

Safety of Journalists Country Report

Colombia

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Report Authors

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Colombia's position in the Global Index on Journalists' Safety reflects a persistent context of risk and structural limitations for media professionals. Despite formal protections, violence against journalists remains entrenched—particularly in regions marked by conflict and organized crime. According to the Fundación para la Libertad de Prensa (FLIP), Colombia saw at least 530 attacks on journalists in 2023, including 69 perpetrated by illegal armed groups, such as paramilitary remnants, guerrilla dissidents, and drug trafficking organizations. These aggressions include threats, intimidation, and forced displacement, contributing to a climate of fear that encourages self-censorship. Such conditions deeply affect journalists' mental health and contribute to the country's middling psychological safety score. While murders have declined compared to previous decades, Colombia remains one of Latin America's most dangerous countries for journalists, a trend echoed in Reporters Without Borders' 2024 Press Freedom Index, where the country ranks 119th out of 180 nations. Compounding these risks are political and economic pressures that further erode journalistic autonomy. Public officials remain the principal source of attacks on the press, responsible for 121 of the 530 recorded incidents in 2023, including verbal attacks, legal harassment, and obstruction of access to public information. Even high-ranking politicians have stigmatized critical journalists, undermining trust in the press and emboldening hostility from other sectors (FLIP, 2023). Economically, Colombia's low financial safety score reflects structural precarity: many journalists work under unstable contracts or freelance arrangements, facing low pay and scarce institutional support. This vulnerability makes them more susceptible to coercion and self-censorship. Moreover, the concentration of media ownership exacerbates the issue. Three conglomerates—Organización Ardila Lülle, Grupo Santo Domingo, and Organización Luis Carlos Sarmiento Angulo—control over 57% of the country's media outlets, a structure that limits editorial independence and facilitates alignment between media agendas and elite political or economic interests. This convergence of violent, political, and structural pressures helps explain why Colombia's overall safety environment for journalists remains deeply compromised, despite improvements in some technical indicators.

Safety Index Scores

Overall Safety Score

63.59

Safety Dimensions

Physical Safety

59.4

Psychological Safety

69.21

Digital Safety

80.84

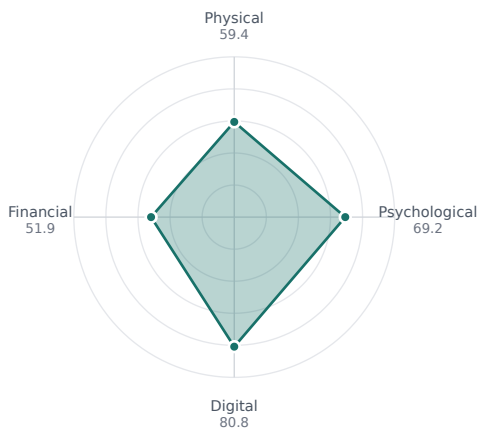
Financial Safety

51.85

Overview

The Safety of Journalists Index provides a comprehensive measurement of journalist safety across four dimensions. The charts below show how Colombia performs across each dimension and highlight any gender-based disparities.

Safety Dimensions Overview



Safety Dimensions

This radar chart displays how the country performs across all four safety dimensions, revealing areas of strength and concern.

Gender Safety Gap by Dimension



Gender Safety Gap

This comparison highlights differences in safety experiences between male and female journalists, revealing potential gender-based disparities.

Physical Safety

The physical dimension carries **50% weight in the safety index**.

21

Journalist Killings

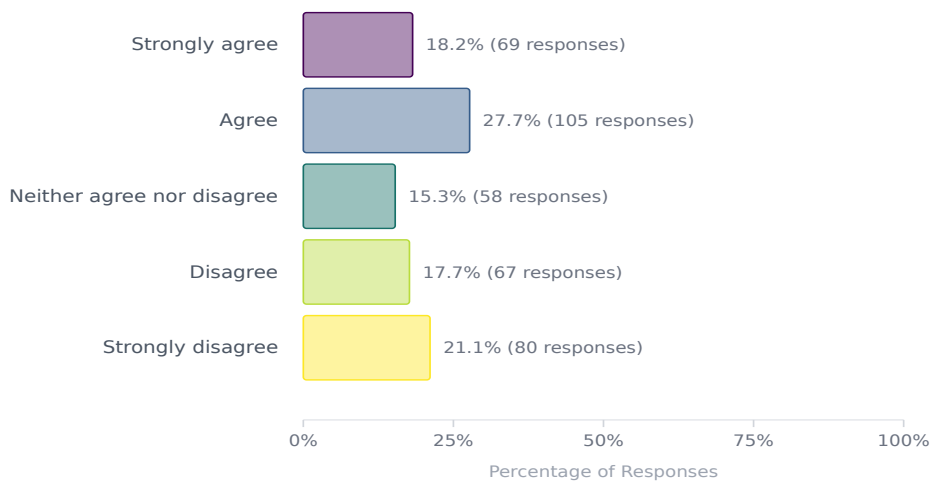
2016-2024

This figure represents the total number of journalist killings in Colombia between 2016 and 2024.

