

Country overview

# Palestine

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# 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.

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# Palestine

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

Results from Palestinian media professionals show that the prevalence of sexual harassment in the workplace remained relatively unchanged between 2020 and 2025, with a slight increase from 22% to 26%.<sup>2</sup>

Palestine's incidence rates are lower than the Arab regional averages across all types of sexual harassment and abuse except rape. Results suggest that online sexual harassment is the most pervasive type overall, although women respondents are more than twice as likely as men to have experienced this in the course of their work.

<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](#).

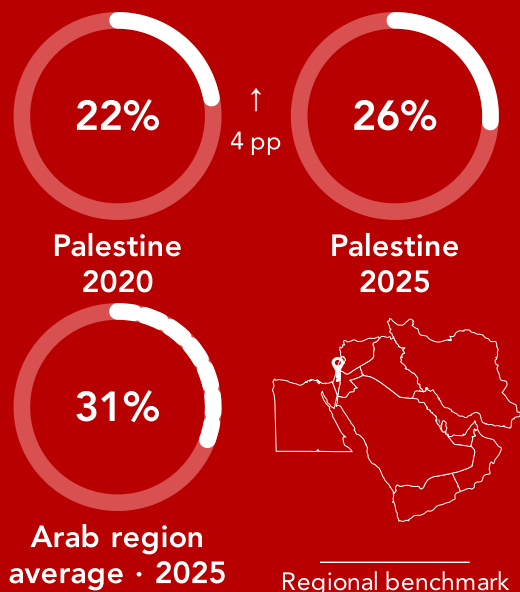
<sup>2</sup>The prevalence of sexual harassment for a given country/region is calculated as the mean average of the percentage of respondents from that location who reported having ever experienced verbal harassment, online harassment, physical harassment and/or rape while at work.

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*“There is a lack of awareness among female journalists regarding mechanisms for dealing with sexual harassment, and there is a need to build their capacities in this area.”*

**Female senior multimedia manager aged 45–54**

## Overall rates of sexual harassment in newsrooms



# Context

**Media work in Palestine<sup>3</sup> takes place against a backdrop of prolonged war, famine and displacement.**

[Almost 90% of Gazans](#) have been displaced as of 2025 – and millions of Palestinians live abroad as refugees. The hardships associated with the Israeli occupation have an impact on all aspects of life and [disproportionately affect women and girls](#).

Acute insecurity, destroyed infrastructure and disruption make the physical safety of journalists a constant concern. Since 2023, large-scale destruction in the Israel-Gaza war has significantly increased risks for Palestinian reporters. At least [207 journalists and media workers](#) have been killed in Gaza, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists. In 2025 Reporters Without Borders named the Gaza Strip as the world's [most dangerous location](#) to work as a journalist, featuring alleged surveillance, targeting and threats and even risks to life. Following the October 2025 ceasefire, media freedoms have remained constrained, notably through a [ban on independent media access](#) to the Gaza Strip. In this context, issues like sexual harassment may be deprioritised and existing gendered vulnerabilities are compounded.

The legal system in Palestine remains fragmented, comprising [a mix of British, Jordanian, Egyptian, Ottoman and Palestinian laws](#) alongside Israeli military orders. Two rival governing bodies operating from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip make it impossible to implement unified labour standards and protections across Palestinian territories, including in relation to sexual harassment.

Chapter 7 of [Palestinian Labour Law No. 7 \(2000\)](#), applicable in both the West Bank and Gaza Strip, aims to regulate women's work, prohibiting gender-based discrimination at work and limiting women's access to some hazardous professions. Article 305 of the Jordanian Penal Code, which applies in the West Bank, criminalises unwanted sexual conduct in public spaces. However, in a review of the legal framework the [EuroMed Feminist Initiative - Regional Civil Society Observatory on Violence against Women and Girls \(EFI-RCSO\)](#) has concluded that there is no comprehensive legislation in place to address gender-based violence.

The [Ministry of Women's Affairs](#), established in 2003, aims to ensure that women's specific needs are considered in policy and programming. However, implementation has faced severe challenges. Support services for sexual harassment survivors remain limited. The National Referral System for Women Victims of Violence (Takamol) has provided shelter as well as legal, health and social services since 2013, but the United Nations' Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia highlights the occupation's [severe limitation](#) on this and other resources' operational capacity and funding. Non-governmental organisations like the [AISHA Association for Woman and Child Protection in Gaza](#) also work to combat gender-based violence and harassment, but operate under severely constrained conditions.

