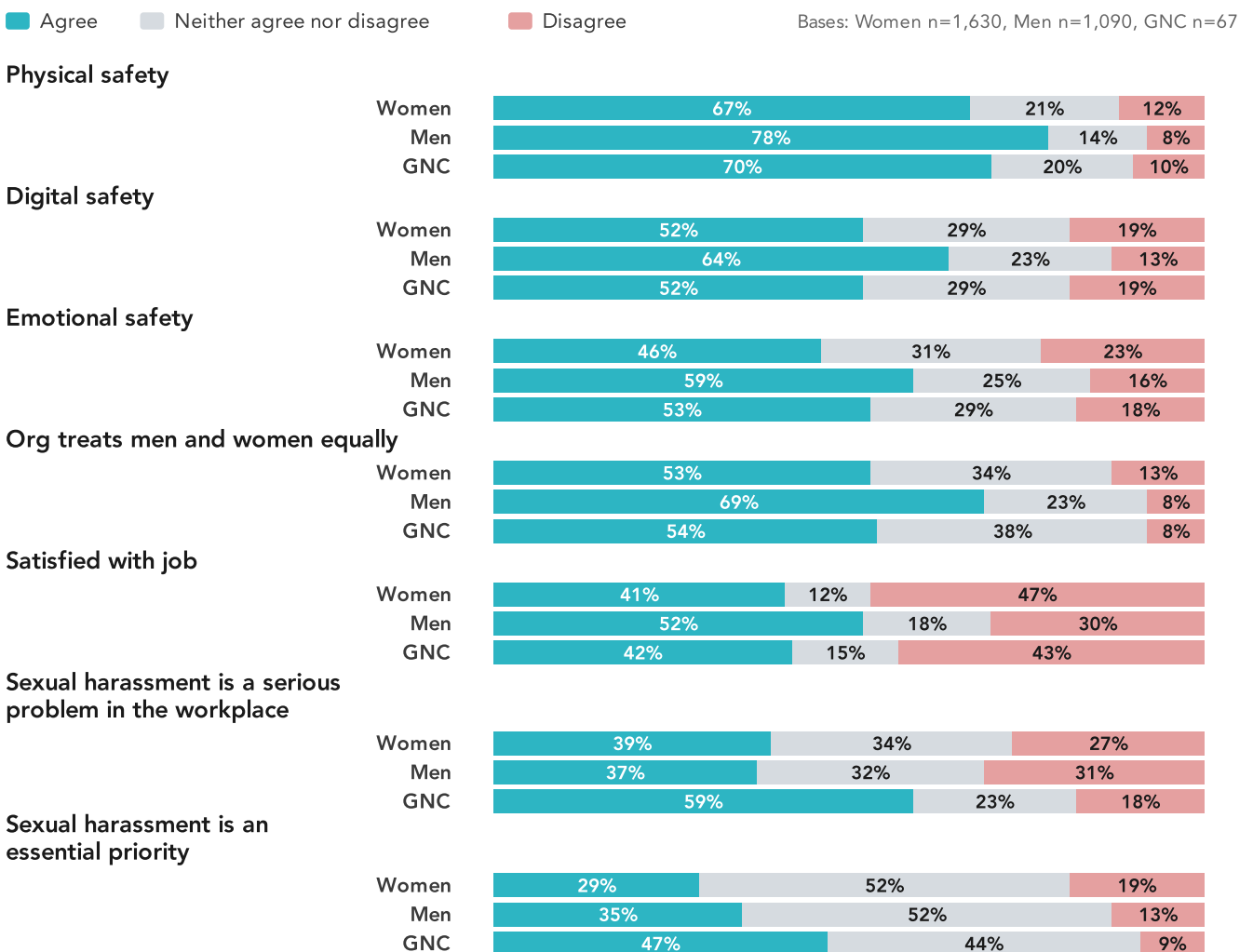


Perceptions

The survey explored how media workers perceive their workplace safety and culture, and asked respondents to rank their organisation’s commitment to addressing sexual harassment and supporting organisational change from the top down. It asked respondents to indicate their level of agreement with a series of statements, including whether they feel physically, digitally and emotionally safe at work, whether they feel their organisation treats men and women equally, and their overall level of job satisfaction.

Figure 9: Workplace perceptions by gender

Base: 1,630 women, 1,090 men, 67 gender non-conforming (GNC) respondents. All percentages rounded to the nearest whole number.



