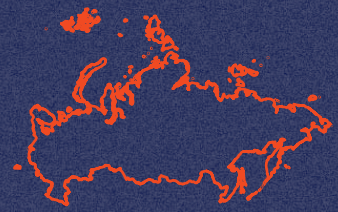


# SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE MEDIA

RUSSIA  
REPORT



Women in News



# Women in News

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 Southeast Asia thanks to support from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

ANRI-Media is a consulting company focused on training and research programmes for Russian media.

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# 1

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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In 2020, WAN-IFRA Women in News (WIN), in partnership with City, University of London, set out to establish the extent of sexual harassment in news organisations and to gauge their effectiveness in managing it.

The research project focused on regions that have traditionally been excluded from large scale research studies on this subject

This report is a summary of its findings in Russia.

The project included an online survey and interviews. Some 176 media professionals completed the online survey. We conducted supplementary interviews with 16 media executives, 13 of whom represented regional media.

ANRI-Media, an important partner of WAN-IFRA, conducted the high-level interviews and oversaw the distribution of the quantitative survey.

## RESULTS AT A GLANCE



**1 IN 4**

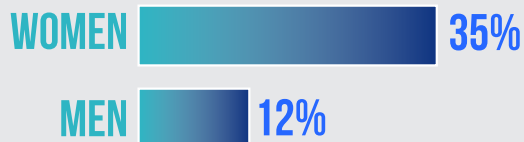
women have faced verbal or physical sexual harassment at work (26%)



**25.5%**

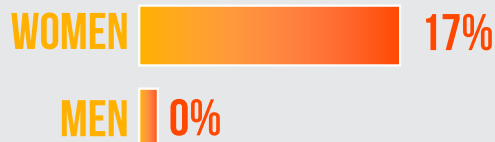
Just over a quarter of cases of sexual harassment are ever reported to management

### VERBAL SEXUAL HARASSMENT



In addition, 4 out of the 5 participants who identified as gender non-conforming experienced verbal harassment.

### PHYSICAL SEXUAL HARASSMENT



In addition, 2 out of 5 participants who identified as gender non-conforming experienced physical harassment.

### THE TOP 4 PERPETRATORS



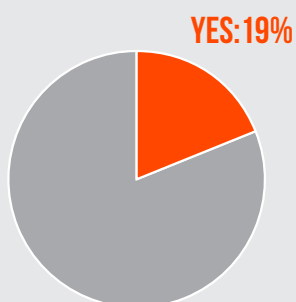
### REPORTED VS ACTION



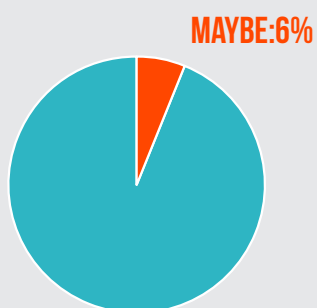
Only 25.5% of cases were reported. Organisations took action for 62% of the reported cases.

## RESULTS AT A GLANCE

### MANAGERS' EXPERIENCES



Three of the managers (19%) had been sexually harassed at work. None reported it.

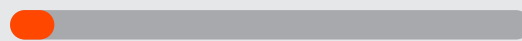


When asked if sexual harassment is an issue in the news industry, 15 of 16 news executives interviewed said no. One said maybe.

### MANAGING SEXUAL HARASSMENT



12% of organisations have a sexual harassment policy.



8.5% of staff know the contents of their organisation's policy

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2

**BACKGROUND**

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The media industry has a sexual harassment problem. But to date, there has been a lack of credible data and research to guide interventions.

When the #MeToo movement against sexual violence and abuse took off globally in 2017, it triggered new research into the prevalence of sexual harassment in media. But much of the inquiry focused on Western Europe and North America. This study is part of WAN-IFRA and ANRI-Media's shared commitment to further research in Russia, and bring more significant regional and cultural diversity to the global conversation on sexual harassment.

"I have been working as a journalist (editor, manager) for many years and have never faced any harassment at work or gender discrimination". This is the most common response when trying to bring an open discussion about gender equality issues to the Russian media community. However, as our research shows, this is in fact not true.

The reality is that the underpaid media industry in Russia is mostly made up of women. A lot of top managers, editors in chief and reporters are women - perhaps TV is the exception. Unfortunately, this is not translating into safer work environments where problems of harassment are less prevalent.

Another distinctive feature of Russian media business - and business in general - is a lack of formal procedures, guidebooks and protocols on addressing sexual harassment. People do not make and use these tools in their business operations, even when they would help to create an ethical and safe environment for their organisation.

Data provides a benchmark for measuring change. It enables us to understand the scope of the problem, create initiatives meant to address and remove sexual harassment and, ultimately, assess newsroom safety and factors that directly impact equality.

WAN-IFRA, through the Women in News programme, has been engaging with journalists and media managers on sexual harassment for more than ten years. In that time, we have collected plenty of anecdotal evidence of sexual harassment. But this is the first time we have been able to draw on large-scale data to support the belief that it is prevalent everywhere and is a significant impediment to a healthy media industry, regardless of country or cultural context.

The results from the Russia research reported here help build a database of statistical evidence to support our work and contribute to a better understanding of the similarities and differences facing media globally. A composite report that also considers trends from the Global North will follow the release of all other regional survey results.

WAN-IFRA's vision is to build a more equitable and sustainable news media industry by developing current and future women media leaders. We collaborate with partners like ANRI-Media, who share this vision. Together, we aim to provide support and resources to organisations to reduce the incidents of sexual harassment and manage incidents when they do occur. Through this mandate and commitment, we seek to establish healthy work environments where assault, harassment and other negative engagement between genders are considered intolerable.