<sup>3</sup>Also known as the Palestinian Territories. In this report we use Palestine as a country label for consistency with previous surveys.

# The survey

Despite the sustained conflict, 114 media professionals from Palestine took part in the survey<sup>4</sup> through an online questionnaire distributed among WAN-IFRA WIN and BBC Media Action networks. Respondents comprised 84 women, 26 men, 3 gender non-conforming people and 1 individual who preferred to self-describe their gender identity (see Figure 1).<sup>5</sup>

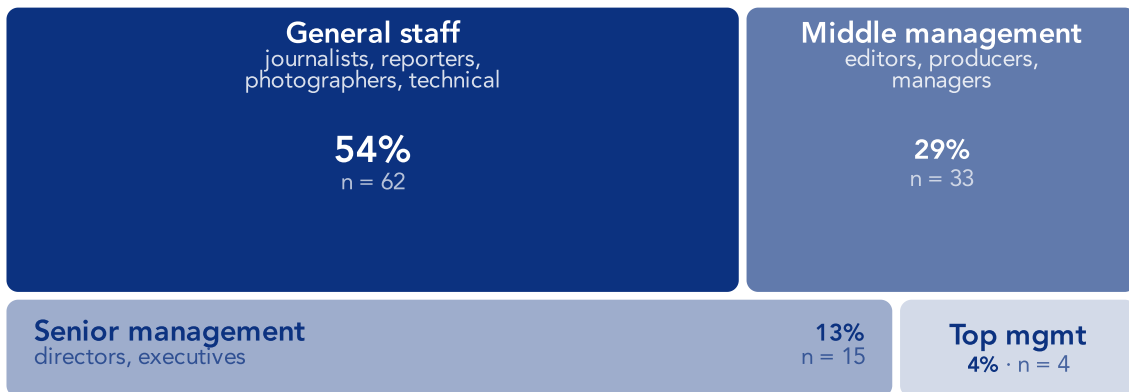
## Figure 1: Respondent demographics

All percentages rounded to the nearest whole number

### By gender identity



### By job level



<sup>4</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>5</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 survey shows that 39% of women respondents in Palestine have experienced **verbal sexual harassment** at least once at work, along with 24% of their male counterparts (see Figure 2). A notable proportion of women participants who experienced this form of harassment at work (14%) said it has happened to them more than five times.

Women in the Palestine sample face **online sexual harassment** at more than twice the rate of

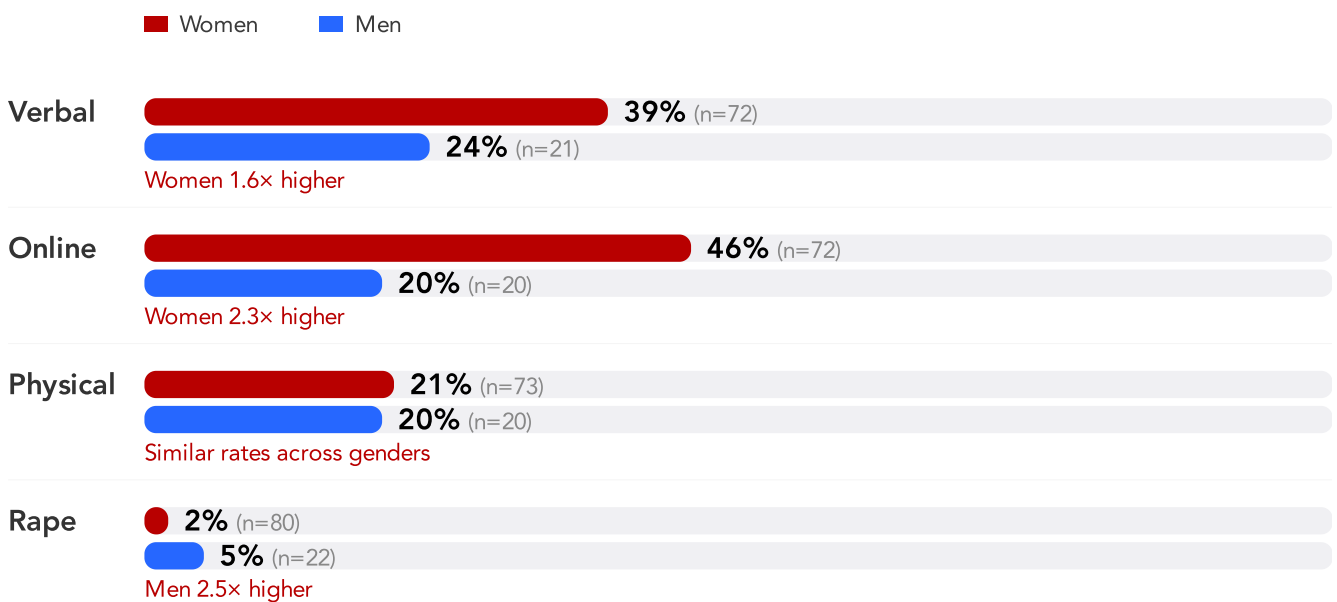
men: 46% of women respondents said they have experienced it at least once, compared with 20% of their male counterparts.