Note: This indicator carries 35% of the weight within the physical dimension of the Safety Index, making it the most significant factor in this category.

Data sourced from UNESCO Observatory of Killed Journalists.

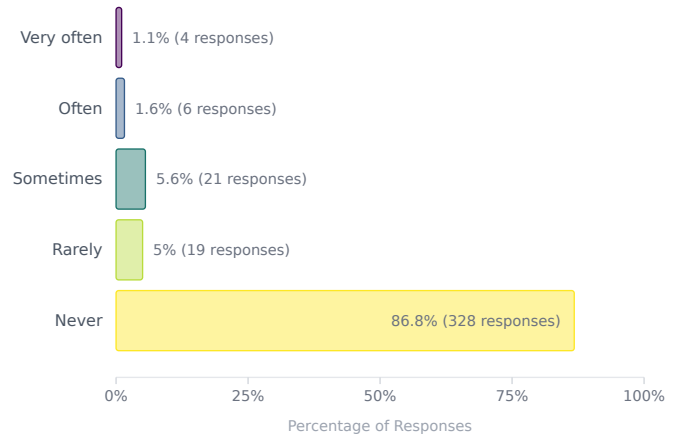
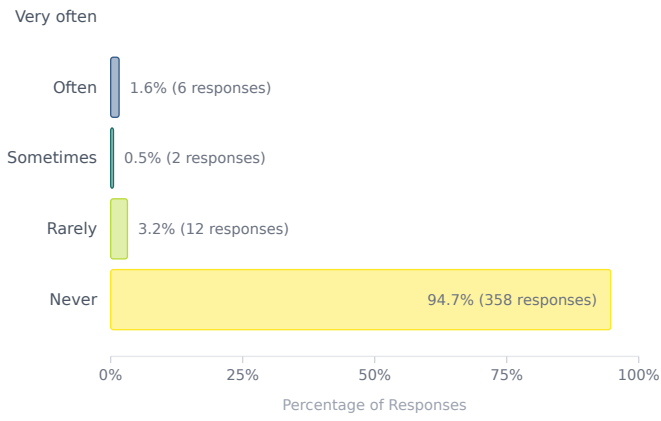
Responses to: "I am concerned about my physical wellbeing" (20% weight in physical dimension)



Responses to: "In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?"

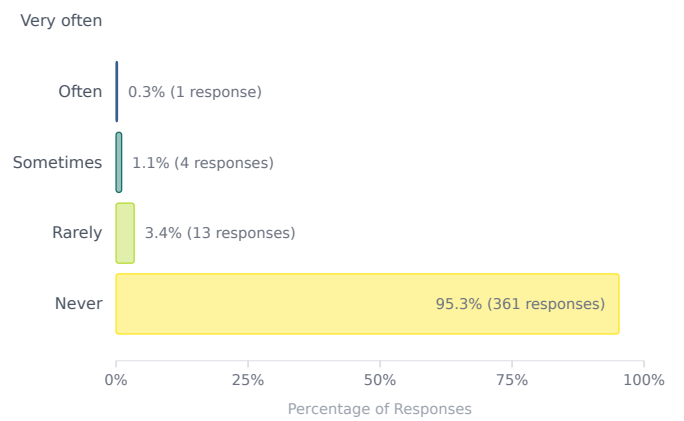
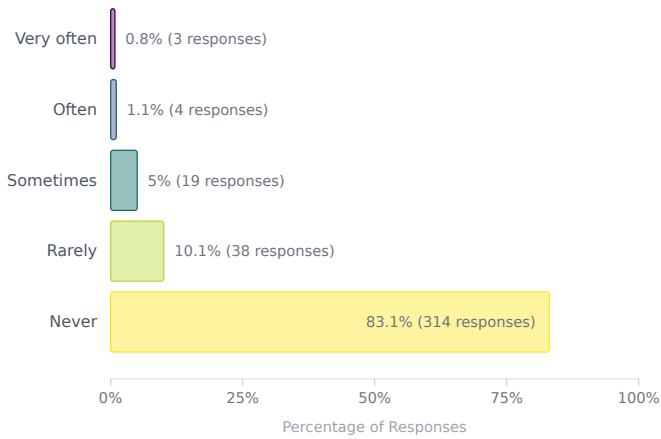
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment (15% weight in physical dimension)

Sexual assault or sexual harassment (15% weight in physical dimension)