Overall, respondents’ perceptions were mixed. **Across all genders, 63% agreed that their employer treats men and women equally.** However, overall less than half of respondents reported feeling satisfied in their current role – ranging from 42% of women and 48% of GNC people to 52% of men (see Figure 9).

This may suggest that perceptions of fairness co-exist with gaps in how organisations support staff, as a key factor influencing overall job satisfaction. General perceptions of fairness may not fully capture everyday workplace experiences, including how issues such as harassment, safety, and equal opportunities are addressed in practice.

At the same time, only 39% of respondents consider sexual harassment to be a serious problem in their workplace, and just 32% believe that their workplace has the issue as an essential organisational priority to tackle.

Gender differences are evident across these variables. **Women consistently report lower levels of confidence in their organisations, expressing lower levels of satisfaction, belief in gender-equal treatment and belief that sexual harassment is prioritised at work.** These perceptions align with women’s increased likelihood of having encountered sexual harassment at work.

Perceptions of safety appear to mirror real sexual harassment occurrence among respondent groups (see Figure 10). Just under half of respondents did not agree with the statement that they feel emotionally safe at work (48%), with verbal sexual harassment affecting nearly the same proportion of people (45%). Similarly, the proportion of respondents who did not feel physically safe at work was lower at 28%, reflecting the lower frequency of actual physical sexual harassment (25%).

Figure 10: Perception vs reality

For each harassment type: % of respondents who report feeling safe at work alongside the % who report having experienced that type of harassment. Base: all respondents, excluding “I can’t remember”. All percentages rounded to the nearest whole number.



“Let’s keep breaking the silence on [sexual harassment at work].”
 Female print/online news executive aged 45–54, Rwanda

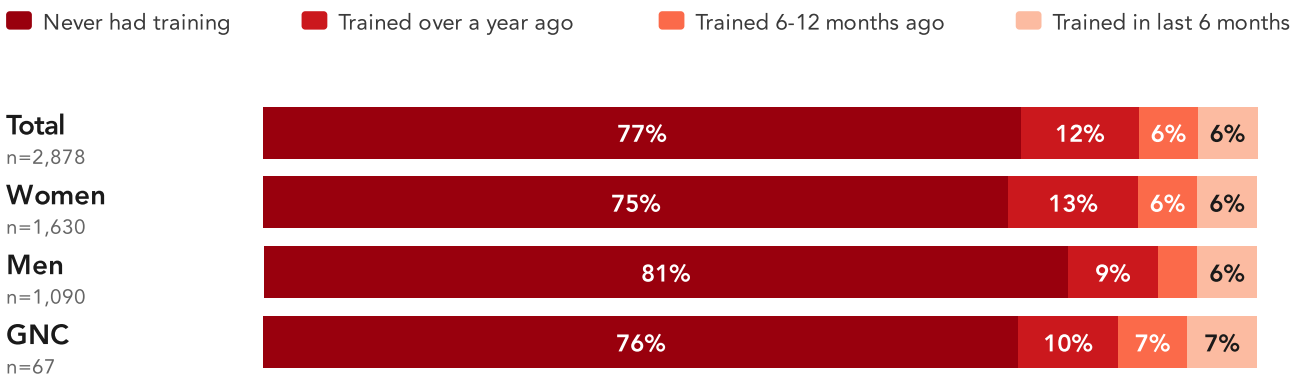
Training and Policy

The survey also considered the role of training and organisational policies in shaping experiences of sexual harassment in the workplace.

The data shows that access to anti-sexual harassment training remains limited among the 2025 global sample (see Figure 11). **Most respondents (77%) said they had never received training on this issue.** Given that 39% of respondents identified sexual harassment as a serious problem, this highlights a clear gap between employees’ perceptions around workplace sexual harassment and employers’ systems to address it, including policies and training.

Gender differences are also evident here. **Women and GNC respondents were more likely than men to say they had received training relating to sexual harassment** (each at 25%, compared with 19% for men), yet they reported higher levels of harassment and lower levels of perceived safety at work. This suggests an important training limitation – it may improve awareness and recognition of sexual harassment, but on its own is not enough to shift the structural conditions that shape workplace culture and underlying newsroom customs and norms.

Figure 11: Training status by gender
Base: all respondents, excluding “I can’t remember”.



“More could be done to equip the newsroom to [use] existing policies and have perpetrators held accountable.”
Male print media senior manager aged 35-44, Zimbabwe

In the survey countries, anti-sexual harassment training is being delivered through multiple routes, but not yet in a consistent or standardised way to reach all media organisations. Where training has been provided (see Figure 12), it is most commonly organised internally – as cited by 40% of respondents who had received training. A further 35% said they had been trained by an external organisation, while an additional 25% said they had been trained by WAN-IFRA WIN.

