THE STATE OF UGANDA JOURNALISTS’ SAFETY, SECURITY AND PROFESSIONALISM:
A BASELINE REPORT
2015

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# Table of Contents

Forward (By HRNJ-U) ..................................................................................................................... 3
Acknowledgements (By HRNJ-U) ...................................................................................................... 4
Abbreviations .................................................................................................................................. 5
Definition of terms ............................................................................................................................ 6
Executive summary ............................................................................................................................ 7
Findings ............................................................................................................................................ 8
Conclusions ...................................................................................................................................... 10
Recommendations ............................................................................................................................ 11

**CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY** ................................................................................................................................................................. 12

1.0 Introduction ................................................................................................................................ 12
1.1 Journalists’ safety, security and protection .................................................................................. 12
1.2 Media professionalism and ethical behavior in Uganda ................................................................. 13
1.3 Rationale of the baseline survey .................................................................................................. 14
1.4 Scope of the survey ..................................................................................................................... 14
1.5 Objective of the survey ............................................................................................................... 14
1.6 Methodology .............................................................................................................................. 15
1.6.1 Sample size and sampling procedure ................................................................................... 15
1.6.2 Data analysis ......................................................................................................................... 16

**CHAPTER TWO: SURVEY FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS** ......................................................................... 17

2.0 Introduction ................................................................................................................................ 17
2.1 Respondents demographics ......................................................................................................... 17
2.1.1 Gender of the respondents .................................................................................................... 17
2.1.2 Respondents’ media organization type .................................................................................. 17
2.1.3 Respondents’ employment status ......................................................................................... 18
2.1.4 Respondents’ position in the media outlet .............................................................................. 18
2.1.5 Education level by status of employment .............................................................................. 19
2.2 Knowledge of media laws and access to professional code of ethics .......................................... 19
2.3 Journalists engagement with and adherence to the professional code of ethics and principles .... 21
2.4. How to enhance professionalism and ethical reporting among journalists

2.5 Journalists face personal safety, risks and security threats in the course of doing their work

2.5 Frequency of occurrence of the security risks and threats

2.6 Extent to which threats to respondents' life affect their ability to fully report stories

2.7 Journalists need to strengthen their defense and protection mechanisms

2.8 How security risks and threats impact the way journalists relate and get stories from sources

2.9 Journalists must embrace digital security and online safety

2.10 Journalists need to always back up their data and information

2.11 Knowledge of international or national organisations that support journalists facing threats

2.12 Practice of changing passwords

2.13 Biggest pressure that can force a journalist to release confidential information

2.14 Journalism skills that journalists want to be empowered with

2.15 Key interventions to protect journalists

CHAPTER THREE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.0 Introduction

3.1 Conclusions

3.2 Recommendations

REFERENCES

Appendix – Self-administered Questionnaire

Appendix II – Interview Guide for Key Informants

APPENDIX III - International Best Practices on Safety and Protection for Media
Foreword

The baseline Report is a culmination of a lengthy discussion about the relationship between increased attack of journalists in Uganda and their non-professional conduct. Whereas there are contrasting views about the validity of the above narrative, many voices have emerged linking journalists to unethical conduct which is thought to have contributed to the raise of personal insecurity. The persistence of this debate insinuated a deeper reflection within HRNJ-U with a view of finding immediate solutions to the increased threats the journalists faced in the country. In the HRNJ-U publication “The quest for safety and security of journalists in Uganda, trends and patterns 2013” the nexus is vividly revealed and clearly points at unethical conduct as one of the many factors to have accelerated journalists risks and threats. Examples of such unethical conduct in the publication include; producing of inaccurate Journalists’ stories, disrespecting people’s privacy, taking bribes, disclosing information sources, hate speech among others.

This necessitated undertaking significant measures to address this emerging trend within HRNJ-U and among its key stakeholders. Broad consensus was generated to undertake a baseline that would act as a basis of informing future interventions aimed at improving the situation under the auspices of the Democratic Governance Facility (DGF). Thus, this baseline is an attempt to respond to the various questions teased in understanding this relationship and the core objectives of the baseline are;

1. To highlight the state of and generate awareness about the safety and protection needs of journalists in Uganda.
2. To highlight the state of journalists adherence to the professional code of ethics and;
3. To provide evidence based recommendations for future interventions and initiatives to address threats for the benefit of the media industry and the country.
Therefore, this report is considered a relevant piece of product and its findings will galvanize shared opinion intended to enhance professionalism among journalists as a pre-condition of deterring attacks and violation of journalists’ freedoms. To a large extent, HRNJ-U believes the baseline report will provide rich practical solutions to a complex situation as attempts are made to improve professionalism in the media industry and promote democratic governance in the country.

Robert Ssempala  
The National Coordinator

...HRNJ-U believes the baseline report will provide rich practical solutions to a complex situation
Acknowledgement

Human Rights Network for Journalists-Uganda would like to appreciate the Democratic Governance Facility (DGF) for the Financial Support that enabled her to conduct the baseline and publish the findings report. We are indebted to DGF for this support and the overall institutional funding without whom this activity would not have taken place.

HRNJ-U wishes to thank individuals and Media Organisations that participated in the interviews, and offered useful information for publishing this report.

The Network highly appreciates efforts of Mr. Paul Kimumwe the lead consultant and the Research Assistants for the invaluable effort rendered to have the Baseline survey done.

Our appreciation also goes to HRNJ-U staff Mr. Robert Ssempala, the National Coordinator and Mr. Moses Magoola the Programmes Manager both for coordinating the entire exercise to its conclusion. We also wish to appreciate the entire secretariat for all their contribution in having this baseline possible.

We hope that this publication will be useful to the entire media industry and a number of stakeholders that are involved in defending media freedom and its development.
## Abbreviations

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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>ACME</td>
<td>African Centre for Media Excellence</td>
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<td>CPJ</td>
<td>Committee to Protect Journalists</td>
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<td>DGF</td>
<td>Democratic Governance Facility</td>
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<td>DPI</td>
<td>Defenders Protection Initiative</td>
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<td>HRNJ-Uganda</td>
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<td>HURINET</td>
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<td>ICJ</td>
<td>International Committee of Journalists</td>
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<td>IMCU</td>
<td>Independent Media Council of Uganda</td>
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<td>KI</td>
<td>Key Informant</td>
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<td>NUMEC</td>
<td>Northern Uganda Media Club</td>
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<td>RDCs</td>
<td>Resident District Commissioners</td>
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<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation</td>
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<td>UHRC</td>
<td>Uganda Human Rights Commission</td>
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<td>UJSC</td>
<td>Uganda Journalists Safety Committee</td>
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<td>UJU</td>
<td>Uganda Journalists Union</td>
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Joseph Akuze – Statistician

Research Assistants;

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Central/Greater Luwero- Luwagga Brian
Central/Mukono- Kamala Benon
Central/Kampala- Magambo Emmanuel
Central/Kampala- Nandudu Diana
Central/Kampala- Ivan Mpaata
Western Region - Enid Ninsiima
Eastern/Soroti- Esegu Julius
Eastern/Mbale- Egona Emmanuel
Northern Region- Sam Lawino
Eastern- Kibwika Saleh Sentamu
Definition of terms

**Journalist:**
For purposes of this study, a journalist refers to an individual who is gainfully engaged in the process of sourcing, processing and disseminating news and information on any media platform.

