

Country overview

# Egypt

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Egypt **04**

---

Context **05**

---

The Survey **06**

---

Experience of Sexual Harassment **07**

---

Reporting and Action **08**

---

# 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

# Egypt

This report is part of a 2025 international study on sexual harassment in media workplaces<sup>1</sup>, 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.

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 earlier research conducted in 2020 that identified persistent gaps in evidence on sexual harassment in media workplaces.

The survey across newsrooms in Egypt shows that overall rates of sexual harassment among respondents stands at 33%, staying constant with the rate of 36% in 2020. The current prevalence rate sits close to the Arab regional average (31%).<sup>2</sup>

Women media professionals in the country have apparently experienced verbal, online and physical harassment at much higher rates than men.

<sup>1</sup>This 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 for specific types of sexual harassment, see the [methodology page](#).

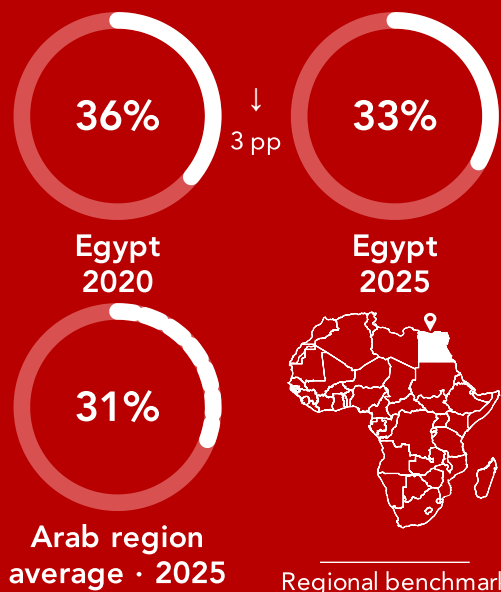
<sup>2</sup>The prevalence of sexual harassment for a given country/region is calculated as the mean average of the percentage of respondents from that location who reported having ever experienced verbal harassment, online harassment, physical harassment and/or rape while at work.

”

*“We have no policies against sexual harassment, and the editor-in-chief does not acknowledge the existence of sexual harassment in the journalistic community.”*

Female senior print journalist aged 35–44

## Overall rates of sexual harassment in newsrooms



# Context

Since 2020 a series of high-profile cases, legal reforms and digital activism moments have highlighted the issue of sexual harassment in the media and in public life in Egypt.

In 2020 a young student's [digital whistleblowing](#) against serial sexual predator Ahmed Bassam Zaki (then enrolled at the American University in Cairo) became widely recognised as the catalyst for Egypt's #MeToo movement. [Zaki's arrest](#) encouraged sexual harassment survivors across multiple sectors, including the media, to speak up.

Also in 2020, multiple women journalists publicly accused a journalist and trainer of sexual harassment and assault. Although he denied the allegations, media organisations including [ARIJ](#) and [Daraj](#) stopped working with him. Women journalists also issued collective demands to the Journalists' Syndicate. While no public criminal case outcome was reported, the incident marked the first wave of #MeToo testimonies within Arab media training circles, and prompted internal policy reviews and syndicate statements condemning sexual harassment.

Other media sexual harassment cases attracted public attention, some of which were referred to the [National Council for Women](#) that receives complaints concerned with women's rights and freedom violations.

The risks faced by women journalists were underscored by the case of a woman journalist who reported experiencing [sexual abuse from prison officers in 2020–2021](#) while detained on charges related to spreading false information and misuse of social media. Her case was highlighted by international advocacy organisations as evidence of the broader vulnerabilities faced by women journalists in Egypt.

From a legislative perspective, the Egyptian parliament passed [amendments to the Criminal Procedure Code](#) in 2020 to guarantee anonymity for survivors of sexual harassment and assault during court proceedings, so as to encourage more women to come forward. Further amendments to the Penal Code ratified in 2021 [upgraded sexual harassment to a felony](#), with longer prison sentences and higher fines.

[Egypt's 2025 Labour Law No. 14](#) marked an important shift by explicitly defining workplace harassment and bullying across sectors, including the media. As of early 2026, further labour law reforms are expected to provide clearer legal grounds for employees to seek redress.