In 2020–2025 WAN-IFRA WIN delivered training to over 2,000 media professionals in 18 of the 21 surveyed countries to build their understanding of sexual harassment. This training covered what sexual harassment is and where it occurs, and how to prevent and address it both within and beyond the workplace. Sessions also provided practical guidance on reporting and managing incidents, alongside support in developing organisational policies, particularly for human resources and senior management teams. Where workplace sexual harassment policies existed, WAN-IFRA WIN offered additional support on how to effectively communicate these policies.

Respondents’ awareness of anti-sexual harassment policies in their workplace is also uneven.

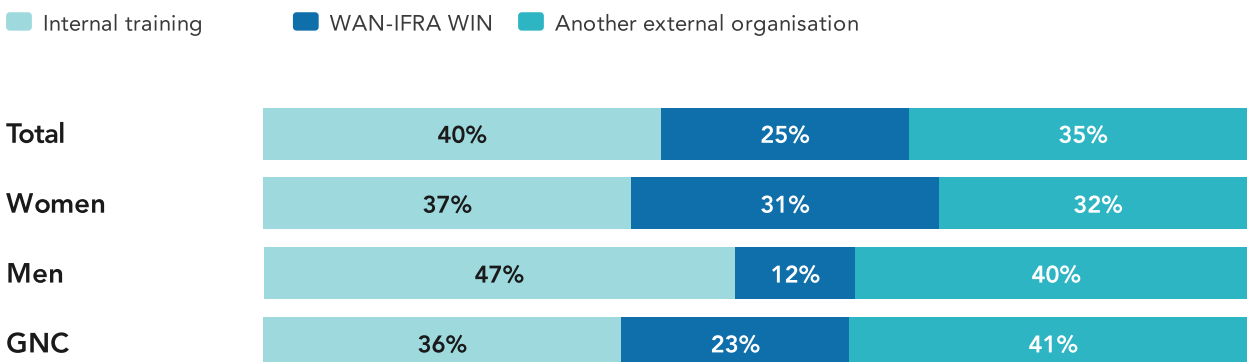
Overall, 37% of respondents said they had not heard of an anti-sexual harassment policy, while 45% were aware of one but had not received any training to understand it. Only 18% of respondents said they were both aware of such a policy and had received focused training. This suggests that even where policies exist, they are not consistently embedded in practice or matched by the necessary support for staff to understand and use them.

Men and GNC respondents were more likely than women to say they are aware of a policy but have received no training (cited by 53% of men and 52% of GNC respondents, versus 39% of women). And women were somewhat more likely than men to say they had both developed awareness and received thematic training (20% and 14%, respectively).

Overall, the findings show that workplace policies and training frameworks do exist in relation to sexual harassment but that their reach and efficacy remain limited. **Without stronger enforcement, clearer reporting pathways and wider organisational change, training alone is unlikely to produce workplaces that are free from sexual harassment.**⁹

Figure 12: Training provider by gender

Among respondents who received training, share by provider, shown as 100% stacked bars per gender. Base: respondents who reported having received training.



⁹ [Research shows](#) that standalone training programmes, however well-designed, fail to produce lasting behavioural change without parallel improvements to organisational reporting mechanisms, accountability measures and workplace culture. [Studies also find](#) that even when training may foster individual willingness to report sexual harassment, institutional reporting rates remain low, underlining the need to transform reporting systems. This becomes particularly challenging in other contexts not covered in the studies cited above, where conflict and displacement may further impact experiences of sexual harassment at work.

Recommendations

01 **Strengthen independent sexual harassment reporting mechanisms available to anyone in the media sector**

Lack of reporting mechanisms, and lack of trust in such mechanisms when they exist, are factors that stop media professionals from telling their employers about their experiences of workplace sexual harassment. Journalists' unions and media associations in particular can play a key role in offering independent sexual harassment reporting mechanisms and support services for survivors. Access to reporting channels and formal support must be made accessible to everyone in media organisations, including freelancers and short-term, project-based contracted workers.

02 **Advocate for mandatory sexual harassment policies and reporting mechanisms in all media workplaces**

Media regulators and non-governmental media associations can both play an important part in establishing and setting standards for workplace policies. This includes supporting the media industry to respond to new technologies and artificial intelligence (AI) that have opened up further space for sexual harassment and abuse, particularly against women and GNC individuals.