**Physical sexual harassment** in the workplace is less common for women than verbal or online harassment, but both women and men respondents experience it at similar rates.

**Rape** at work is rare in Palestinian newsrooms, yet both men and women in the sample reported having experienced this.

## 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.



*"Sometimes [sexual] harassment is dealt with by the woman who was harassed, and the matter is resolved without turning to the institution."*

Female print editor aged 35–44

# 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.

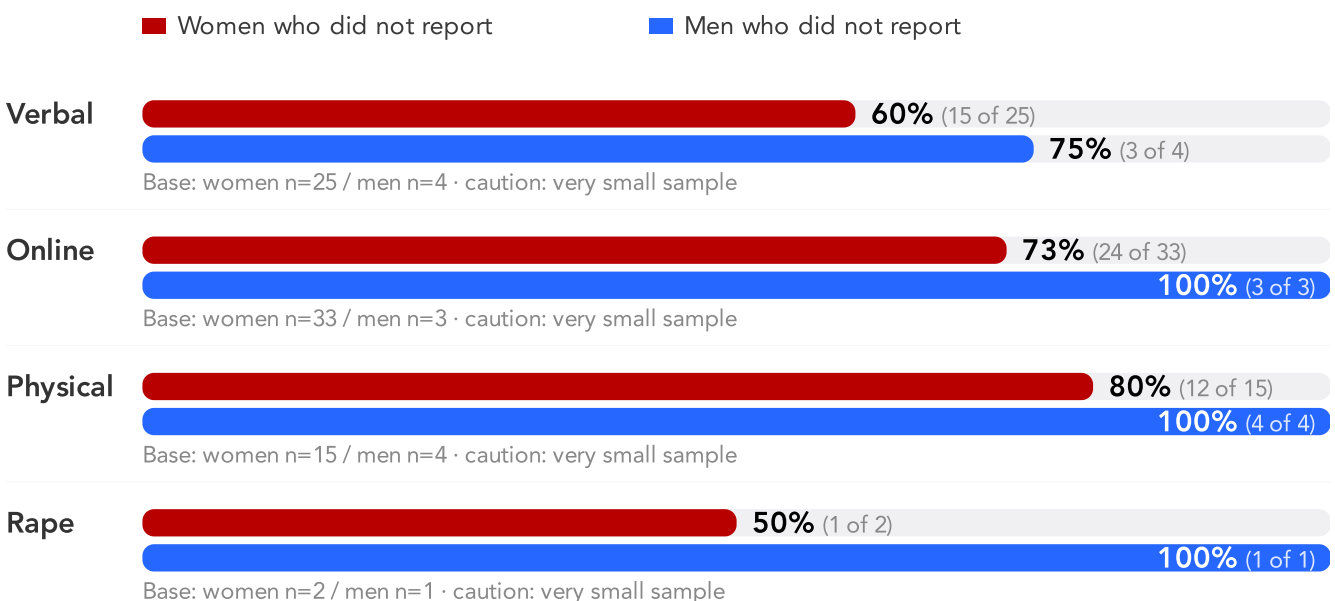
The majority of respondents who had experienced **verbal sexual harassment** at work did not take their case to their employer, with only one man and 10 women having done so (see Figure 3). For those who explained their reasons not to report this experience, thinking it was not a big deal and a lack of reporting mechanisms were among the most cited arguments. The limited number of respondents who made workplace complaints about this form of harassment make it difficult to draw conclusive findings on organisational action. But over half of women who reported this said that their employer took no

action in response (see Figure 4). The most common course of action employers took was to provide emotional support for the survivor.

Similarly, most people in the sample did not report their experiences of **online sexual harassment** at work, most commonly because of a lack of mechanisms and not thinking the issue was a big deal. Even though the sample size is very small, three out of eight respondents said that their employer always took action after their complaints about this type of harassment, while two others mentioned that organisations took action at least some of the time.