See page 20 for practical steps that media can take to address and improve the safety of their working environment.



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# 3

**METHODOLOGY**

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# DATA COLLECTION

This project employed two methods for data collection: a survey of media personnel, distributed online, and in-depth interviews with media executives conducted online through video calls. The two-method approach was designed to understand patterns of sexual harassment in newsrooms, and gauge perceptions from officers with positions of power within media organisations.

The survey responses were anonymous and interview participants were assigned a pseudonym to protect their identity.

Data collection took place in November 2020. Surveys and in-depth interviews were conducted remotely to

comply with COVID-19 regulations. All data collection was in Russian. After the initial filter questions, 253 participants began the survey, with 176 completing. The survey took an average of 19 minutes to complete. In total, 16 in-depth interviews were conducted with managers and executives from various media organisations, 13 of which were from representatives of regional media organisations. Interviewees were invited from media organisations that WAN-IFRA Women In News or ANRI-Media has involved in training, and executives from media organisations willing to engage in the discussion on sexual harassment (regardless of an existing relationship or not). The average interview lasted 40 minutes.

## DEFINITIONS, LANGUAGE AND SAMPLE SIZE

WIN is aware that the language around gender and sexuality continues to evolve rapidly, as it did while this report was being written. The refinement of words and their definitions is based on our understanding of how complex constructs related to sexuality and gender evolve.

In the research, participants were invited to select their identity as Woman, Man or Gender Nonconforming. The number of respondents who identified as nonconforming in this survey was five. This small sample should not mean their experiences are diminished. However, from a statistical perspective, it poses a challenge as it is difficult to find significant relationships from the data. Statistical tests typically require a larger sample size to ensure a representative

distribution of the population and be considered representative of groups of people to whom results will be generalised or transferred. It was, therefore, essential to consider this. The data, however, shows that experiences of sexual harassment cannot be ignored for any group. Thus, while the numbers are small, we recognise this fact.

WIN acknowledges the profound diversity regarding size, development level, political, legal and economic system, geography, culture, and history within individual countries. This is why we have focused on regional patterns of sexual harassment experiences for this phase of the research.

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WIN 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.

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# 4

**DEMOGRAPHICS**

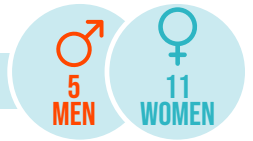
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# DEMOGRAPHICS