*"It is important to conduct training for media leaders regarding anti-[sexual] harassment policies."*

Female senior print editor aged 45–54

# The survey

A total of 220 media professionals from Egypt took part in the survey<sup>3</sup> through an online questionnaire distributed among WAN-IFRA WIN and BBC Media Action networks. Respondents comprised 40 men, 174 women, 2 gender non-conforming people and 4 respondents who preferred to self-describe their gender identity.<sup>4</sup>

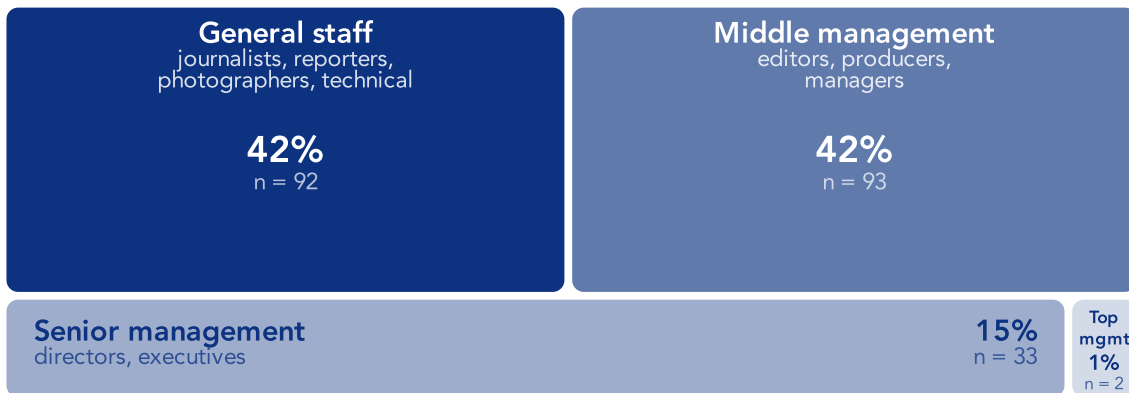
## Figure 1: Respondent demographics

All percentages rounded to the nearest whole number

### By gender identity



### By job level



<sup>3</sup>This 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](#).

<sup>4</sup>Totals include gender non-conforming individuals and those who prefer to self-describe their gender identity. Data is not disaggregated for these people at country level. To explore trends for these groups, please refer to the relevant regional or global report.

# Experience of Sexual Harassment

The 2025 survey results show that women media professionals in Egypt report experiencing verbal, online and physical sexual harassment at higher rates than their male colleagues (see Figure 2).

When it comes to **verbal sexual harassment**, women are over three times more likely to experience it than men. Over half (56%) of women respondents have faced at least one incident of this type of harassment at work, and 21% said they have experienced it five or more times.

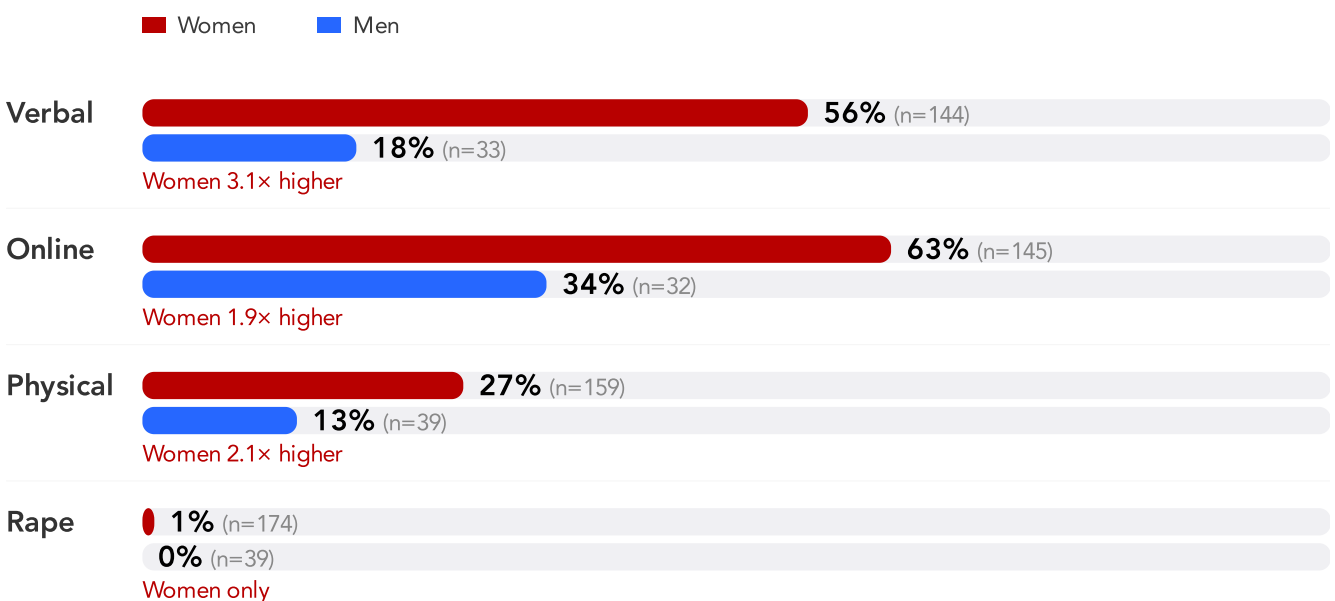
**Physical sexual harassment** is less prevalent overall but still reported by over a quarter of women. Women media professionals in Egypt are more than twice as likely as their male colleagues to have experienced this form of harassment (27% compared with 13%, respectively).