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

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



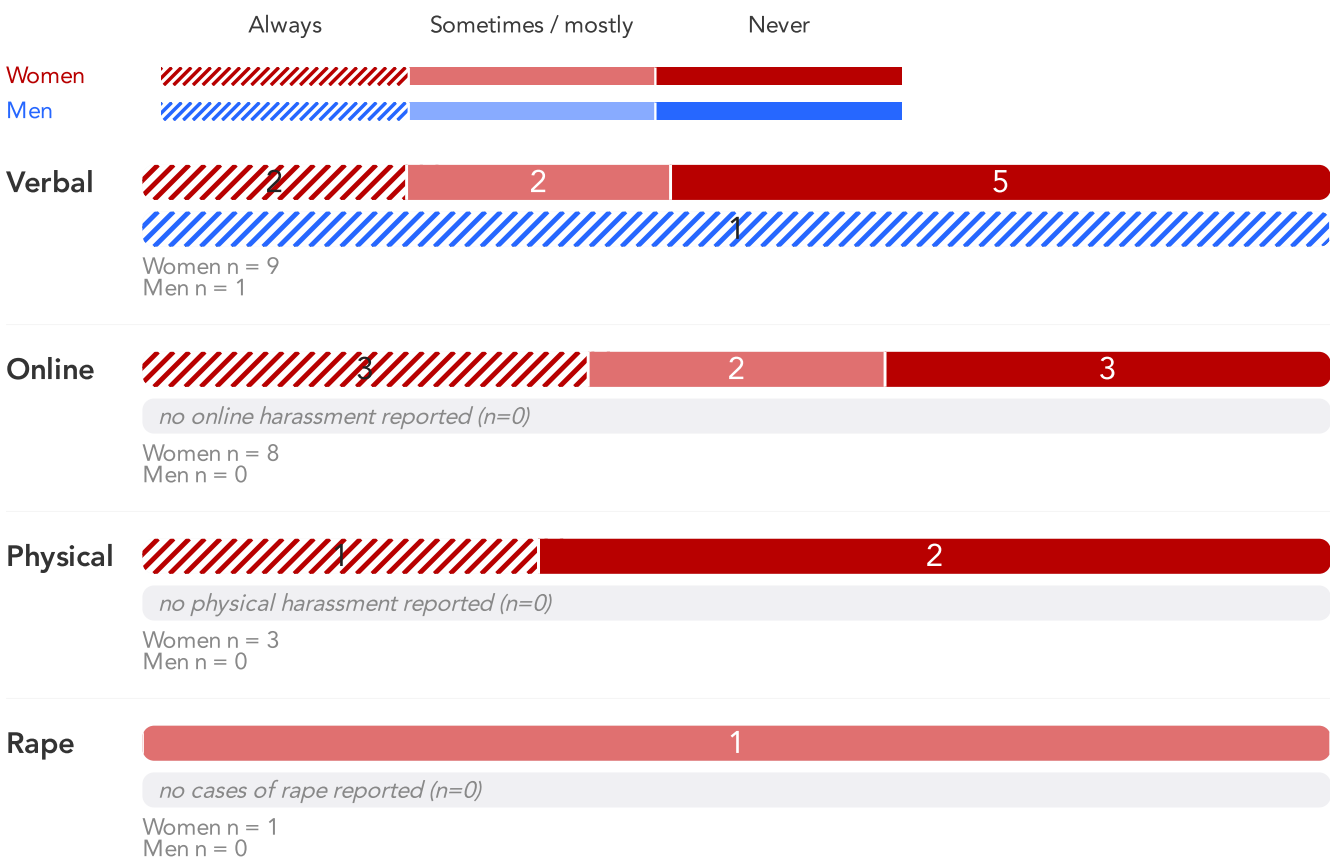
A large majority of women respondents chose not to report **physical sexual harassment** to their employer, and no men (out of four who experienced it) did so. The most common argument for not speaking up was again a lack of available reporting mechanisms, as well as concerns about the potential negative impact on their job. Organisations only took action in one

case of the three reported cases of physical harassment.

The sample size for workplace **rape** in Palestine is extremely small. Two out of the three survivors did not report this experience to their employer because they were scared it would affect their job or that the perpetrator would retaliate against them.

**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").



*“It is important to collect information about the problem of sexual harassment... in a way that ensures the integration of local factors and community-based concepts to achieve a more accurate understanding of how to address this problem in a radical and structural way that is connected to the culture, language and values of Palestinian society.”*

**Female middle manager (other media) aged 25–34**