

Country overview

South Sudan

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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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South Sudan

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.

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.

The survey shows that the overall prevalence of sexual harassment in newsrooms in South Sudan stands at 27%,² lower than the Sub-Saharan African average (33%). As this was the first time the survey was conducted in the country, there is no 2020 data available for comparison.

Women media professionals surveyed in South Sudan appear to experience all types of workplace sexual harassment except rape at over twice the rate of men, with verbal and online cases being the most common types of harassment.

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 for specific types of sexual harassment, see the [methodology page](#).

²The 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.

”

“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

Overall rates of sexual harassment in newsrooms. First survey — no 2020 comparison

27%

South Sudan
2025

33%

Sub-Saharan Africa
average · 2025



Regional benchmark

Context

South Sudan continues to be shaped by prolonged conflict, with ongoing insecurity and large-scale displacement affecting daily life.

[Sexual violence linked to the conflict](#) has been widely documented – with [65% of women and girls in conflict-affected areas](#) of the country having experienced physical and sexual violence. With this violence comes [stigma faced by survivors](#), limited access to support services, and ongoing challenges in securing justice, particularly in areas affected by violence and displacement.

For media workers, this context also has implications for [safety and workplace protection](#). In the country's media sector, women often occupy lower job positions than their male colleagues. Some [43% of South Sudanese media professionals](#) surveyed by International Media Support (IMS) in 2015 said that women journalists are either unfairly or very unfairly represented in the media sector.

Initiatives like the [National Editors' Forum](#) (which formally adopted a gender policy in 2025) and the [Association for Media Development in South Sudan](#) (AMDISS) have highlighted the existence of sexism and sexual harassment in the media sector. In 2023 AMDISS gathered stories of harassment and sexist behaviour from editors, government officials and [over 30 members of its Female Journalists' Network](#), showing that sex-

ual harassment and sex-based discrimination are widespread.

South Sudan is still developing its legal and institutional approach to addressing sexual harassment. At the time of writing, the Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Bill is with the National Ministry of Justice and [has not yet been passed](#) by the National Legislative Assembly. As a result, there is [no dedicated sexual and gender-based violence law in place](#).

In practice, cases of gender-based violence, including those involving sexual harassment, are handled through GBV courts, with some cases also taken up by the Ministry of Labour. South Sudan's [specialist GBV court](#) was inaugurated in 2020 with the support of the United Nations Development Programme. In its early years, the court filed over 600 cases and secured 12 rape convictions. Mobile courts extend jurisdictional reach beyond the capital Juba, but their [geographic coverage and capacity remain limited](#). Comprehensive data on reporting rates and the effectiveness of GBV courts remains scarce, and [cases of sexual violence have continued to rise](#), with a 43% increase in violent incidents recorded between April and June 2024 alone.

"When it comes to training journalists about sexual harassment, it has to be mandatory."

Male radio media executive aged 45–54

The survey

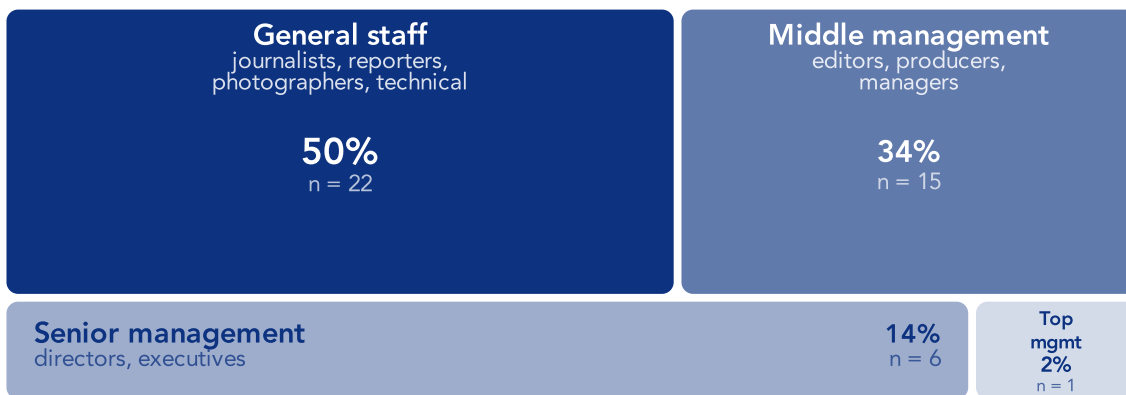
The sample in South Sudan was small, with 44 participants who took part in the survey³ through an online questionnaire distributed among WAN-IFRA WIN and BBC Media Action networks. Respondents comprised 14 women, 25 men, 1 gender non-conforming individual and 4 who preferred to self-describe their gender identity (see Figure 1).⁴