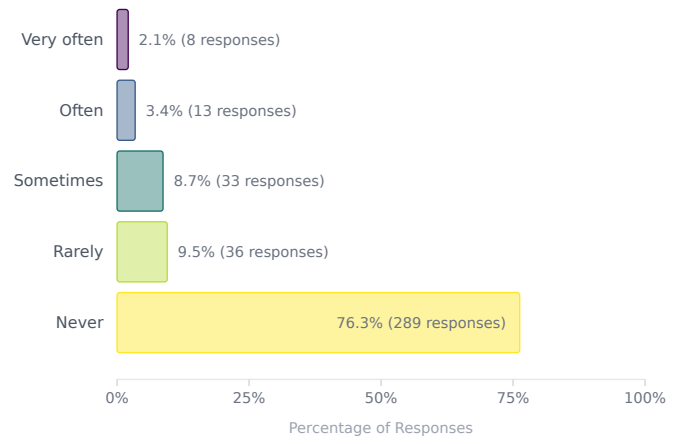
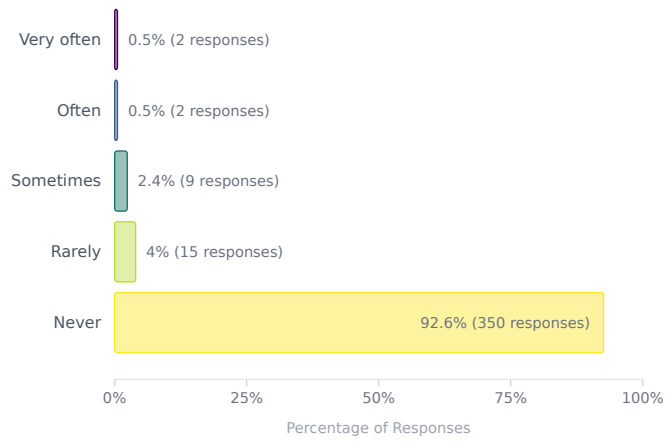
Other physical attacks (15% weight in physical dimension)

Abductions (did not contribute to calculation)



Office raids or seizures or damage of equipment (did not contribute to calculation)

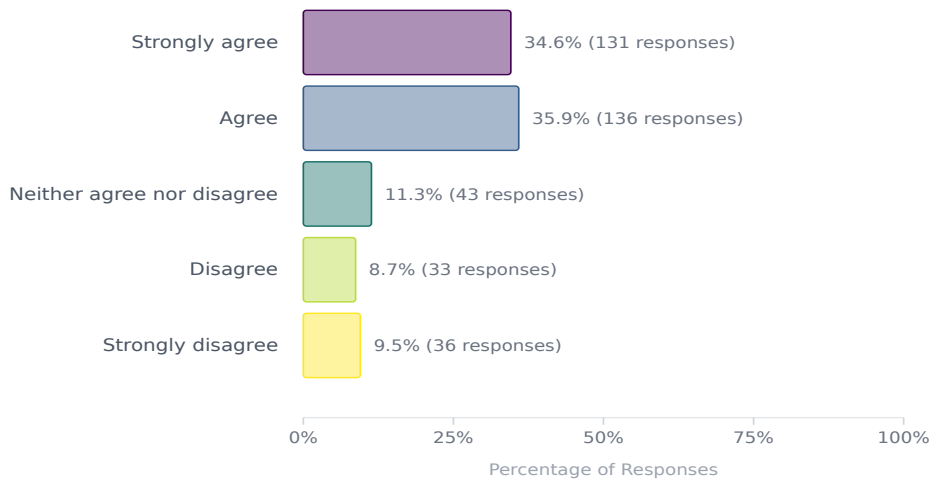
Being required to work in an environment where COVID-19 had easily spread (did not contribute to calculation)



Psychological Safety

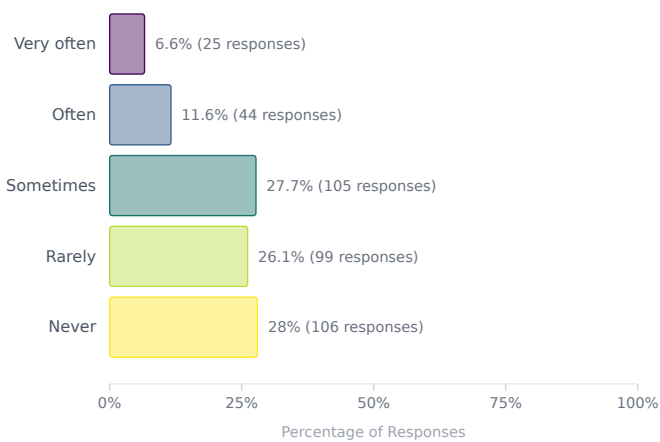
The psychological dimension carries **25% weight in the safety index**.

Responses to: "I am concerned about my emotional wellbeing" (20% weight in psychological dimension)

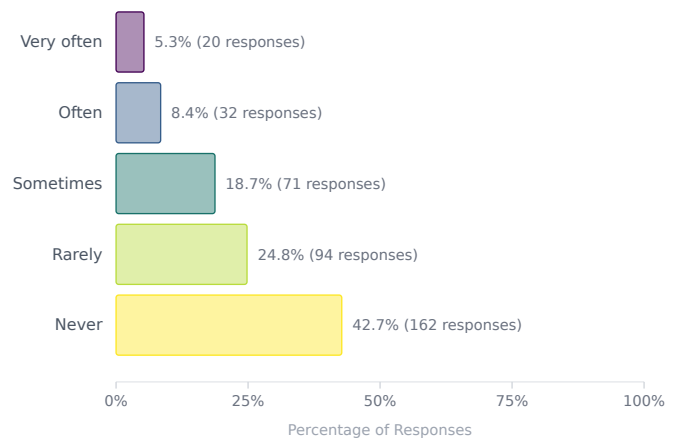


Responses to: "In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?"

Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you (16% weight in psychological dimension)



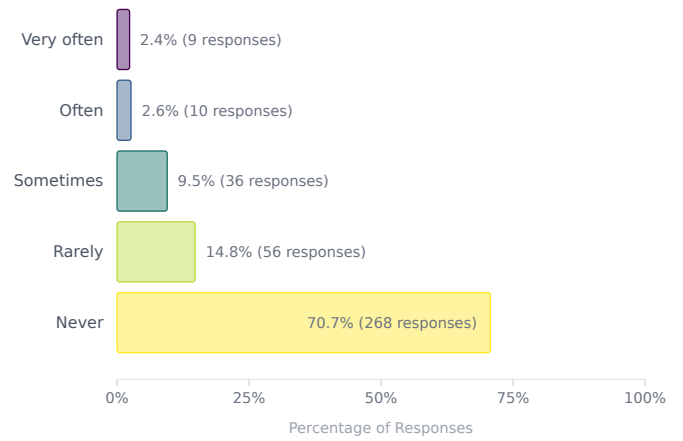
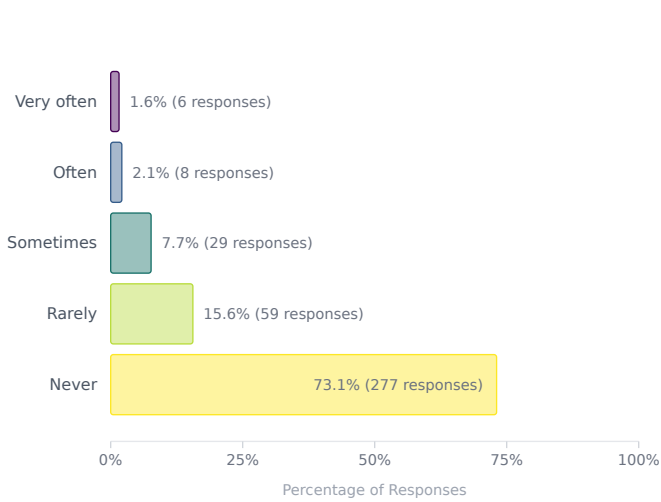
Public discrediting of your work (16% weight in psychological dimension)



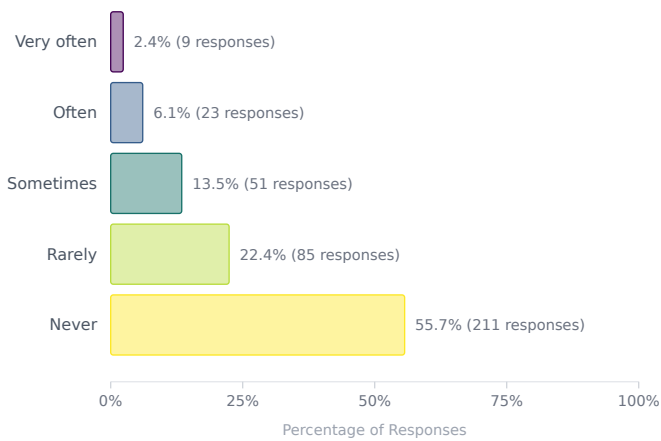
Legal actions against you because of your work (16% weight in psychological dimension)

Stalking (16% weight in psychological dimension)

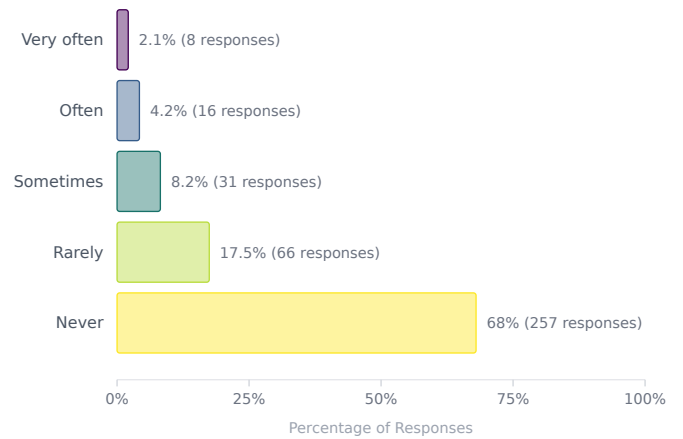
dimension)



Other threats or intimidation directed at you (16% weight in psychological dimension)