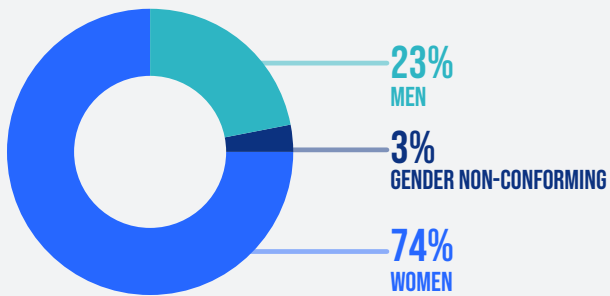
176 ONLINE SURVEY PARTICIPANTS



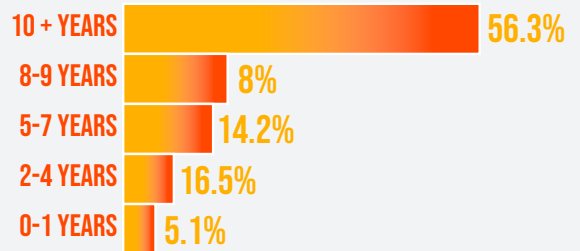
16 INTERVIEWS



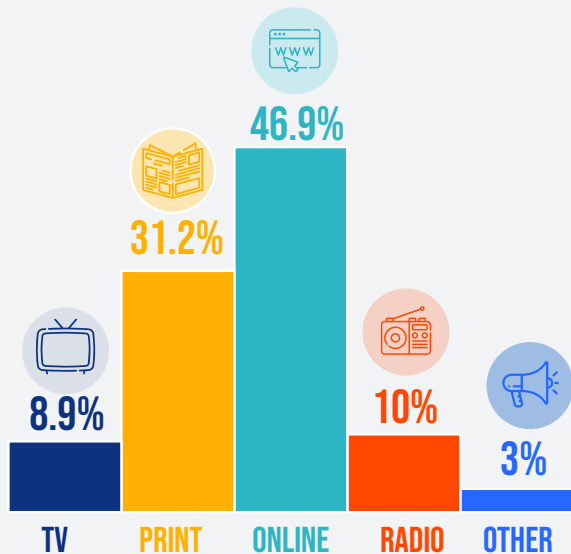
## GENDER IDENTITY



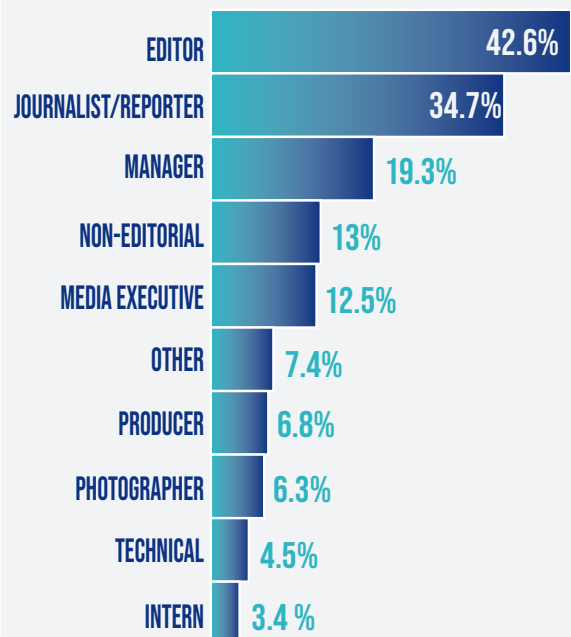
## EXPERIENCE



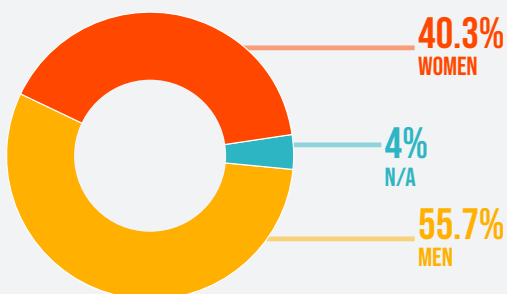
## MEDIUM



## ROLE



## GENDER OF SUPERVISOR



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# 5

**FINDINGS**

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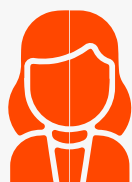
# ONLINE SURVEY

## PREVALENCE

### PREVALENCE OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT



**WOMEN  
ARE...**



**4 X**  
MORE LIKELY TO EXPERIENCE  
SEXUAL HARASSMENT THAN  
MEN



**MEN SEEM IMMUNE TO  
UNWANTED  
PHYSICAL ATTRACTION AT  
WORK**

The first set of questions asked participants their experience of verbal and physical sexual harassment on a scale from never to five or more times.

Of those who reported experiencing harassment, 31% experienced verbal and 14% experienced physical.

For men, 12% of participants indicated they had experienced verbal sexual harassment at least once at work, while none had experienced physical sexual harassment.

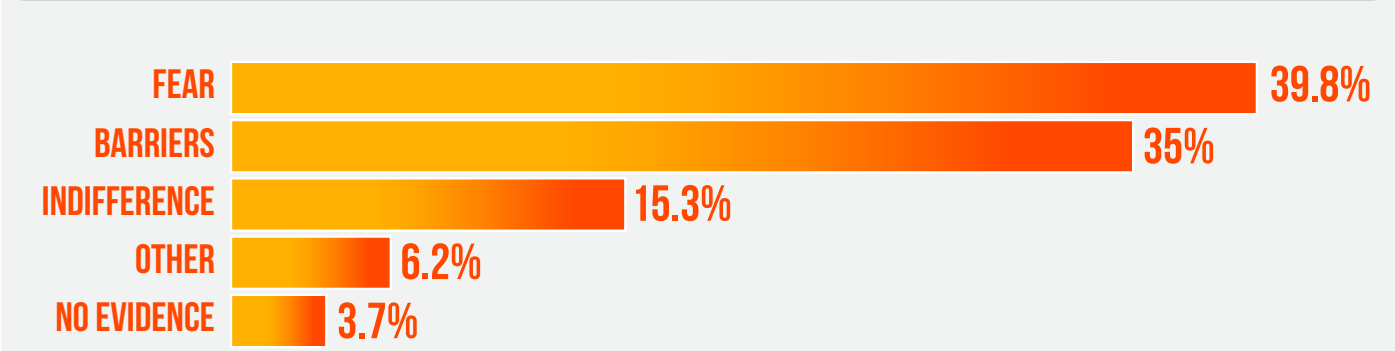
For women, 35% of participants responded they had

experienced verbal sexual harassment at least once—12.3% five times or more, and 16.2% stated they'd experienced physical sexual harassment at least once.

Of the five gender non-conforming participants, four said they had experienced verbal sexual harassment, and two had experienced physical sexual harassment.