Figure 1: Respondent demographics
All percentages rounded to the nearest whole number

By gender identity



By job level



³This 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](#).

⁴Totals 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 in South Sudan shows women media workers face all types of workplace sexual harassment more often than men (see Figure 2).

Nine women in the sample (64%) say they have experienced **verbal sexual harassment** at work at least once, compared with four men (19%). Although caution is needed in interpreting findings with this small sample, this makes women over three times more likely than men to experience this form of harassment.

Women are similarly more likely to experience **online sexual harassment**, with nine women

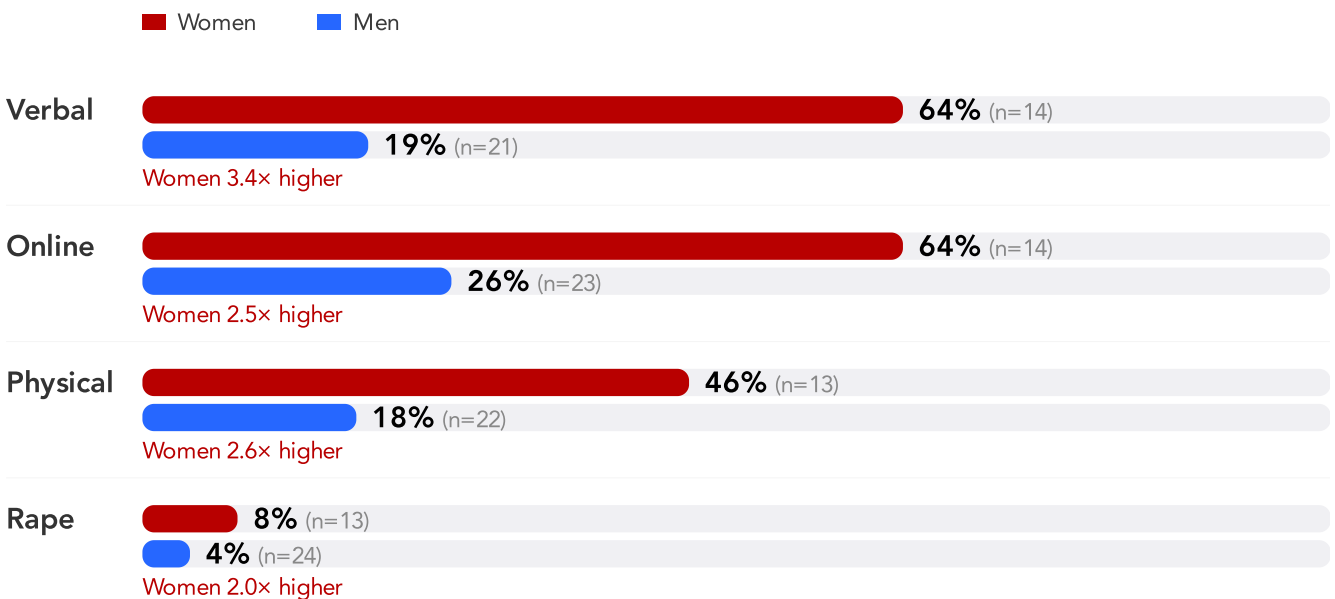
respondents (64%) citing at least one experience at work, compared with six men (26%).

Physical sexual harassment is less common in the country than other types of workplace harassment. Nonetheless, six women respondents (46%) and four men (18%) say they have experienced it.