**Online sexual harassment** is the most prevalent form of workplace sexual harassment recorded by respondents, experienced by 63% of women and 34% of men.

The survey suggests that **rape** in media workplaces in Egypt is infrequent – reported by 1% of women respondents and no men.

**Figure 2: Experience by type of sexual harassment and gender**

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



# Reporting and Action

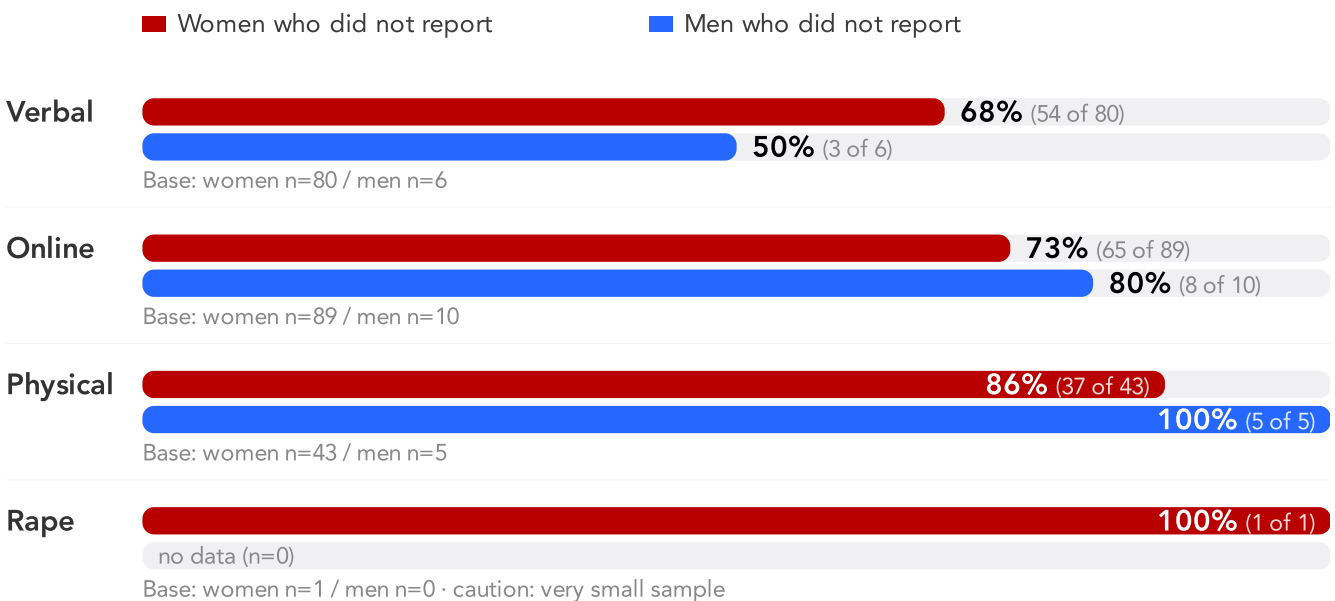
The survey asked respondents who indicated they had experienced sexual harassment at work whether they reported the incident to their organisation. In such cases, the survey asked follow-up questions to assess whether their employers had taken any action as a result.