**Freelance Journalist**
This refers to a journalist who is not employed as a permanent member of staff for any media house and is therefore paid per story published/broadcast.

**Safety**
For purposes of this baseline survey, safety is defined as; “freedom from risk or harm for journalists in the course of doing their journalistic work as a result of unintentional acts such as accidents and illness1”

**Security**
Security refers to freedom from risk or harm resulting from violence or other intentional acts such as legal actions, arrests, intimidation, imprisonment, physical attacks.2

**Risk**
In this baseline survey, risk refers to possible events, however uncertain, that result to harm of the journalist3.

**Protection**
Protection refers to ‘measures taken to influence other actors to enhance security such as deterrence, evacuation, hiding or any other support that will minimize the consequences of risk4.

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1 Protection International [www.protectiononline.org](http://www.protectiononline.org)
2 Ibid
3 Ibid
4 Ibid
Executive Summary

This report presents findings from a baseline survey of the situation of Uganda journalists’ safety, security and professionalism commissioned by the Human Rights Network for Journalist (HRNJ-Uganda) with financial support from the Democratic Governance Facility (DGF). The main objective of the survey was to establish the extent to which journalists understand and adhere to the different laws, policy frameworks and other professional codes that affect journalism and how these relate to their personal safety and security.

In order to achieve the baseline survey objectives, the study used a cross-sectional design employing mixed methods of data collection and analysis, integrating both qualitative and quantitative data at three different levels. The survey was a national undertaking, covering the five regions – Northern, Southern, Eastern, Western and Central – of the country. From each of these regions, 3 districts were randomly selected, and with the help of the research assistants, we used simple random sampling to select the respondents from each of these districts.

In the Northern region therefore, we selected Lira, Gulu and Kitgum; in the Southern region, we selected Masaka, Kalangala, and Rakai; in Western, we selected Kasese, Kabale and Fort Portal; in the Central, we selected Kampala, Luwero and Mukono; while in the Eastern, we selected Soroti, Mbale and Jinja, bringing the total number of districts covered to 15. Specifically, the study conducted in-depth interviews with 35 respondents (15F and 20M) comprising of senior media managers and executives of media support organizations. The study also reached 117 journalists (43F and 74M) through self administered questionnaires. In addition, the baseline reviewed literature that was relevant to understanding the key underlying issues regarding media professionalism, safety and security of journalists in Uganda.

During data analysis, all filled questionnaires were reviewed by the consultant and statistician for consistence and data quality, and then entered into a pre-programmed data entry screen in CSpro, cleaned and later exported and analyzed using SPSS and Ms. Excel. Since the study was mainly descriptive, frequency/percentage distribution tables, graphs and cross-tabulations are the main form of presentation and analysis for the study.

While data from KI was captured by the research team taking detailed notes and highlighting
the emerging issues. These were later manually analysed and categorised into themes that were eventually constructed into narratives for interpretation. Quotes from the KIs are used to illustrate and emphasize the voices and issues raised by the respondents.

... In order to achieve the baseline survey objectives, the study used a cross-sectional design employing mixed methods of data collection and analysis, integrating both qualitative and quantitative data at three different levels.
Key findings

**Knowledge of media laws and access to professional code of ethics:**

The baseline established that while there is a general sense of awareness among journalists of laws and principles that govern the media in Uganda, with 70 per cent saying they know these laws, a majority (80 per cent) could only list the Press and Journalists Act (1995) and the repealed Electronic Media Act (1995) and this is despite the existence of a plethora of laws, including Article 29(1) of the Constitution, the Access to information Act (2005) and many others that govern media practice in Uganda.

Majority of the respondents (73 per cent) reported that their media houses have copies of professional codes of ethics that are accessible to journalists with some respondents indicating that they have personal copies (44 per cent). Unfortunately, this is yet to translate into an increase in the level of adherence to the principles as provided for in these codes and guidelines. Probably the fact that only about 8 per cent of the journalists said that they make reference to their professional ethical code on a daily basis could explain non-adherence and thus the decline in professional behavior of journalists.

**Personal safety, risks and security threats in the course of doing their work:** Findings from the baseline suggested that majority of the journalists (72 per cent) often face risks and threats in the course of executing their work, from physical assaults, intimidations, attacks by security agencies and politicians, police summons to record statements, and from the general public itself. Majority of the respondents (54 per cent) said that these risks and threats affect their ability to fully report on stories, with 28 per cent saying the threats have very serious implications. Among the actions listed as having been taken by the various journalists in the face of these threats include:

- “At times I fail to bring out the facts because I fear the consequences of being attacked later”; Female journalist from Mbale
- “At times I have had to keep away from writing on politics, police and military”; “I can abandon a story before it is fully out and reported”; Male journalist from Luwero
- “Due to the threats, I tend to shun some important news stories”; “I end up dropping some stories and cases”; Male journalist from Kasese
- “I feel intimidated and sometimes my sources don’t want to give me stories”; Female journalist from Jinja
‘I no longer report news stories, I was transferred to another sector, (because of the) threats to my life’; Male journalist from Soroti

“It (threats) reduces on my movement and working hours” Female journalist from Kalangala

Indeed these rampant threats may have led to the practice of self-censorship where journalists and their editors deliberately avoid and spike public interest stories respectively for fear of their lives.

**Journalists’ response to risk, threats and attacks:** The baseline findings point to a lack of adequate mechanisms to effectively respond to these threats and attacks. One of the key steps in dealing with or responding to threats is sharing the risk with key stakeholders who can either offer protection or cause a chain reaction of events that eventually exposes the aggressor. At least 50 per cent said that they had reported to someone about the threats they encountered. From the survey, majority of those who said they had reported to someone noted that they had reported to HRNJ-Uganda (70 per cent) alongside their supervisors (editor/manager). Other offices/individuals mentioned included the police (15 per cent), fellow reporters/journalists, local authorities, and the Uganda Human Rights Commission. It is only 56 per cent of these who actually made efforts to find out the reason for the threat/attack, and yet the failure to establish the cause/reason for the threat/attack may predispose these journalists to more attacks.

**Journalists not equipped with safety and protections skills:** The baseline survey findings suggest that majority of the journalists do not possess the requisite skills and knowledge to effectively deal with the risks and threats they face in the course of executing their work, especially as these threats are more likely to escalate during election periods. Majority of the respondents (64 per cent) said that their media houses do not have a safety protocol in place. Of the few (36 per cent) who said that the media houses have safety protocols, majority 57 per cent feel that the measures are not sufficient to deal with the increasing threats and attacks to their lives. This is because among the elements listed as part of the safety protocols for some media houses included; having a company lawyer, having security guards, suspending sensitive stories, provision of organization IDs, branded T-shirts among others.
Journalists not equipped with skills to deal with digital and online safety:
The baseline survey also established that journalists are not equipped to effectively protect their online communication. 40 per cent of the journalists said they access the internet through commercial cyber cafes, while most (66 per cent) also said that they do so through a shared office desktop computer. The practice of safeguarding their information through making back-ups has also not been embraced by a number of the journalists (40 per cent), making them vulnerable to losing all their information in case of a cyber attack or loss of their computer/laptops.