Rape in media workplaces appears to be rare in South Sudan – only one man and one woman in the survey said they had 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.



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.

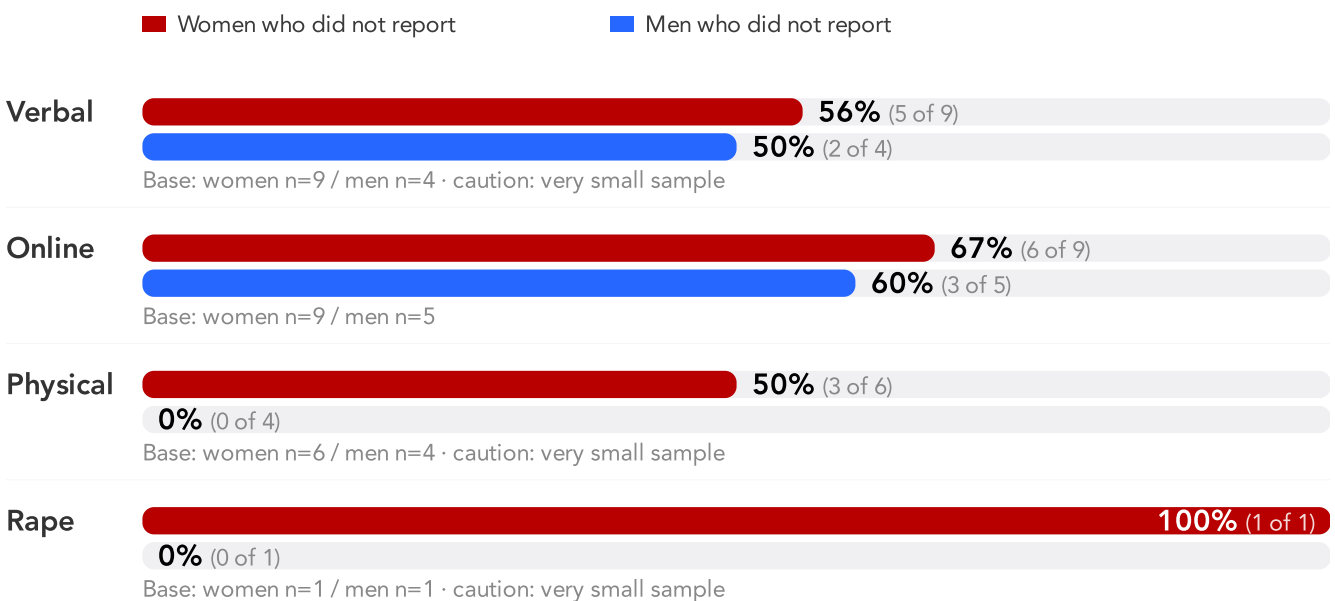
While results from the small South Sudan sample need cautious interpretation, men and women generally reported to their employers around half of the sexual harassment incidents they had experienced (see Figure 3). In instances where complaints were made, organisational follow-up has been inconsistent (see Figure 4).

not tell their employer, most commonly for fear of retaliation. Other common reasons included not thinking the experience was a big deal and a lack of reporting mechanisms in the workplace. Out of six cases reported to their organisations, employers took action only once (see Figure 4), with the outcome being that the organisation dismissed the complaint after a case review.

Around half of men and women respondents who experienced **verbal sexual harassment** did

Figure 3: Reporting rates by type of sexual harassment

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



Only two men and three women respondents said they had reported **online sexual harassment** to their employer. Fear of losing or negatively impacting the job were common reasons for not telling the organisation, as was thinking that the incident was not a big deal. Again, employers rarely took action in response to these complaints. When they did, actions included moving the survivor to another department and issuing a warning to the perpetrator.