# REPORTING AND ACTION

## WHY I DID NOT REPORT SEXUAL HARASSMENT

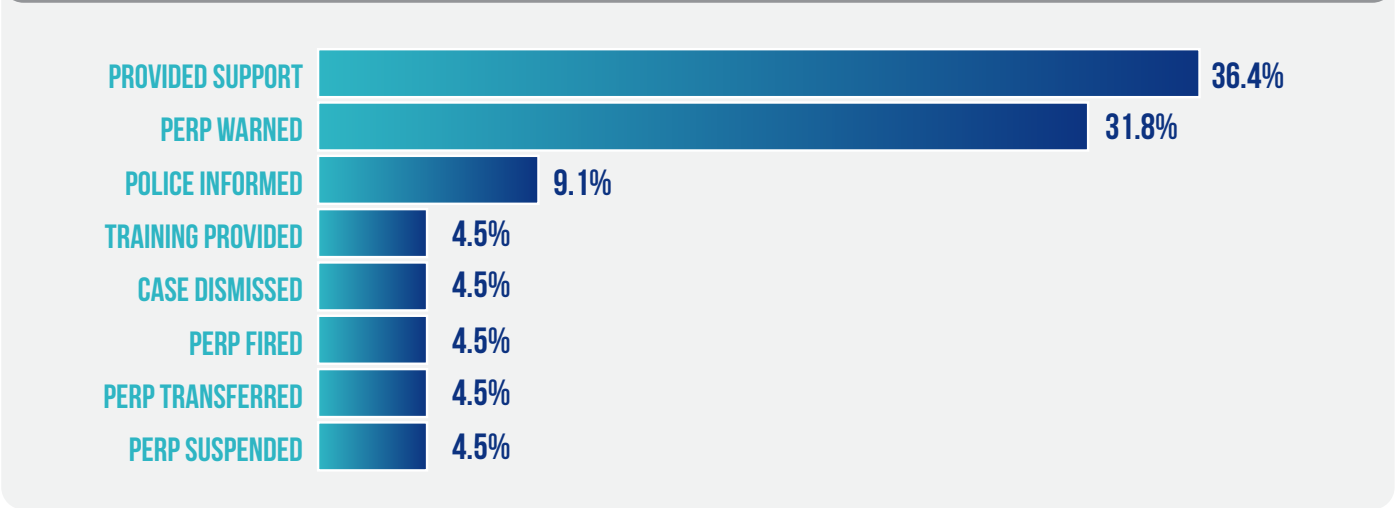


**\*Responses have been categorised as:**  
**Fear:** “I was afraid of losing my job”; “I was afraid I would negatively impact my job”; “I was afraid the perpetrator would retaliate”; “I didn’t want myself or others to be negatively labeled”  
**Barriers:** “I didn’t think my organisation would believe me”; “There are no reporting mechanisms at my organisation”; “I didn’t know how to report”;  
**No evidence:** “I didn’t think I had evidence”  
**Indifference:** “I didn’t think it was a big deal”  
**Other:** “I was offered something by the perpetrator for not reporting”; “Other”

On average, only 25.5% of cases were reported to the participant’s respective media news organisation. Of those reported cases, news organisations took action 62% of the time.

The top reasons listed for not reporting were no known reporting mechanism available (17.1%), not thinking it was a big deal (15.3%), not knowing how to report (13.7%), and being afraid reporting would negatively impact the participant’s job (13.3%).

## ORGANISATIONAL RESPONSE TO FORMAL COMPLAINTS

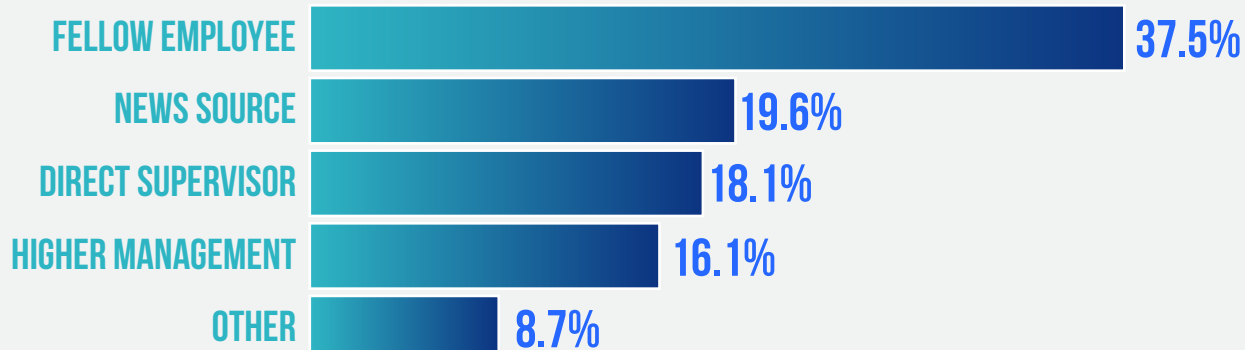




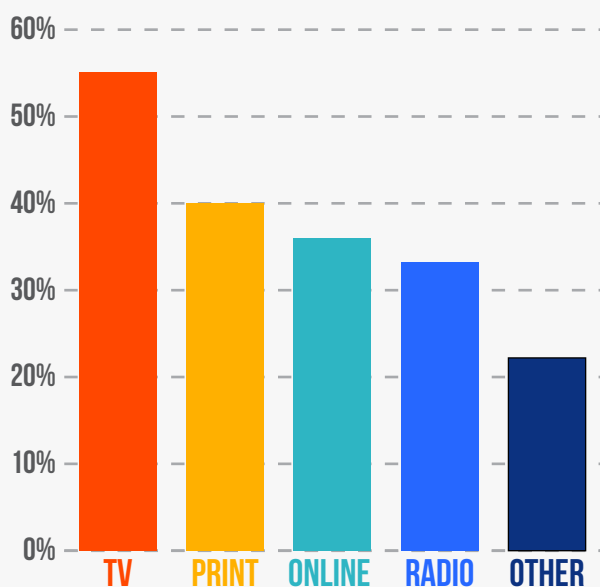
## SOURCE & FREQUENCY

The most common source of sexual harassment was a fellow employee (37.5%), followed by news source (19.6%), direct supervisor (18.1%), higher management (16.1%), and other (8.7%).

### THE PERPETRATORS



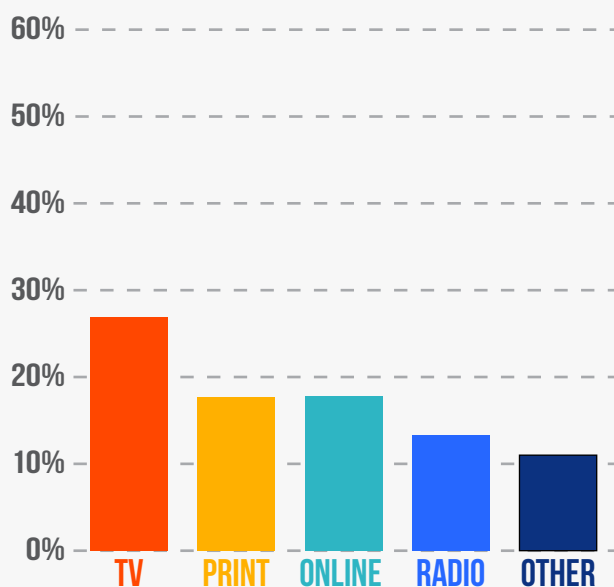
### PREVALENCE BY MEDIUM



### VERBAL

The highest frequency of verbal sexual harassment occurred in TV, 55.1%, followed by radio 40%, print 36%, online 33.2%, and other 22%.