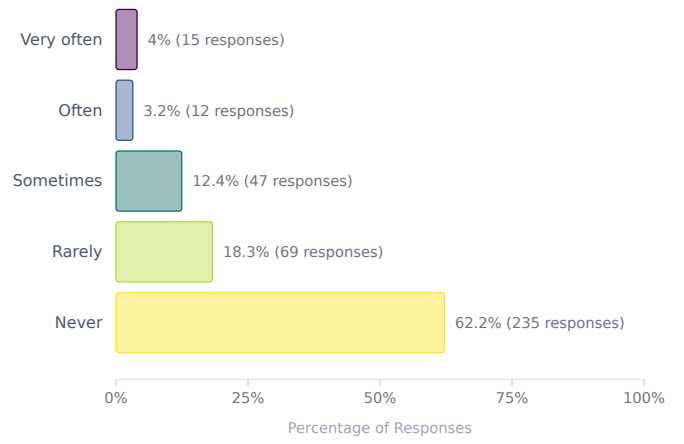
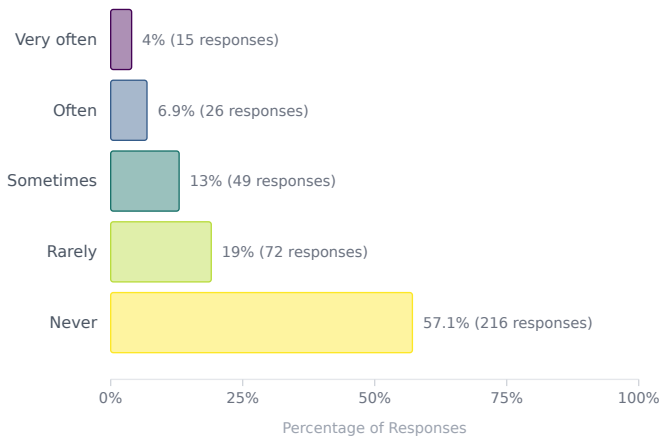


Coercion (did not contribute to calculation)

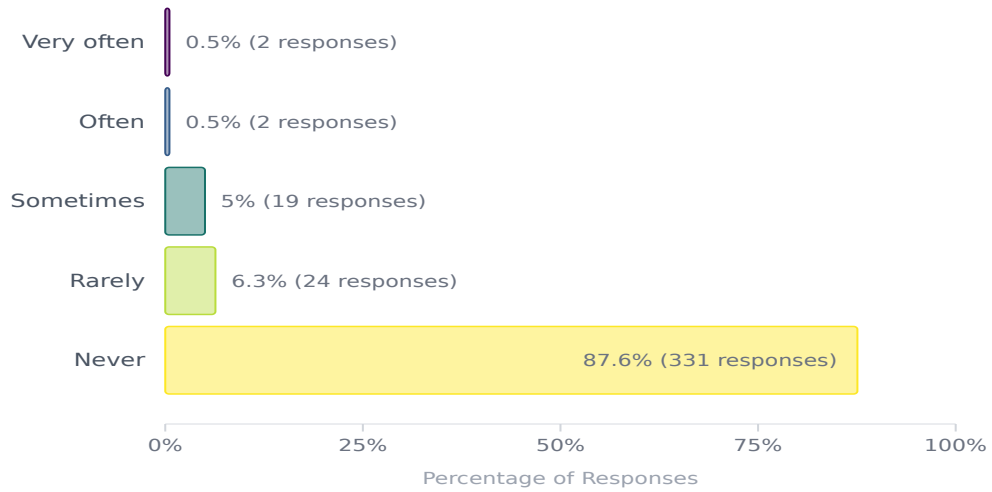


Questioning of your personal morality (did not contribute to calculation)

Workplace bullying (did not contribute to calculation)



Intimidation that targets your family or close associates (did not contribute to calculation)