The baseline findings point to a lack of adequate mechanisms to effectively respond to these threats and attacks.
Conclusions

From the above findings, a number of conclusions can be derived including the fact that journalists constantly face risks, threats and attacks in the course of performing their work irrespective of the standard of their professional work. And that despite the number of efforts geared towards enhancing the professional standards and safety and protection of the media in Uganda, there are still challenges that need to be addressed.

1. The level of appreciation and adherence to the journalism professional codes and other in-house editorial guidelines is still low with the level of violations quite high. There are several factors that can be attributed to this, ranging from the lack of the requisite skills and knowledge, lack of passion for the profession, poor pay, and outright impunity within the media fraternity.

2. Journalists face an increasing level of threats and risks to their lives and person in the process of doing their jobs. The number of journalists being attacked and threatened with the sole purpose of dissuading them from reporting issues of public interest is on the increase. These threats and risks have a negative impact on the journalism practice since journalists and by extension media houses desist from covering sensitive issues that may “offend” some of their stakeholders.

3. Media houses have not done much to cushion their employees through providing employee safety nets and investments such as continuous capacity building to enhance their capacity to report and investigate issues professionally and systematically.

4. Journalists still lack the requisite skills to effectively deal with these risks and threats, including the lack of understanding of the basic laws that govern the practice of journalism, and other skills like assessing their environment which leaves them vulnerable to abuse and attacks.

Media houses have not done much to cushion their employees through providing employee safety nets and investments.
Recommendations

Based on the above findings, the following conclusions can be made:

**Promoting professional and responsible journalism**

a) Continuous skilling and training of journalists in basic news writing and reporting including, objectivity, accuracy, fairness, balancing and multiple sourcing

b) Encourage and support media houses to populate the professional code of conduct, including developing in-house editorial guidelines whose adherence must be enforced. This is through revising and updating the ICMU code as well as offering technical support in developing the in-house editorial policies.

c) Support the establishment of a peer-review mechanism where media matters such as professionalism and adherence to the journalism codes are discussed to promote self-regulation, especially at regional level with the involvement of regional media associations.

d) Engage media training institutions to develop mechanisms of reaching out to the industry so as to provide leadership in the continuous professional development of journalists.

e) Strengthen the capacity of selected media associations that will take lead in advocating for and advancing the needs of journalists such as, a minimum wage, employment contracts, health and life insurance, access to legal representation.

**Journalist safety and protection**

a) Develop a multi-level training curriculum that aims at equipping the journalists with skills to report safely and professionally for individual journalists, media houses and media training institutions.

b) Train and support media houses and individual journalists to develop and adopt a safety and security protocol in the course of their work.

c) Ensure effective documentation of and sharing of information regarding journalists that have been attacked or threatened.

d) Build partnerships and coalitions with media houses, media support organizations and the legal fraternity to ensure that cases of attacks against journalists are exposed and condemned.

e) Engage in strategic advocacy and litigation against retrogressive legal provisions that infringe on freedom of expression and affect journalism practice in Uganda.

f) Engage with the security forces so as to develop a better working relationship between them and the media.
CHAPTER ONE:
INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction

The media in Uganda has come a long way since the liberalization in the early 1990s. In 1993 the first privately owned station went on air\(^5\). Since then, the country has seen an increase in the number of privately owned media outlets – both print and electronic, accompanied by establishment of media training institutions to build the professional capacity of the journalists – from as low as certificate to masters. By 2009, the numbers of licensed radio stations stood at 222, of which 192 are operational, while 35 of the 50 licensed television stations are on air\(^6\) and over 10 major daily, weekly and monthly print news papers and magazines.

There are no clear figures on the number of practicing journalists working in Uganda today due to the lack of a proper registration system. The HRNJ-Uganda has a membership of 700 journalists country-wide\(^7\).

1.1 Journalists safety, security and protection

The safety of journalists in Uganda continues to be of great concern to media freedom and human rights defenders. HRNJ-Uganda has been documenting the attacks against the media in Uganda, and in 2013, the organizations revealed that they had documented 124 cases of attacks against the media\(^8\).

Of these, 85 cases were attacks by the police. This was almost double the number of attacks

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7 Interview with Moses Magola, Ag. Programmes Manager at HRNJ-Uganda 10th February 2015
8 HRNJ-Uganda (2013) The quest for safety and security of journalists in Uganda: Trends and Patterns
by police against the media committed in 2012. The police was accused of employing various tactics including prolonged detention of the journalists arrested; barring them from accessing news scenes and targeting them with tear gas.

But journalists are not only worried about their safety from state actors. There are cases of public attacks against journalists, especially during riots and demonstrations where journalists from certain media houses become targets of attack. Of the 124 violations documented in 2013, 85 were by the Police; while 11 of the cases were attributed to private individuals. Other violators listed in the report included; media houses (management), Resident District Commissioners (RDCs), private security companies, among others.

Despite repeated advocacy and petitions from various actors calling for government to take action against perpetrators of violence against journalists, nothing has been forthcoming. A growing culture of impunity is manifest in Uganda as the powerful and government agents get away with their illegal deeds committed against journalists (HRNJ-Uganda 2013b).

1.2 Media professionalism and ethical behavior in Uganda

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) an internationally recognized authority on media and freedom of expression, asserts that as the Fourth Estate and the Ears and Eyes of society; the media needs to “provide a platform for sustainable, professional and credible journalism.” But this can only be achieved by the media adhering to their professional code of ethics and journalistic principles.

In Uganda however, professional ethics and observance of universal standards of journalism remain a challenge for media houses in spite of efforts by several media development organizations such as; the African Centre for Media Excellence (ACME), the Uganda Media Development Foundation (UMDF), Uganda Radio Network (URN), and PANOS Eastern Africa; to conduct capacity enhancement training courses.

While commenting on the state of professionalism among journalists in Uganda, Daily Monitor’s Bernard Tabaire (2013) in one of his columns wrote that the tough working
conditions should not be an excuse for journalists to take bribes to either kill or promote stories noting further that;

"Integrity amid hardship is a mark not just of professionalism, but also of general civilised conduct...... The average Ugandan journalist will not give you (passion and ambition: the desire to be the best). Ignorance and arrogance seem to be their (journalists') stock in trade. They need not be because that is no way to advance freedom of the media and to serve the public interest."15

According to the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Africa Media Barometer report16, there is a worsening trend of corruption among journalists, which compromises their integrity and standing in society. The report notes that while the more affluent and well established media houses such as The Daily Monitor and New Vision tend to provide better working conditions and therefore are not greatly affected by this growing vice, journalists from less established media houses tend to charge civil society organisations in order to have their issues covered – with some accused of direct extortion in order not to print damning stories.