The highest frequency of physical sexual harassment occurred in TV, 26.9%, print, 17.7%, radio, 17.8%, online, 13.3%, and other 11%.



### PHYSICAL

When asked if they had ever witnessed sexual harassment in the newsroom, 23.4% of participants said they had seen at least one incident.

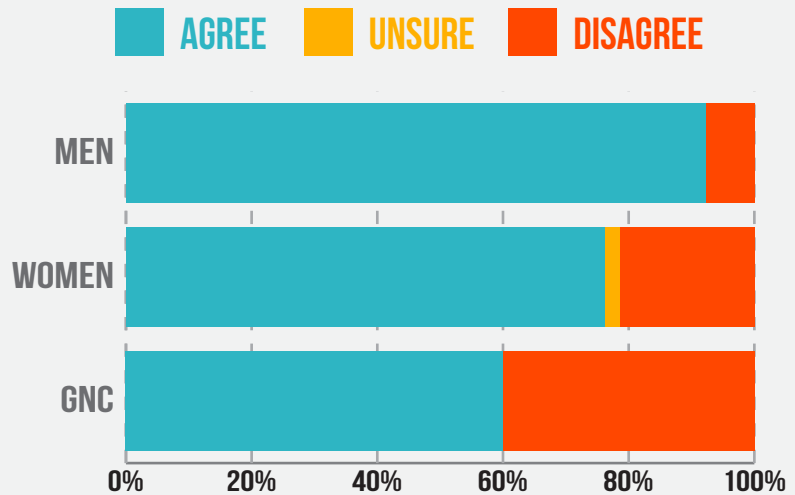


**23.4%**

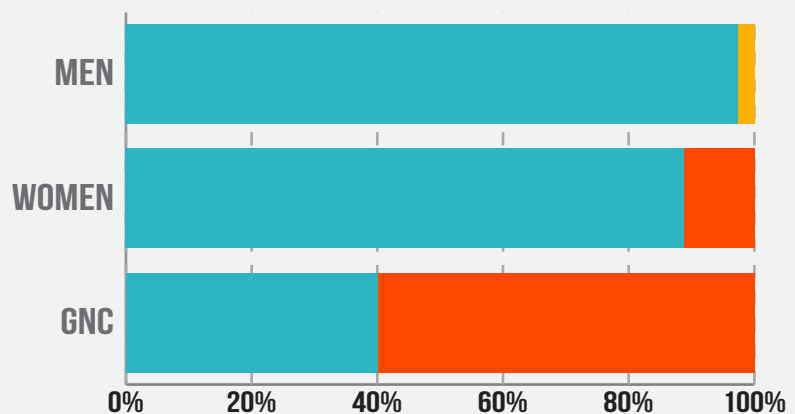
of participants witnessed at least one incident of sexual harassment

## PERSONAL ATTITUDES

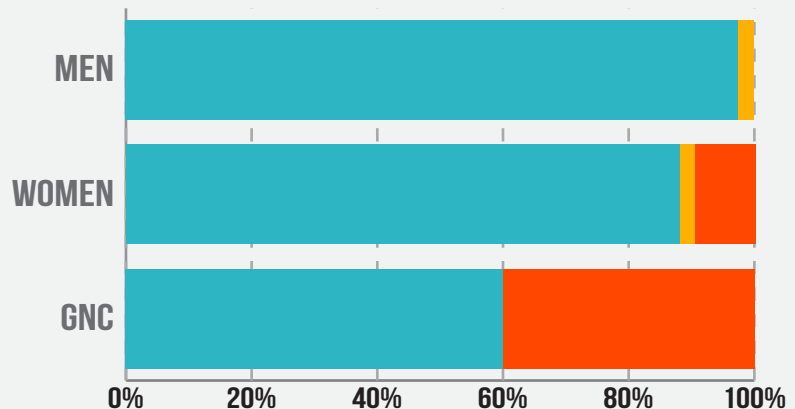
I CAN TALK TO  
MY SUPERVISOR



I FEEL SAFE IN  
MY NEWSROOM



I FEEL LISTENED  
TO WHEN I  
SPEAK OUT AT  
WORK



**\*Agree responses** reflect those who said “Strongly agree”, “agree” and “somewhat agree”

**Disagree responses** reflect those who said “Strongly disagree”, “disagree” and “somewhat disagree”

**Unsure responses** reflect those who “neither agree nor disagree”

We asked respondents if their work environment was supportive. For women, 76.2% somewhat to strongly agreed they could openly talk to their supervisor, 88.1% somewhat to strongly agreed they felt listened to at work, and 88.8% somewhat to strongly agreed they felt safe in their newsroom.

For men, 90.1% somewhat to strongly agreed they could openly talk to their supervisor, 95.6% somewhat to strongly agreed they felt listened to at work, and 97.6% somewhat to strongly agreed they felt safe in their newsroom.