The majority of both men and women respondents who faced **verbal sexual harassment** at work did not report it to their employer, with only three men and 26 women having done so (see Figure 3). The biggest obstacle to speaking up was the lack of reporting mechanisms, followed by thinking the sexual harassment they had experienced was not a big deal.

When it comes to **online sexual harassment**, nearly three-quarters of both men and women did not report it to their employers. Their reasons for not doing so were varied, especially for women. The most commonly cited reason was not thinking that their experience was a big deal, or that there were no reporting mechanisms in place.

**Figure 3: Reporting rates by type of sexual harassment**

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



Organisations did not take any action in response to reported online sexual harassment in 46% of cases (10 out of 22, see Figure 4). The sample is limited due to survivors’ hesitance to take the cases to their employers, but the most common actions taken by media organisations were to warn the perpetrator and to complain to another body.

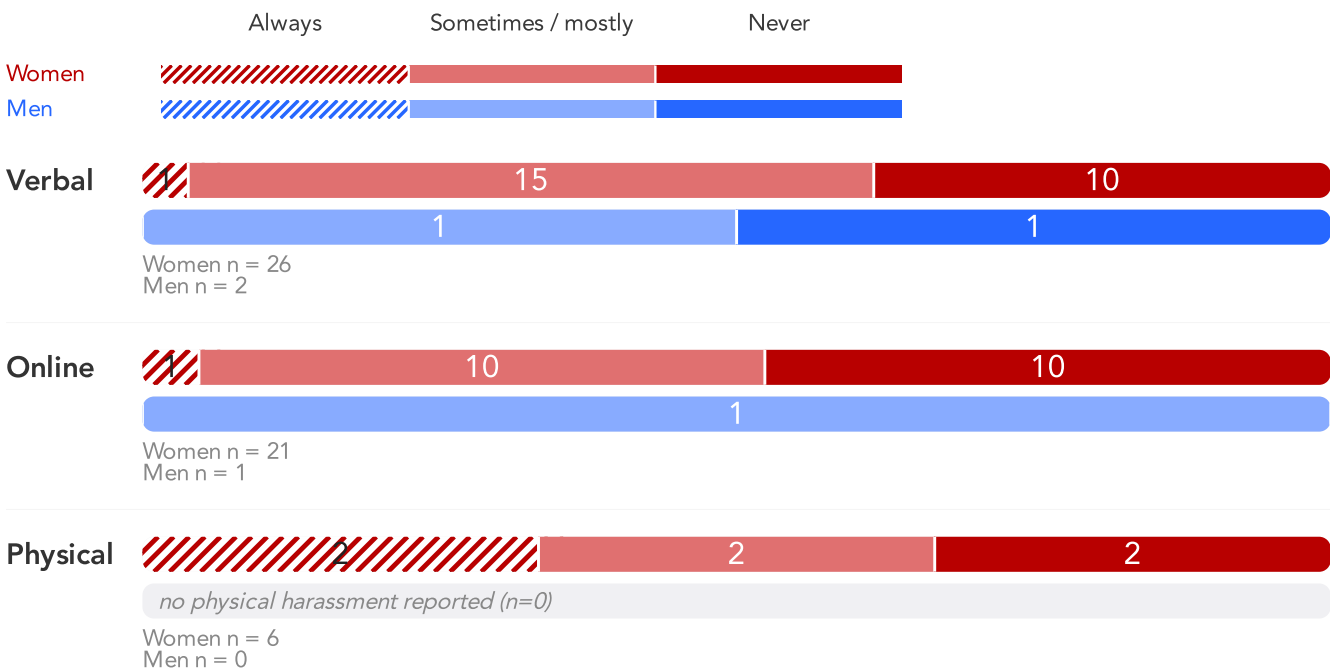
Almost all of the respondents who had faced **physical sexual harassment** did not report at work – only six women and no men out of 48

respondents. Primary reasons for not recording the incidents include a lack of reporting mechanisms (cited in 18 cases) and a belief that their organisation would not believe them (cited in 11 cases). Organisations took action in four out of these six reported cases, including firing and suspending perpetrators.

Experiences of **rape**, and officially reporting it at work, were extremely rare among the survey sample.

**Figure 4: Action taken by organisations on reported sexual harassment**

Base: those who reported harassment and answered the action question (excluding "I can't remember").



*“This is the first time that I am learning that training sessions to deal with [sexual] harassment in newsrooms exist.”*

**Female print journalist aged 35–44**