However, the challenges facing the media today are many and they stretch beyond individual journalists. The heavy commercialization of media houses, especially radio, has heavily impacted on the level of investments by media owners in the industry. Many media owners and managers have opted for freelance practitioners who are paid on piecemeal basis. The payment ranges from less than a dollar to a few dollars per story17. These payments are not only meager, but also inconsistent, especially for up-country radio stations18. This has consequently affected the quality of the output.19

There seems to be a perpetual shortage of well-trained media professionals especially at upcountry-based radio & TV stations. Journalists often lack basic tools of work such as computers, voice recorders and cameras; and are poorly facilitated to move to the field to

17 http://hrnjuganda.blogspot.com/2012/05/impact-of-liberalization-and.html
18 In an interview with Moses Lwochaza, the Coordinator of the Busoga Media Network, 11th February 2015
19 http://hrnjuganda.blogspot.com/2012/05/impact-of-liberalization-and.html
gather news.20

1.3 Rationale of the baseline survey

Studies by HRNJ-Uganda2122 show that sometimes journalists’ vulnerability to attacks and threats is accelerated by the publication and broadcasting of inaccurate stories, unbalanced reporting, very subjective as opposed to objective and fare news coverage, the failure to respect people’s privacy in the course of sourcing for news stories, taking bribes, disclosing information sources and propagating hate speech.

According to HRNJ-Uganda, there is a possibility of a link between the lack of professionalism among journalists and their safety and security. This would therefore make it imperative to target current active practitioners across the country to equip them with the requisite skills and knowledge as a preemptive measure of mitigating future attacks especially as we draw near 2016 general elections, a period when attacks and violations of journalists’ rights are at the peak level.

In this regard, the Human Rights Network for Journalists Uganda (HRNJ-Uganda) with support from the Democratic Governance Facility (DGF) is implementing a two-year program titled; “Bolstering the professional capacities of journalists to deal with their personal safety and security threats and risks”. The project seeks “To contribute to improved professional conduct that enhances the safety and security of journalists in the upcoming 2016 elections in Uganda”.

It is hoped that this project will enhance the ongoing efforts for the media sector to uphold its professional standards and promote independent journalism and that this will directly improve journalists’ safety and security.

In order to establish a clear starting point for the project, HRNJ-Uganda commissioned this baseline survey with a view of understanding the dynamics relating to journalists knowledge of and application of the journalism professional principles, frameworks and guidelines/codes of journalism in executing their duties and responsibilities and the effect of this on their personal safety, security and protection.

20 DGF Media Development Strategy 2013
1.4 **Scope of the Survey**

The baseline survey was a national undertaking, covering the five regions of the country namely; Northern, Southern, Eastern, Western and Central. In terms of issues, the baseline sought to explore the extent to which journalists comprehend their rights and freedoms; knowledge of existing legal, policy frameworks and guidelines; knowledge of and adherence to the professional code of ethics. It also sought to explore the personal safety and security issues facing journalists; the existing defense, protection and support mechanisms; including the vulnerabilities in the media (both at individual and media house level).

1.5 **Objective of the survey**

The objective of the survey therefore was to establish the extent to which journalists understand and adhere to the different laws, policy frameworks and other professional codes that affect journalism and how these relate to their personal safety and security.

Specifically, the national baseline survey sought to;

a) Establish the journalists’ knowledge of their rights and freedoms as well as the laws and policies affecting media practice in Uganda

b) Examine the state of journalists’ adherence to the professional code of ethics

c) Highlight the state of and generate awareness about the safety and protection needs for journalists in Uganda

1.6 **Methodology**

In order to achieve the baseline survey objectives, the study used a cross-sectional design employing mixed methods of data collection, analysis and integration of both qualitative and quantitative data at three different levels:

**a. Qualitative**

Qualitatively, the survey conducted in-depth interviews (IDIs) with key informants (KI): These involved detailed discussions with, selected media managers and editors, media trainers and executives of media support organizations. A set of written questions were prepared for the field research team to be used as interview guides during the discussions with the key informants. The purpose of using this approach was to collect information from a wide range of experts (mentioned above) given their particular knowledge and understanding of the media environment in Uganda, courtesy of their positions.

**b. Quantitative**

Quantitatively, the survey used self administered questionnaires (SAQ). This involved the distribution of questionnaires that had been specifically designed to be completed by the
respondents without the guidance or intervention of the field researchers.

The interview guide for the key informants and the self-administered questionnaires were both pre-tested with two respondents in Kampala (a key informant and an ordinary respondent) and further discussed with the National Coordinator and Acting Programs Manager of HRNJ-Uganda and were revised accordingly.

**c. Literature Review**

In addition to the above two, it was important to review the available literature – including reports, newspaper articles and books – that was relevant to understanding the safety and security situations, and the nature of professionalism of journalists in Uganda. Reports and other publications on the state of freedom of expression in Uganda, media regulation and practice, media development and safety of journalists were therefore given priority when it came to selection.

**1.6.1 Sample size and sampling procedure**

The baseline survey received responses from a total of 117 journalists (43F and 74M) through self-administered questionnaires; and 35 key informants were interviewed (15F and 20M). In order to reach these respondents, the survey used a multi-stage sampling strategy in which the country was divided into five regions – Northern, Southern, Eastern, Western and Central. From each of these regions, 3 districts were randomly selected, and with the help of the research assistants, simple random sampling was used to select the respondents from each of these districts.

In the Northern region, the study selected Lira, Gulu and Kitgum; in the Southern region, Masaka, Kalangala, and Rakai were chosen; in Western, Kasese, Kabale and Fort Portal were selected; in the Central, Kampala, Luwero and Mukono were picked; while in the Eastern region, Soroti, Mbale and Jinja were selected. This brings the total number of districts covered to 15.

In each of the 15 districts, except Kampala, a total of 8 respondents were also purposively selected from a list of HRNJ-Uganda members for the self-administered questionnaires, while 2 key informants were also selected in each. Bringing the total of respondents reached in each district (except Kampala) to 10.

In Kampala, 14 respondents and 8 KIs were purposively selected. The reason for this disparity in numbers between Kampala and other districts is that because the former has the highest concentration of media outlets and journalists, making it crucial to reach more
people in Kampala than anywhere else.

**1.6.2 Data Analysis**
Because the study used a mixed approach, a number of methods were used in doing the data analysis.

All filled questionnaires were reviewed by the consultant and statistician for consistence and data quality, and then entered into a pre-programmed data entry screen in CSpro, cleaned and later exported and analyzed using SPSS and Ms. Excel. Since the study was mainly descriptive, frequency/percentage distribution tables, graphs and cross-tabulations are the main form of presentation and analysis for the study.

While data from KI was captured by the research team taking detailed notes and highlighting the emerging issues. These were later manually analysed and categories into themes that were eventually constructed into narratives for interpretation. Quotes from the KIs are used to illustrate and emphasize the voices and issues raised by the respondents.
CHAPTER TWO:
SURVEY FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

2.0 Introduction
This chapter presents findings of the baseline survey that sought to establish the extent to which journalists comprehend their rights and freedoms; adherence to the professional code of conduct and how these relate to their personal safety and security. The results are from responses of the 117 out of a total of 128 respondents that were reached through self-administered questionnaires, representing a response rate of 91 per cent. Among the KI, we had a response rate of 97 per cent, having received positive response from 35 out of the 36 targeted respondents.

The results from the self-administered questionnaires, the KI and literature review are presented simultaneously. For purposes of emphasis, direct quotes from KI have been used in the discussions of the findings.