# EXECUTIVE INTERVIEWS

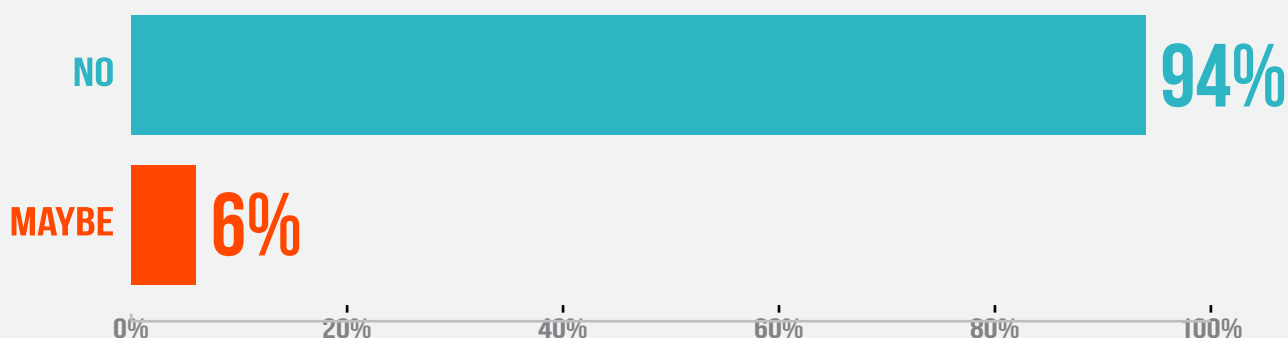
To understand management perspectives on the prevalence of sexual harassment, ANRI-MEDIA interviewed 16 managers and executives in Russia, 11 were women, and five were men. Of the 16, 13 represented regional media. Most held ranks of deputy editor-in-chief to CEO/owner. The participants represented print and digital media. All data was anonymised, so pseudonyms are used.

The news executives reported their personal experiences of sexual harassment. Three women

stated they had experienced sexual harassment, but none had reported their incidence.

When asked if sexual harassment is an issue in the news industry, 15 of the 16 executives interviewed said no. One said maybe. The consensus between the news executives was that sexual harassment may occur in Russia in general, but it was an issue to be reported on, not one that was experienced by news personnel.

## IS SEXUAL HARASSMENT A PROBLEM?



### Is sexual harassment a problem in the media industry?

“The topic of violence is found only in the news and investigations. There is no such thing within the news team.” - Nikolai, CEO

“I don’t think sexual harassment is a problem. If an issue arises, staff know how to defend themselves. Moreover, I have women who will fight back against anyone if this happens. We are all in a transparent environment; we see each other.” - Alyona, Editor-in-Chief

“It is difficult for me to answer this question unequivocally. The honest answer: more likely yes than no.” - Michael, Deputy Editor-in-Chief

News executives were asked if any of their employees had reported cases of sexual harassment to them. Three of the 16 answered yes, and their response was to discuss the incident with those concerned.

### On office relationships

“As a team, we know a lot about our employees and what’s going on in their lives. There are office romances, voluntary relationships, without harassment.” - Svetlana, Media Owner

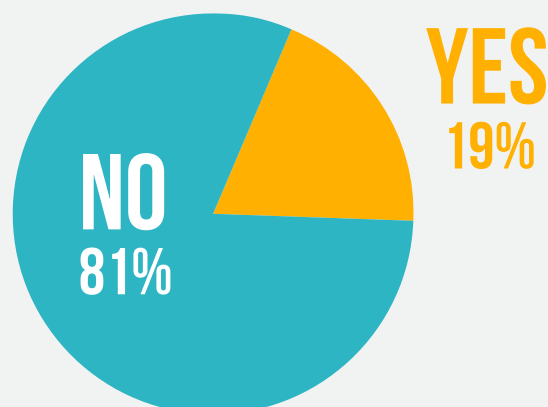
### On reduced complaints

“Since the beginning of the #MeToo movement, many men have been rethinking their actions. Nonetheless, I remain concerned about sexual harassment and realise we can do better.” - Yuri, CEO

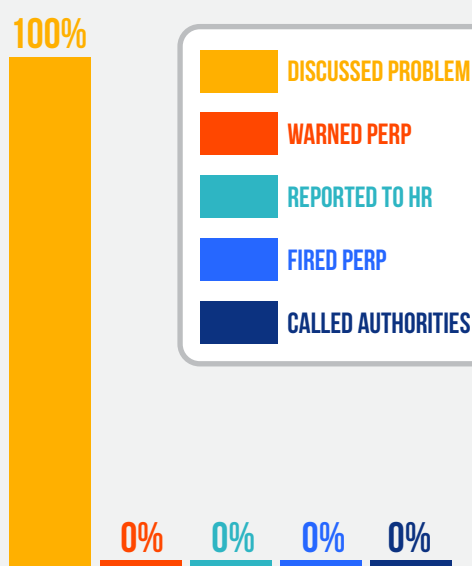
### On receiving a complaint

“I will check whether it happened or not, and what kind of harassment it was, then I will carefully talk to one side, separately, and then the other. If I understand that the case has gone further, then there will be consequences up to dismissal. I take this seriously, people should know where the boundaries are. There should be a strict framework; the consequences will be serious if it is actually harassment and not something else, as when one side wants to spite the other. Women can take advantage of this.” - Tia, CEO