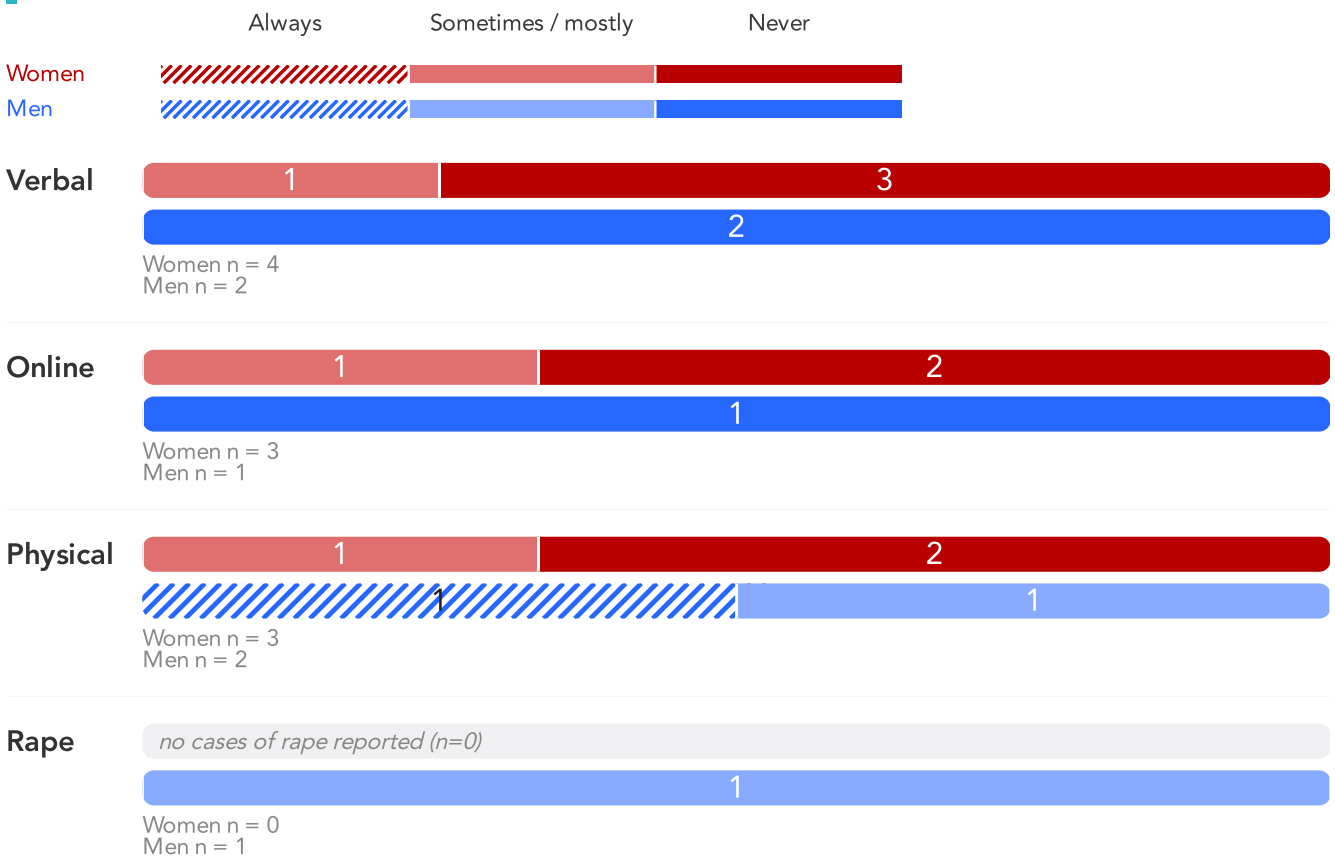
Half of the six women in the sample who said they had experienced **physical sexual harassment** did not report it to their media organisation,

most commonly citing a lack of reporting mechanisms as the reason for this. All four men in the sample who experienced this form of harassment told their employer. While the sample is small, employers took action in around half of reported cases.

The only man in the sample who had experienced **rape** at work told his employer. In contrast the only woman who had experienced this did not make an official complaint, citing a lack of reporting mechanisms, fear of retaliation, and fear of negatively affecting their job.

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").



"I witnessed sexual harassment from fellow colleagues in the newsroom."

Male multimedia employee aged 35–44