2.1 Respondents’ demographics
The general demographic information sought from the respondents included; gender, media employer, nature of employment, and academic qualifications

2.1.1 Gender of the respondents
Close to two-thirds of the respondents were male (63 per cent) while only 37 per cent were female. In Uganda, the media landscape is dominated by men both in terms of numbers as well as holding key decision making positions.
Table 1
The table below summarises the gender disaggregation of the respondents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender of the respondents</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.1.2 Respondents’ media organization type
The media landscape in Uganda is still predominantly dominated by radio as evidenced by the number of radios compared to other media platforms. By 2009, the number of licensed radio stations stood at 222, of which 192 are operational, while 35 of the 50 licensed television stations are on air. It also goes without saying that radio should also be the largest employer of journalists. It was therefore not surprising that majority of the baseline survey respondents were working with radios (58%), with only 28% of the respondents working with a print media outlet. The smallest group of journalists that participated in the survey were those from online media platforms at just 4.27%. This is because online media and general access to broadband internet in Uganda is still new and predominantly urban. Internet use stands at 20% of the population. The low ICT uptake is attributed to a number of factors that include; the poor spread of infrastructure, low literacy levels, high cost of access and minimal local content online.

26 Ibid
2.1.3 Respondents’ employment status

Media houses in Uganda have tended to keep a very tiny fraction of their workforce as full time employees while the bulk work as freelancers where some are paid a monthly retainer, while most are paid per story broadcast/published. The practice of having freelancers ensures that employers are freed from certain obligations such as paying health insurance for the journalist, National Social Security Fund (NSSF), and any other benefits. It also means that the journalist who gets paid per story published/broadcast must invest in the process of getting the story.
Table 2
The table below summarises the respondents’ employment status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment Status</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freelance</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full time staff</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.1.4 Respondents’ position in the media outlet
The majority (84%) of the respondents held a position of reporter or correspondent within the media outlet that they worked for, only one respondent was a producer. When the study compared the different positions by type of media outlet namely; print, radio, TV and online, there were no observed statistical significance (P-value >0.05) between the different types, however like we had observed earlier the radio media type of media outlet employed most of the respondents (reporters/correspondents)
Table 3
The table below shows the distribution of the frequency of the respondents’ positions at their media houses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents’ position in the media organization by type</th>
<th>Type of media outlet</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>n(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Position in the media outlet</td>
<td>Print</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>(90.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Radio</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>(58.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TV</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>(100.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>(80.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>(72.4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Reporter/ Correspondent</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>n(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>(90.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>39</td>
<td>(58.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>(100.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>(80.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>(72.4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Editor</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>n(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(3.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>(13.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>(0.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(20.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>(9.48)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Producer</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>n(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>(0.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(1.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>(0.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>(0.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(0.9)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Senior Management</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>n(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>(0.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>(4.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>(0.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>(0.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>(2.6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Other (Specify)</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>n(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(6.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>(22.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>(0.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>(0.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>(14.7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>n(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>33</td>
<td>(100.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>67</td>
<td>(100.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>(100.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>(100.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>(100.0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pearson Chi (12) 18.467
P-Value = 0.102

Others include; Bureau chief, Investigative reporter, Marketing, News reader, Presenter and Talk show host

2.1.5 Education level by status of employment
Nearly half (49.6 per cent) of the respondents had a diploma as the highest level of education they had attained, with about 31 per cent of all respondents indicating a bachelor’s degree as their highest level of education. This is consistent with findings from other studies that have indicated that many graduates often opt out of the newsrooms for greener pastures as most media houses do not offer competitive salaries and thus can only retain just a handful of graduates on their staff. An interesting finding is that majority of the respondents who had attained an education level of at least a diploma were full-time employees by the media outlet while the majority (27.5 per cent) of those with only a certificate were freelance journalists compared to only 13.6 per cent who were staff.
Table 4
The table below shows summarises the respondents’ qualifications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents’ level of education and employment status</th>
<th>Freelance</th>
<th>Staff</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level of Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate</td>
<td>14 (27.5)</td>
<td>9 (13.6)</td>
<td>23 (19.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>24 (47.1)</td>
<td>34 (51.5)</td>
<td>58 (49.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelors</td>
<td>13 (25.5)</td>
<td>23 (34.9)</td>
<td>36 (30.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>51 (100.0)</td>
<td>66 (100.0)</td>
<td>117 (100.0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.2 Knowledge of media laws and access to professional code of ethics.
For any practicing journalist, an understanding of the legal and policy framework that governs the profession is a vital tool in safeguarding their personal safety, security and first line of defense. While 70 per cent of the respondents said that they were knowledgeable of the laws that govern journalism practice in Uganda, when challenged to list the specific laws, majority 80 per cent could only list the Press and Journalists Act 1995 and the repealed Electronic Media Act 1995. Only 10 per cent listed the Access to Information Act 2005 in addition to the above two, with less than 2 per cent listing Article 29 of the Constitution. This is despite the numerous laws and policies that have a direct effect on the media in Uganda.

Article 29(1) (a) of the Uganda Constitution provides that;
“Every person shall have the right to freedom of speech and expression, which shall include freedom of the press and other media”

Additionally, article 41(1) of the same Constitution provides for the right of access to information thus;
“Every citizen has a right of access to information in the possession of the State or any other organ or agency of the State except where the release of the information is likely to prejudice the security or sovereignty of the State or interfere with the right to the privacy of any other person”

Other constitutional provisions that should guarantee the safety and security of journalists include: Article 22 (the right to life); Article 23 (the right to personal liberty); Article 24 (respect for human dignity and protection from inhuman treatment) and last but nonetheless least,
Article 28 (the right to a fair hearing).

Additionally, journalists need to be aware with the following legislations that have a direct bearing on journalism practice especially as we approach elections time; such as the Presidential Elections Act (2005); the Referendum and other Provisions Act (2005); the Parliamentary Elections Act (2005). Other laws that pose a continuous threat to the safety of journalists and the media in Uganda include; the Penal Code Act (as amended 2007); the Press and Journalists Act (2000); the Anti-Terrorism Act (2002).

Regarding the existence of/and journalists’ access to professional code of conduct/ethics, about 73 per cent of the journalists said that their media houses have a copy of the journalists’ professional code of ethics. Of these, 72 per cent mentioned that the codes are accessible to all journalists within their media house. When asked if they had a personal copy, only 44.4% answered in the affirmative. Some media houses had however gone ahead to develop in-house editorial policies. 71.8% of the journalists indicated that their media house indeed had in-house editorial policies and guidelines for journalists.

But even with over 72% of respondents reporting their media houses having a code of conduct and 72% of these having access to it, there was split opinions on the current state of journalism professionalism among KIs. While some KIs felt that it had drastically declined (20% - 37%) due to a number of reasons including the fact that majority of the practicing crop especially in the country-side had no basic training in journalism (including on job training), others were less harsh indicating that there has been some progress.

“Uganda is not doing badly. Most media houses have codes of ethics governing journalists operations. Most mainstream media have opened up discussions on media related issues and an emphasis on continuous skilling and retooling of journalists....."According to a female KI at the level of Programs Director for a radio in Jinja

However, despite the fact that most media houses have journalism codes, including in-house editorial guidelines, the profession faces a lot of threats and ethical dilemmas. According to a male KI working as a Bureau Chief of a media outlet in Masaka, journalists

continue to exhibit unethical behaviors that tarnish the profession.

“Many journalists have violated the ethical code by accepting bribes to make ends meet. Plagiarism from the internet to build on news or material for broadcast. Some media houses have become judges and prosecutors of suspects, showing images without protecting them even as the law presumes them innocent until proved guilty by the courts.”