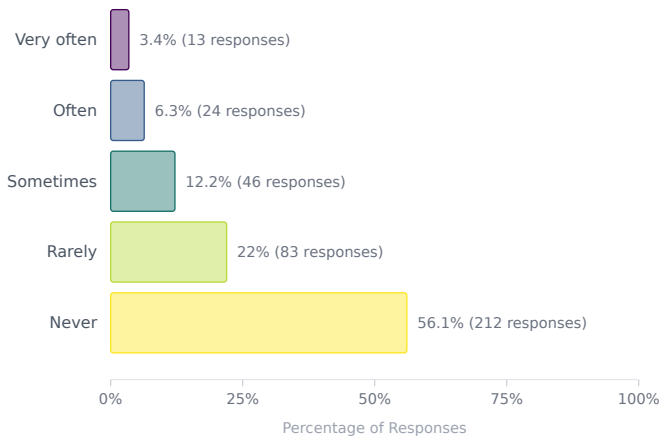


Digital Safety

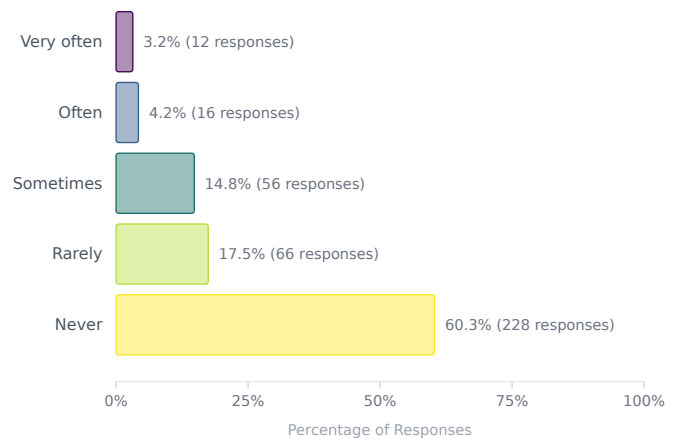
The digital dimension carries **12.5% weight in the safety index.**

Responses to: "In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?"

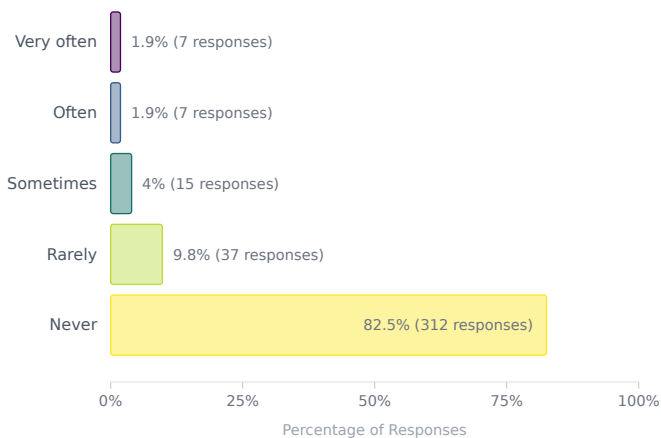
Surveillance (50% weight in digital dimension)



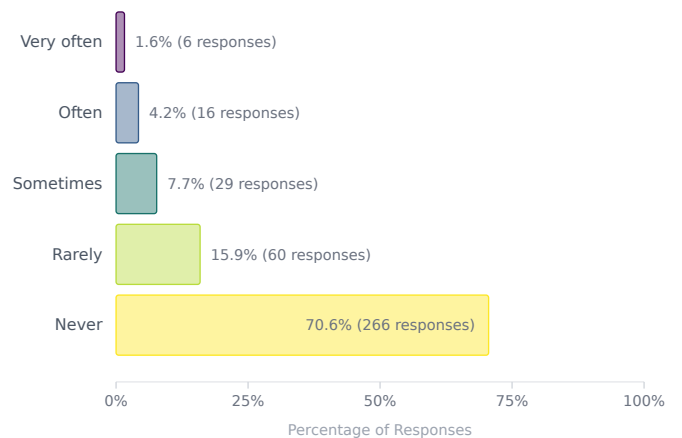
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites (50% weight in digital dimension)



Others using your byline for fabricated or manipulated stories (did not contribute to calculation)



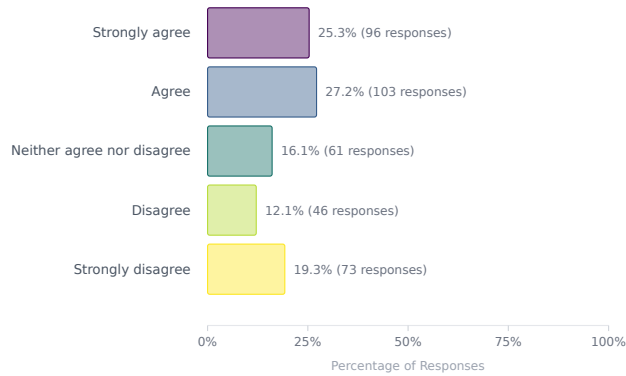
Others disseminating your personal information (did not contribute to calculation)