03 **Make the business case to media employers to take labour rights more seriously**

Establishing workplace rules that prioritise employees' wellbeing has demonstrable benefits to media employers. Tackling workplace sexual harassment will reduce an important cause of high staff turnover, career exits, and reputational and legal problems. And ensuring that women and employees from minority groups feel safe and supported at work will mean that they can be their authentic selves, allowing them the space for creativity and innovation. Just as importantly, this will support the development of media content that is relevant to a wider, more representative range of audiences.

04 **Provide more holistic support for sexual harassment survivors**

Many survey respondents said that their employers' response to a reported case of sexual harassment was limited to disciplining the perpetrator, showing that few workplaces have a [survivor-centric approach](#). Media workplaces should provide a range of services to sexual harassment survivors, including confidential reporting mechanisms, solidarity networks, psychosocial counselling, medical services where applicable, and independent legal assistance. Media organisations should also offer practical workplace adjustments and career support to workers who do not feel safe remaining in a role after experiencing or witnessing sexual harassment. Access to these support services should be separate from formal reporting and resolution mechanisms, so that survivors can seek help without necessarily triggering an investigation. While formal complaints and disciplinary processes are important for accountability, they should not govern access to care and recovery for survivors.

05 **Train more media organisations in tackling workplace sexual harassment**

Only a minority of respondents had ever received training on sexual harassment, and many had never even heard of such a thing. Unions and media associations in particular can also play a key role in this respect and more work is needed to inform the media sector about what sexual harassment is, its prevalence, and how to tackle it at work. Media organisations need to recognise that sexual harassment disproportionately affects women and requires specific responses. These include clear rules on when staff should disengage from harassers, training on how to keep personal social accounts private, and active support so that individuals do not have to manage this experience alone. Organisations also need to recognise that online abuse can become in-person abuse so the issue needs to be taken seriously from the outset. Training should be provided across the media sector and across all organisational levels, not just targeted at journalists.

06 **Ensure that workplace anti-sexual harassment training equips survivors to understand and exercise their rights**

Simply raising awareness of sexual harassment is not enough – media staff must be equipped to use their rights more effectively. Workplace training must cover legal frameworks, reporting mechanisms, digital hygiene, and workplace behaviours that relate to the everyday work of media professionals.

07 **Deliver active bystander training, either separately or as part of workplace harassment training**

Findings showed that most respondents who had witnessed sexual harassment at work did not report it to their employer. There is an opportunity to shift culture by supporting people to understand the impact and benefit of reporting sexual harassment to organisations – and to help them understand when “grey zone behaviours” such as banter and informal power imbalances cross a line. In addition, media professionals would benefit from understanding how to support colleagues affected by sexual harassment through formal and informal mechanisms, playing an active role in building a better and more inclusive workplace culture. Training should equip editors, producers and managers with the skills and confidence to intervene and manage their staff’s behaviour on set or in the newsroom.

08 **Engage men as potential allies of sexual harassment survivors**

Although men respondents were less likely to say that sexual harassment was a serious problem in their workplace, 32% said they viewed it as either a serious or moderate issue – suggesting they believe their organisation needs to do more. Training and policies should include men as potential survivors as well as allies, especially in male-dominated media environments.

09

Recognise male and gender non-conforming survivors of workplace sexual harassment

Respondents often framed sexual harassment as a women's issue, yet this study finds that an important minority of men and gender non-conforming media professionals face sexual harassment in the workplace. Across the sector and in academia, more research is needed into this issue, also exploring whether workplace responses and support for sexual harassment survivors may consider different gender dynamics when tackling harassment against men and gender non-conforming individuals – in particular, addressing possible misconceptions and cultural taboos that keep male and gender non-conforming survivors from speaking up.

10

Engage media leaders through mentoring on leading communication, workplace culture and inclusion

Surveyed senior and top managers took the issue of sexual harassment less seriously on average than more junior staff, indicating that media leaders are not fully equipped to improve workplace cultures around this issue. In designing a broad, preventive approach in relation to sexual harassment, media organisations need to proactively identify high-risk roles, settings and power dynamics, and design safeguards into them. This requires acknowledging the systemic nature of workplace sexual harassment and moving beyond considering cases individually as they arise. It will involve establishing regular, scenario-based training, management accountability and media leaders visibly role modelling and championing appropriate workplace behaviours, using their influence to set the standards for positive culture change in the newsroom.