Figure 2
The figure below shows respondents’ knowledge of the media laws, knowledge of conventions that guarantee freedom of expression, media houses with code of conduct and the journalist’s access to the codes.

A Know any media regulatory laws
B Know any conventions that guarantee freedom of expression and media
C Media house has a copy of journalists’ code of conduct
C1 Accessible to all journalists in media house
D Have a personal copy
E talk about the need for journalists to adhere to the professional code of ethics
F media house have an in-house editorial policy or guidelines for journalists
2.3 Journalists engagement with and adherence to the professional code of ethics and principles

Like any other profession worth its name, the journalism professional code of ethics is ideally the constitution of the journalism profession, intended to guide the practice of sourcing, processing and dissemination of news and information. But from the table below, about 58 per cent of the journalists indicated that they make reference to the journalism professional code of ethics as and when the need arises with about 8 per cent referencing it at least once a month. Findings show that another 8 per cent makes consult their professional code on a daily basis.

Table 5
The table below shows the distribution of the frequency the respondents make reference to their professional code of ethics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How often and under what circumstances do you refer to it</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a week</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Several times a month</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least once a month</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whenever I feel like</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>57.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another male KI from Kasese opines that adherence to the code is low due to the fact that many of those who join journalism do not do it out of passion for the profession, but rather as a source of income. Another KI from Soroti suggested that some journalists get compromised on their ethics due to their needy financial situations.

“It is difficult to stick to professional ethics on an empty stomach and much worse when you are not assured of your job the following day,” she says.
2.4. How to enhance professionalism and ethical reporting among journalists

Among the suggestions by KI include;

a) Setting minimum qualifications for one to practice journalism with an approved curriculum for all media training institutions
b) Providing editorial policies and guidelines to all media houses
c) Setting up a professional body to deal with errant journalists and those who violate the professional code of ethics
d) Strengthen journalists’ watchdog bodies, like the Independent Media Council of Uganda (IMCU)
e) Provide continuous trainings for journalists to improve skills and ethical conduct
f) Journalists unions should revive their mandatory role or disciplinary measures against undisciplined members and advocate for their rights as well
g) Improve welfare of journalists and other media practitioners

2.5 Journalists face personal safety, risks and security threats in the course of doing their work

The impact of attacks against journalists on journalism itself and the wider democracy cannot be over emphasized. According to Barry James (2002);

“Every journalist killed or neutralized by terror is an observer less of the human condition. Every attack distorts reality by creating a climate of fear and self-censorship.”

From the survey, about seventy-two percent (72%) of the respondents indicated that they face risks and threats to their lives ranging from physical assaults, intimidations, attacks by security agencies and politicians, police summons to record statements and the public itself.

According to a KI at the level of Assistant Station Manager, the self-censoring of stories taking place within media houses to “serve personal as opposed to public interest” is also a big threat facing the media in Uganda today as many public interest stories do not see the light of the day.

Within the professional ranks, there is also the threat of insufficient understanding and appreciation of media ethics and principles due to “un-qualified” journalist which impacts on the level of professionalism. According to another KI from Gulu, these threats to media

professionalism are occasioned by the media houses themselves. “They invest less in their employees which predisposes them (employees) to external threats like corruption” he says.

Figure 3
The figure below shows percentages of respondents who reported facing threats and risks, those who reported about the threats and those who found out why they were threatened.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Security risks and threats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Percent</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face any threats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reports about the threats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find out why s/he is threatened</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When asked if they had made efforts to inform anyone (even police) of the threats they were facing, only half of the respondents indicated that they had informed anyone about the risks and threats they were facing. Majority of those who said they had reported to someone (70 per cent) said they had reported to HRNJ-Uganda alongside their supervisors (editor/manager). Other offices/individuals mentioned included the police (15 per cent), fellow reporters/journalists, local authorities, and the Uganda Human Rights Commission. Unfortunately, it is only 56 per cent of these who actually made efforts to find out the reason for the threat/attack, and yet the failure to establish the cause/reason for the threat/attack however may predispose these journalists to more attacks.

2.5 Frequency of occurrence of the security risks and threats
From the baseline survey findings, over 28 per cent of the respondents indicated that they are subjected to risks and threats at least once in a month, while close to 26 per cent experience these risks and threats several times within a month. In any given week, at least 10% of respondents indicated being threatened while 6% it is a daily occurrence. Those
that reported receiving threats daily said that they were subjected to verbal assaults and intimidation, harassments at work or in the field sometimes by colleagues.

Table 6
The table below shows the distribution of the frequency respondents said they had been threatened during their journalism career.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rate of occurrence of security risks and threats</th>
<th>Rate</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a week</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Several times a month</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a month</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.6 Extent to which threats to respondents’ life affect their ability to fully report stories
From the survey findings, 54 per cent of the respondents feel that these risks and threats affected their ability to fully report on stories, with 28 per cent saying the threats had very serious implications to the extent of refusing to cover certain stories that are regarded as too dangerous.

Below are some selected responses from the various respondents on the impact of the threats on their ability to effectively report on stories.
“At times I fail to bring out the facts because I fear the consequences of being attacked later”; Male journalist from Rakai
“At times I have had to keep away from writing on politics, police and military”; Male journalist from Fort Portal
“I can abandon a story before it is fully out and reported”; Female journalist from Mukono
“Due to the threats, I tend to shun some important news stories”; Male journalist from Lira
“I end up dropping some stories and cases”; Female journalist from Kampala
“I feel intimidated and sometimes my sources don’t want to give me stories”; Male journalist from Mbale

“I no longer report news stories, I was transferred to another sector, (because of the) threats to my life”; Male journalist from Gulu

“It (threats) reduces on my movement and working hours” Female journalist from Kampala

These testimonies underscore the importance of mitigating these threats as their persistency will keep on affecting how the media operates.

Table 7
The table 7 below shows the distribution of the frequency respondents said the threats affect their ability to fully report stories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How do threats to your life affect your ability to fully report stories</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seriously</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>28.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somehow</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>54.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>117</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.7 Journalists need to strengthen their defense and protection mechanisms

The study examined the existing defense and protection mechanism that are available to journalists. While 60.7% reported possessing the skills to avoid and deal with risks and threats in the course of their journalism work, only 45.3% reported having received actual training on safety and protection. Among the organizations that respondents listed as having received training from included; ARTICLE 19, HRNJ-Uganda, Panos, UMDF and the Red Cross. The survey also sought to know if the respondents’ news organization had a safety plan/protocol in place. Majority of the respondents (64 per cent) said that their media houses do not have a safety protocol in place. Of those few (36 per cent) who said that the media houses had a safety protocol, majority (57 per cent) felt that the measures were not sufficient to deal with the increasing threats and attacks to their lives. This is because among the elements listed as part of the safety protocols for some media houses included; having a company lawyer, having security guards, suspending sensitive stories, provision of
organization IDs, branded T-shirts among others.