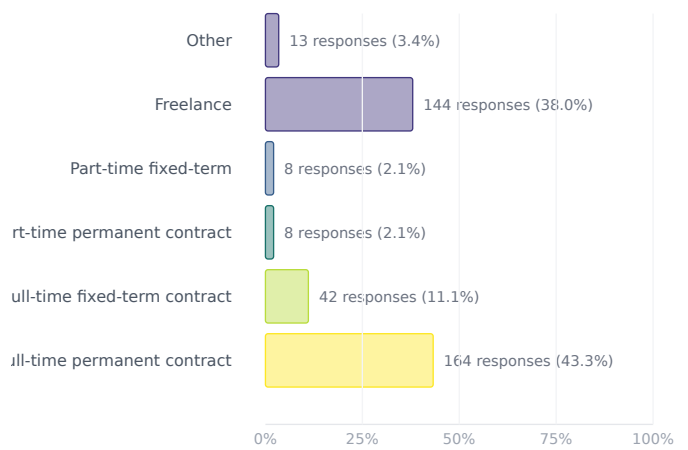
Financial Safety

The financial dimension carries **12.5% weight in the safety index.**

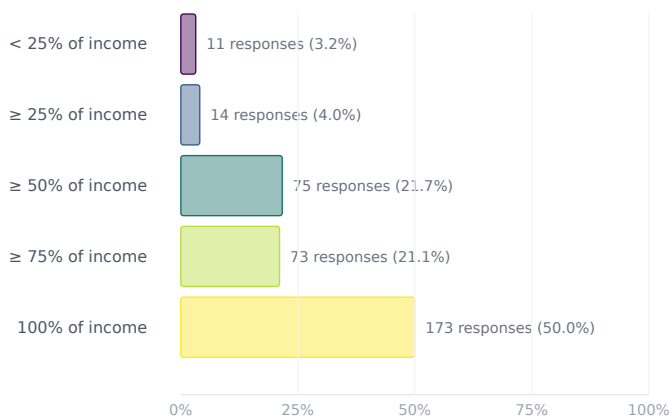
Responses to: "I am worried about losing my job in journalism within the next 12 months" (20% weight in financial dimension)



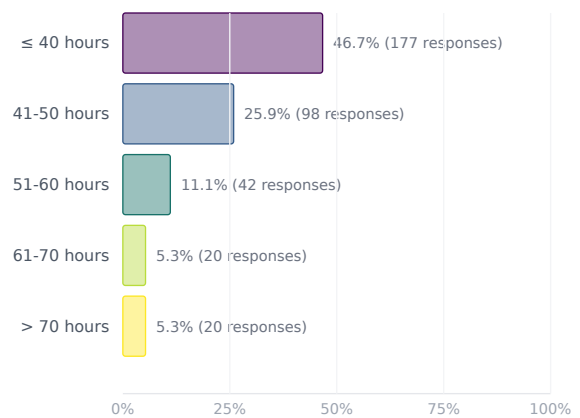
Responses to: "Which of the following categories best describes your current working situation as a journalist?" (20% weight in financial dimension)



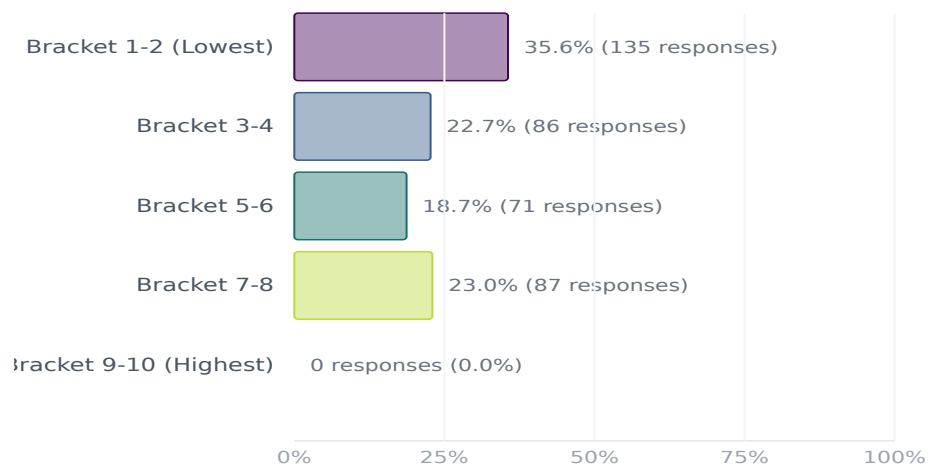
Responses to "Approximately what percentage of your overall work-related income comes from your work as a journalist?" (20% weight in financial dimension)



Responses to: "How many hours a week on average do you work as a journalist?" (20% weight in financial dimension)



Responses to: "In which of the following categories does your salary as a journalist fall?" (20% weight in financial dimension)



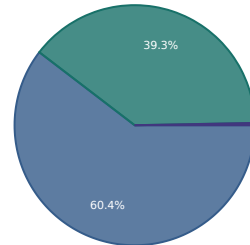
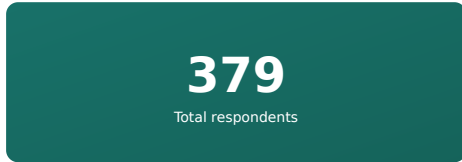
Options are given on a 10-point scale specific to each country.

Demographics

This section contains demographic information about survey respondents from Colombia.