### HAS ANYONE REPORTED TO YOU?

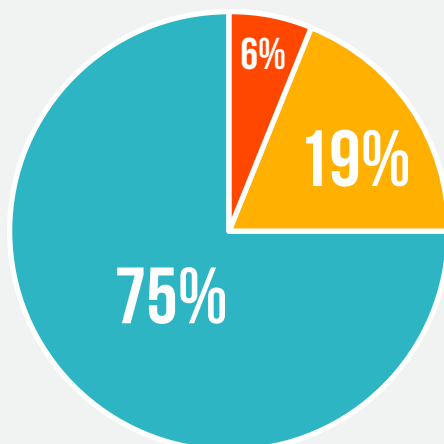


### HOW DID YOU REACT IF SOMEONE REPORTED TO YOU?



## DO STAFFERS FEEL COMFORTABLE TO REPORT?

NOT SURE MAYBE YES



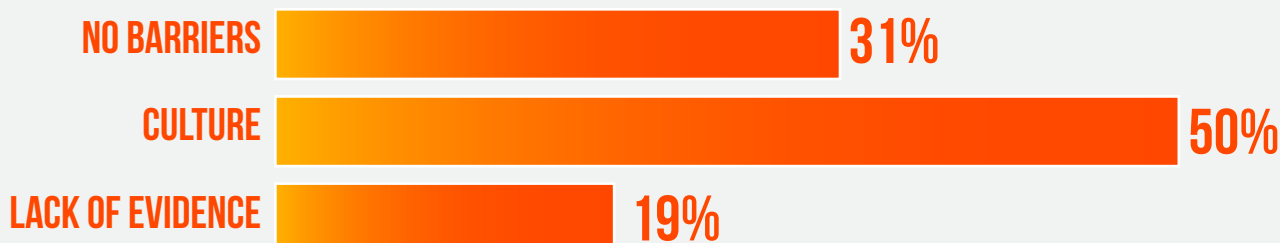
In response to a question on whether or not news executives believed their employees felt comfortable reporting sexual harassment incidences to their news organisation, 12 said yes, three said maybe, while one was not sure.

### On men and women reporting

"I'm sure about the women. They certainly would tell. They always talk about their problems, from health problems to personal dramas and breakups. With men, I'm not so sure. A man should deal with his problems on his own - this is the Russian mentality. You're not a man if you show your weakness or ask for help."  
- Vlada, General Director

News executives were asked to list the barriers in the news industry for reporting sexual harassment. While just over a third (five out of sixteen) felt there were no barriers, eight listed a culture related barrier, and three listed lack of evidence.

## WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS TO REPORTING?



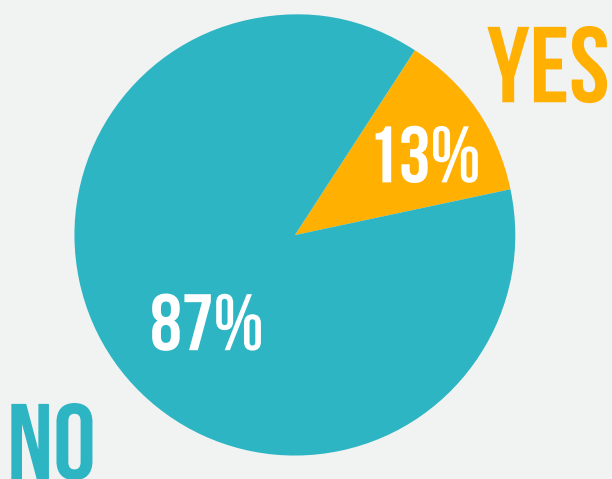
## On barriers

“There are no gender barriers because the management of our company is balanced. A woman can turn to a woman, and a man can address a man with such a problem. We have a trusting relationship in our team.” - Vyacheslav, General Director

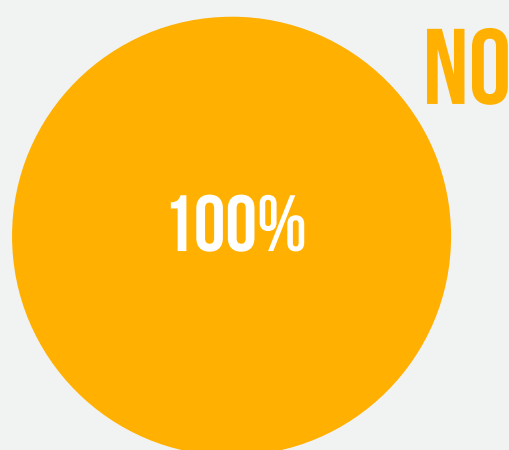
“Shame and an unwillingness to give publicity to a negative event are the basic barriers. It is unpleasant for a person to recognise themselves as a victim.”  
- Julia, Owner, Online News Site

Of the 16 news executives, only two were aware of a sexual harassment policy at their news organisation.

### ARE YOU AWARE OF ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY?

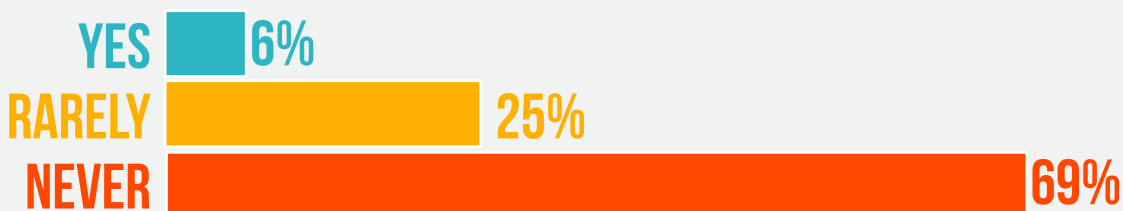


### HAVE YOU PERSONALLY BEEN TRAINED?



When asked if executive meetings commonly discussed sexual harassment, only one participant answered yes, four stated sometimes, and 11 said no.