Figure 4
The figure 4 below shows the percentage of respondents who said that they have the skills to deal with risks; those who have been trained on safety and protection, media houses with a safety protocol, and those who think that the measures in place are sufficient.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Security and Protection against threats and risks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have skills to avoid exposure to threats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trained on journalists’ security, safety and protection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation has a safety plan in case of danger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measures in place are sufficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment safety when on duty</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Proportion who have heard any of the key safety statements
One way of ensuring journalists safety and security is if they understand and appreciate their working environment and are able to make decisions regarding their personal safety. Accordingly, the survey asked respondents if they had heard of some of the key statements that would enable them demand for safety nets at their workplaces.

Slightly over a half (55.6%) had heard of the statement that; “Journalists should not take risks in pursuing a story if they think they might be killed or injured”. On the other hand, less than a half (49.6%) reporting that they had ever heard of the statement; “A journalist can refuse a dangerous assignment”.

While it is generally assumed among media practitioners that; “No story is worth a journalist’s life”, only 73.5% of respondents said that they had ever heard the statement. It is however important to note that respondents acknowledged having heard and indeed agreed with
the statement that; “It is important for journalists to have safety training”.

**Table 8**
The table 8 below shows the distribution of the frequency respondents said they had heard of the following media safety statements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents have heard of media safety statements</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Journalists should not take risks in pursuing a story if they think they might be killed or injured</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>44.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>55.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A journalist can refuse a dangerous assignment</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>50.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>49.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Media houses should provide journalists with safety equipment while going for dangerous assignments</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>23.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>76.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>It is important for journalists to have safety training.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>23.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>76.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Media house should provide journalists with personal insurance covers</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>35.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>64.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No story is worth a journalists’ life</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>26.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>73.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.8 How security risks and threats impact the way journalists relate and get stories from sources

Majority of the respondent (81 per cent) indicated that the constant security risks and threats that they face have an impact on their behavior as journalists especially on how they related with their sources of information. Close to 30% of the respondents indicated that the impact was very serious. Below are selected responses from some respondents on the impact of the threats on how they related and got stories from sources.

“Failure to access information which means no work and I will not be paid since I'm paid per story; Male journalist from Fort Portal
“I ended up leaving out some stories because of the threats”; Female journalist from Rakai
“I have simply just ignored certain good stories due to fear for my life;” Female journalist from Masaka
“I stop asking hard questions to the sources that are already unfriendly;” Male journalist from Jinja
“News sources fear to divulge information for fear of reprisal from their bosses;” Female journalist from Kitgum
“Potential sources fear to identify with reporters labeled opposition for fear of reprisals;” Female journalist from Luwero
“Some politicians label (journalists) anti establishment;” Male journalist from Kasese
“Some sources are no longer welcoming journalists;” Female journalist from Mbale
“Sources hoard information due to fear of being at risk even when promised protection of identity;” Male journalist from Mukono
“Sometimes you are not free to get information from your sources;” Male journalist from Lira
Table 9
The table 9 below shows the distribution of the frequency respondents said risks and threats impact they way they relate and get stories from sources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How have security risks and threats affected the way you relate and get stories from your sources</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seriously</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>29.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somehow</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>52.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.9 Journalists must embrace digital security and online safety
Given the important role that the internet and online communication plays, and the associated risks and threats, the survey asked respondents about how they access internet services. 65.5% indicated they accessed internet using the desktop computers at their offices, while 53.4% accessed through their mobile phones.

Almost 40% accessed internet through a cyber café and common computers. This requires skills and software to remain anonymous online given the risks associated with shared computers. Unfortunately, majority of the respondents when prodded further did not seem to have access to the software nor the skills to navigate anonymously online while using a shared machine.
The figure below summarises the distribution of the frequency of respondents' source of internet.

![Source of Internet Diagram]

2.10 **Journalists need to always back up their data and information**

About 60% of the respondents indicated that they did backup of their data, while 40% indicated they did not make backups of their data and information. This practice of not making back-ups exposed them to the possibility of losing all their information incase of a cyber attack, or loss of their gadgets.

The figure below summarises the distribution of the frequency of respondents backing up of data.

![Have any backups for the data Diagram]
2.11 Knowledge of international or national organisations that support journalists facing threats

When asked about their knowledge of international organizations that support journalists in distress, 79.5% said they knew some, while 20.5% said they did not know of any organization.

Among those listed included; HRNJ-Uganda, African Centre for Media Excellence, Uganda Human Rights Commission, Defenders Protection Initiative, ARTICLE 19, International Committee of Journalists, Northern Uganda Media Club, Committee to Protect Journalists, Human Rights Network Uganda, and Uganda Journalists Union, among others.

Table 10

The table 10 below shows the distribution of the frequency respondents said they knew of international/national organizations that support journalists facing threats

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge of organizations that support journalists facing threats</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>79.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>20.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.12 Practice of changing passwords

When asked how often they changed their passwords, 37% said they have never changed their passwords, while only 5.1% claimed to change passwords on a weekly basis. 20.5% said they changed theirs at least once a year, while only 13.7% and 15.4% changed their passwords monthly and quarterly respectively.
Table 11
The table 11 below shows the distribution of the frequency respondents said change their passwords

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How often do you change your password?</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After three months</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annually</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>20.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>37.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.13 Biggest pressure that can force a journalist to release confidential information
Respondents were asked to list pressures or situations under which they would be forced to release confidential information which would compromise their sources or endanger their lives.
Among the pressures or reasons listed included; court orders; put at gun point; threat of being killed; loss of job; threat to family members; order by supervisors; the risk of losing a job; fear of imprisonment.

“If am threatened to be killed like at gun point, I may be convinced to release such information,” according to a male journalist from Gulu.

“Court can force me to release the information i have got but after consulting my bosses.” Female journalist from Kampala

“If threatened by torture by especially by member of the armed forces,” male respondent from Soroti

2.14 Journalism skills that journalists want to be empowered with
The survey asked journalists to list the kind of skills they would want to be empowered with in relation to their personal safety, security and professional ethics. Here is a summary of the key skills identified:

- Basic skills of writing news and reporting,
. How to report balanced stories
. The legal and policy frameworks governing the media in Uganda
. Some basic knowledge on the court system especially how to behave when arrested or summoned to the police
. Ethical principles in journalism
. Basics in personal safety and protection
. Risk and threat analysis while in the field, especially hostile environment
. Cyber and online security
. How to cover conflicts
. Investigative reporting and covering elections
. How to deal with violent and hostile sources and aggrieved parties
. How to protect equipment and gadgets while in the field
. Both theories and practical skills in safety reporting

2.15 **Key Interventions to protect journalists**

There have been several efforts, both nationally and internationally to try and curb the amount of attacks against journalists as well as provide journalists with skills, safety nets and protection mechanisms. On 12th April 2012, the United Nations Executives Board endorsed what is now known as the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity[30]. The UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity was the result of a process that began in 2010 upon request of the Intergovernmental Council of the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) with the purpose of creating of a free and safe environment for journalists and media workers, both in conflict and non-conflict situations, with a view to strengthening peace, democracy and development worldwide.