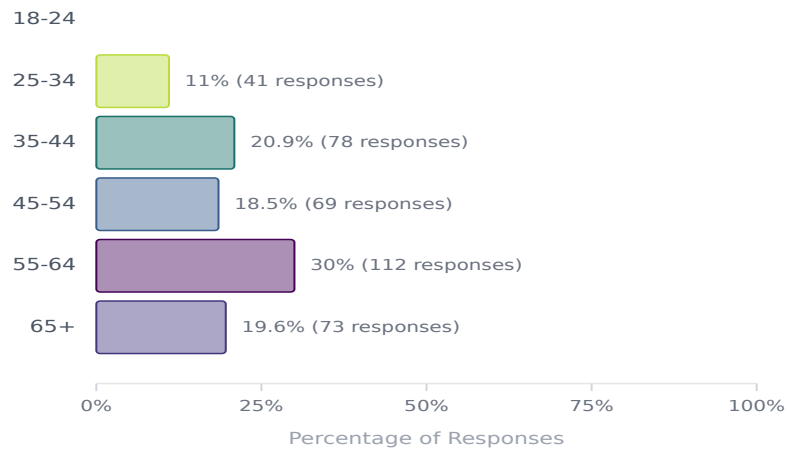
Gender Breakdown of Respondents

Survey Participation

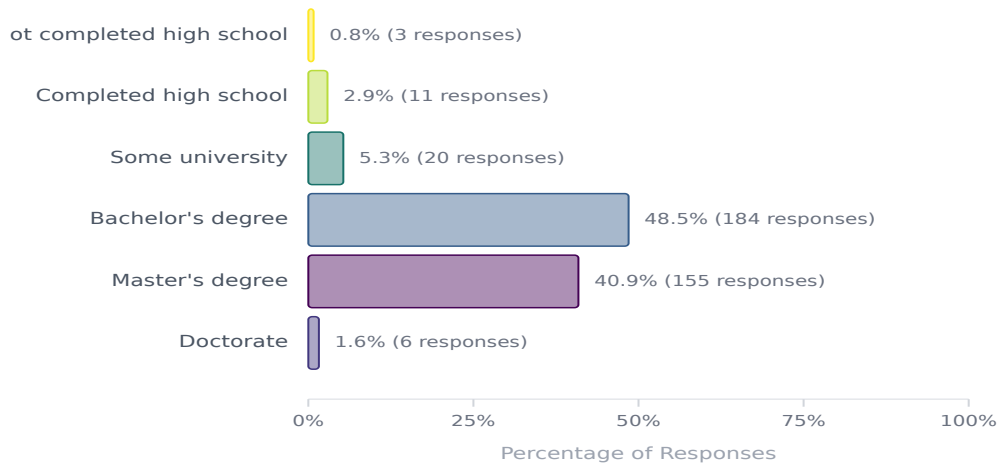


Male (229, 60.4%) Female (149, 39.3%) Other (1, 0.3%)

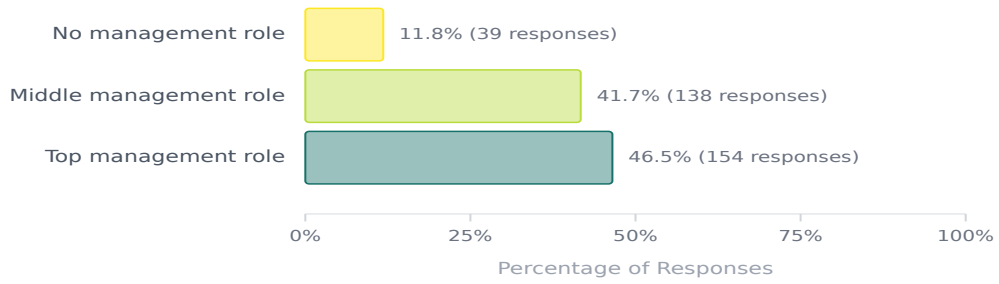
Age Distribution of Respondents



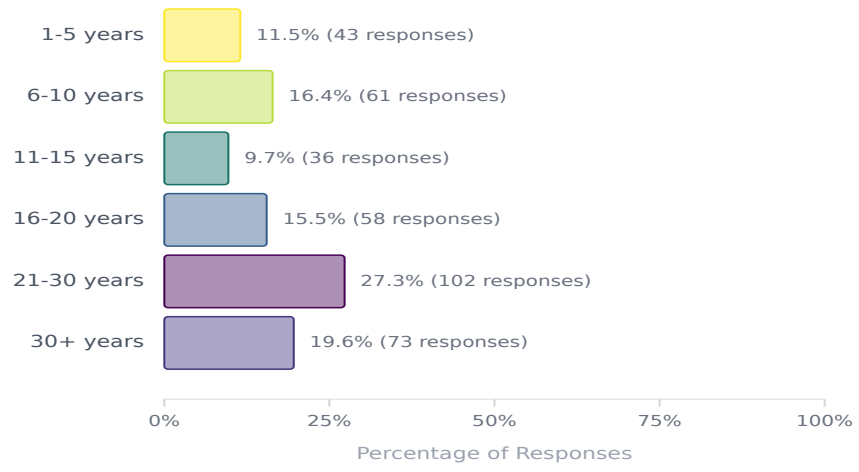
Education Level of Respondents



Workplace Position of Respondents



Years of Experience as Journalist



For more detailed information about the methodology and complete findings, please visit the full country page at: <https://safetyofjournalists.org/index/country/colombia>

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