### IS SH DISCUSSED IN SENIOR MANAGEMENT MEETINGS?



# HOW TO ELIMINATE SEXUAL HARASSMENT

When asked to provide suggestions for eliminating sexual harassment in the news industry, news executives focused on the importance of

communication in creating a comfortable atmosphere. Most believe this exists in their workplace, so they believe sexual harassment isn't a significant issue.

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## On respect

"Discussions are meaningless. It is necessary to maintain an atmosphere of respect, preventing sexual harassment. I load everyone with work so that there is no time to be distracted. There was a time when we said goodbye to a person on a probationary work period because of her provocations. She was "a selfie girl", putting her sexuality on display. I didn't hire her because of her self-positioning." - Tia, CEO

---

Executives' beliefs that sexual harassment is a non-issue in their workplace contrast with the respondent's views, where one in five women have experienced either unwanted verbal or physical attention at work.

Respondents said the perpetrator was most likely a fellow employee (37%) but the unwanted attention from people in power in the organisation - namely supervisors and executives - accounted for a third of incidents.

Management's stance on there being no need for explicit sexual harassment policies and procedures may explain why reporting is low.

The most common reason for not reporting was dismissing the event as no big deal. However, one respondent pointed to a feeling of shame around verbal harassment, in line with cultural norms that silence victims.

"We feel shame reporting verbal harassment. So we are silent. We are afraid. We are shy. We consider this topic closed." - Journalist

The news executives' confidence that their workplaces, with their open communication, are not hotbeds for harassment, feeds into their notion that sexual harassment is a problem of the past.



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# 6

**WHAT  
ORGANISATIONS  
CAN DO**

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# WHAT MEDIA ORGANISATIONS CAN DO TO MANAGE SEXUAL HARASSMENT

To manage and reduce sexual harassment, clear rules and procedures are needed. Here are some guidelines



## THE PRINCIPLE OF CONFIDENTIALITY:

A very central and important aspect of managing sexual harassment is guaranteeing confidentiality. This principle is considered a moral standard as well as a legal commitment and a part of professional ethics. Confidentiality aims to protect all individuals involved in sexual harassment complaints as well as the information that they disclose; only the personnel assigned by the organisation to investigate and manage should be allowed to access this information.

Confidentiality protects all people involved, including the person who experienced harassment, the person accused of harassment, witnesses and any other involved party. This principle also acts as a motivation to report harassment cases by building trust.

And in order to maintain confidentiality, an organisation must make sure that its data storage systems are safe and that the laws related to information and data protection in the country are followed.

1

### TAKE ALL COMPLAINTS SERIOUSLY

Consider all sexual harassment complaints seriously and deal with them as soon as possible.

2

### ADOPT COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES

Give employees the options of filing official and non-official complaints. The steps and results of these two methods can vary, as do the procedures for each.

3

### ALLOW ANONYMOUS REPORTING

In fighting harassment, it is useful to allow people to report cases anonymously. This gives employees the ability to expose such cases without having to reveal their own identity. But to perform a proper investigation, the organisation would need to know the identities of all involved parties.

4

## ASSIGN TEAM TO INVESTIGATE

Clearly assign a person or a team to investigate and deal with sexual harassment cases. This person should preferably be from the HR department and have knowledge of guiding laws. It is imperative that they receive specialised training for conducting investigations.

5

## HIRE EXPERTS WHEN NEEDED

In some cases, it may be necessary to seek external help from someone experienced in managing investigations with objectivity, fairness and integrity.

6

## ALERT AUTHORITIES IN SOME CASES

If the case under investigation contains sexual assault (including rape), the authorities must be notified in accordance with law, and the survivor may need immediate medical attention. The organisation needs to cooperate fully with any official investigation by the police, and may require legal assistance or consultation.

7

## CONSIDER TEMPORARY SUSPENSION

In grave cases of sexual harassment, including physical assault, it may be necessary to suspend the employee accused of harassment until the investigations (internal or external) are done. Temporary suspension is considered a procedural measure, and not a disciplinary one.

8

## CLARIFY PROCEDURES TO ALL

Policies to counter sexual harassment inside the organisation should include clear procedures on how the received complaints are dealt with. This is very important for both managers and employees to avoid any ambiguity about the essence of these procedures. It is always preferable to adapt a step-by-step detailed approach for even higher clarity.



WOMEN IN NEWS'  
SEXUAL HARASSMENT  
MICROSITE

[sexualharassment.womeninnews.org](https://sexualharassment.womeninnews.org)

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# 7

**WIN RESOURCES**

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# CLICK [HERE](#) TO VISIT WIN'S SEXUAL HARASSMENT TOOLKIT

or visit this link: [sexualharassment.womeninnews.org/en/resources/sexual\\_harassment\\_toolkit\\_win](https://sexualharassment.womeninnews.org/en/resources/sexual_harassment_toolkit_win)

## THE TOOLKIT INCLUDES:

- Practical guide for employers and employees
- Awareness poster (A2) to put up in newsrooms and offices
- Sample sexual harassment policy
- Sample sexual harassment survey
- Sample communications templates
- Sample for interviews during an investigation
- Sample for feedback on a decision
- Informal complaints procedures
- Formal complaints procedures

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