In re-echoing what Barry James (2002) said about the need to protect journalists, Section 14 of the UN Plan of Action on the safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity asserts that; “The safety of journalists and the struggle against impunity for their killers are essential to preserve the fundamental right to freedom of expression, guaranteed by Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Freedom of expression is an individual right, for which no one should be killed, but it is also a collective right, which empowers populations through facilitating dialogue, participation and democracy, and thereby makes autonomous and sustainable development possible.”[31]


The process of campaigning for the safety of journalists had indeed been started much earlier by the UN Security Council when they adopted resolution 1738 calling for more action to protect journalist in conflict situations.\textsuperscript{32}

The resolution “urges all parties involved in situations of armed conflict to respect the professional independence and rights of journalists, media professionals and associated personnel as civilians”, and urges warring parties “to do their utmost to prevent violations of international humanitarian law against civilians, including journalists, media professionals and associated personnel\textsuperscript{33}”

Nationally, organisations such as HRNJ-Uganda and ARTICLE 19 Eastern African have led the way in ensuring that journalists are equipped with the requisite skills and knowledge to safely perform their journalistic duties. Between 2012 and 2013, ARTICLE 19, with support from DGF, trained 97 journalists (66M and 31F) in personal safety and security.\textsuperscript{34} On the other hand, HRNJ-Uganda and her partners have provided legal representation and financial support, in addition to training of a number of journalists. In addition, HRNJ-Uganda has also filed a number of petitions challenging retrogressive media laws such as the Press and Journalists Act Cap 105 that infringe on freedom of expression and have thus been used to harass and intimidate journalists.

It thus becomes clear that the safety of journalists requires a combination of factors, not just the constitutional guarantees as these are easily undermined by other laws as well as the impunity of the violators and the non-responsiveness of the duty bearers to tame the situations. This has been well captured by the 2008 UNESCO Media Development Indicators that provide a framework for assessing media development

“It is not just the absence of restrictions on the media that matters, but the extent to which all sectors of society, especially the most marginalised, can access the media to gain information and make their voices heard.

\textsuperscript{32} http://www.centurionsafety.net/Resource/News_from_other_sources/UN_Security_Council_adopts_resolution_to_pro-tect_journalists.html
\textsuperscript{33} Ibid
\textsuperscript{35} http://acme-ug.org/?p=1497
CHAPTER THREE:
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the conclusions of the baseline survey as well as key recommendations for both HRNJ-Uganda and other media support organizations and partners.

3.1 Conclusions

From the above findings, a number of conclusions can be derived including the fact that journalists constantly face risks, threats and attacks in the course of performing their work irrespective of the standard of their professional work. Despite the number of efforts geared towards enhancing the professional standards and safety and protection of the media in Uganda, there are still challenges that need to be addressed.

Many practitioners are not well versed with these frameworks and do not understand their rights and responsibilities as custodians of news and information. The level of appreciation and adherence to the journalism professional codes and other in-house editorial guidelines is still low with the level of violations quite high.

There are several factors that can be attributed to this, ranging from the lack of the requisite skills and knowledge, lack of passion for the profession, poor pay, and outright impunity within the media fraternity.

Journalists face an increasing level of threats and risks to their lives and person in the process of doing their jobs. The number of journalists being attacked and threatened with the sole purpose of dissuading them from reporting issues of public interest is on the increase. These threats and risks are have a negative impact on the journalism practice as journalists and by extension media houses desist from covering sensitive issues that may “offend” some of their stakeholders.

Media houses have not done much to cushion their employees through providing employee
safety nets and investments such as continuous capacity building to enhance their capacity to report and investigate issues professionally and systematically.

Journalists still lack the requisite skills to effectively deal with these risks and threats, including the lack of understanding of the basic laws that govern the practice of journalism, and other skills such as assessing their environment which leaves them vulnerable to abuse and attacks.

It is important therefore that journalists acquaint themselves with all the relevant legislations, starting with the Constitution (Articles 29(1) (a) that guarantees freedom of expression, including the media which should by extension provide for the protection and safety of journalists and the media.

3.2 Recommendations
Promoting professional and responsible journalism

g) Continuous skilling and training of journalists in basic news writing and reporting including, objectivity, accuracy, fairness, balancing and multiple sourcing. This could be done through scheduled in-house training, formal organised training workshop on selected topics as well as mentoring and coaching.

h) Provide support media houses to populate the professional code of conduct, including developing in-house editorial guidelines whose adherence must be enforced by management

i) Support the establishment of a peer-review mechanism where media issues such as professionalism and adherence to the journalism codes are discussed to promote self-regulation

j) Engage media owners/managers to develop and embrace initiatives that enhance journalists’ skills and knowledge such as peer learning, in-house training and presentations on topical issues. This could be through breakfast meetings, and individual media house visits to engage with the top management.

k) Provide specific and tailor-made training for editors and sub-editors to detect and identify errors in news stories submitted by their journalists. This could be in-house training as well as workshop format training and mentoring/coaching

l) Engage media training institutions to develop mechanisms of reaching out to the industry so as to provide leadership in the continuous professional development of journalists

m) Strengthen the capacity of selected media associations that will take lead in advocating and advancing the needs of journalists, including a minimum wage to reduce on the
level of exploitation.

**Journalist safety and protection**

- g) Develop a multi-level training curriculum that aims at equipping the journalists with skills to report safely and professionally for individual journalists, media houses and media training institutions
- h) Support media houses and individual journalists to develop and adopt a safety and security protocol in the course of their work
- i) Ensure effective documentation of and sharing of information regarding journalists that have been attacked or threatened
- j) Build partnerships, synergies and coalitions with media houses, journalists support organizations (both national and international) and the legal fraternity to ensure that cases of attacks against journalists are exposed and condemned
- k) Strategic advocacy and litigation against retrogressive legal provisions that infringe on freedom of expression and affect journalism practice in Uganda.
- l) Engage with the security forces so as to develop a better working relationship between them and the media.
- m) Setting up an emergency fund and mechanism to support journalists in distress including, legal fees, family support as well as evacuation of the victims
- n) Setting up a working group on the safety and protection of journalists and other media workers
REFERENCES

Kenya Media Programme (2013) Safety and Protection of Kenyan Journalists: Is it common sense or common cents?

Appendix –
Self-administered Questionnaire

Dear respondent,

Thank you for accepting to respond to this questionnaire which has been developed to know how journalists working in Uganda are aware about their personal safety and security/protection; and their adherence to the journalism code of ethics.

The study is commissioned by the Human Rights Network for Journalists-Uganda (HRNJ)

All information obtained will remain confidential.

Name: (Optional) _________________________________
Gender: _____________
Media organisation (s): _______________________________
Type of media organisation: (Print/Radio/TV/Online):_________________________
Status of employment: Freelance/staff: _______________________________
What is your position in the organisation? (Tick one)
 a) Reporter/Correspondent
 b) Editor
 c) Producer
 d) Presenter
 e) Columnist
 f) Senior Management (Please specify): _______________________________
 g) Others (specify) ______________________

Level of Education
 a) Certificate
 b) Diploma
 c) Bachelors
 d) Postgraduate Diploma
 e) Masters
 f) PhD
**Knowledge of Media Laws and adherence to Professional Code of Ethics**

1. The media in Uganda is regulated by several laws. Do you know any of them and the specific provisions that affect your work as a journalist?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

   a) If yes, kindly list all those you know. ____________________________

2. Do you know of any Regional or International conventions or treaties that guarantee freedom of expression and that of the media?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

   a) If yes, kindly list all those you know. ____________________________

4. Does your media house have a copy of the journalists’ professional code of conduct?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

   a) If yes, is it accessible to all journalists in the media house?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

6. Do you have a personal copy?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

   a. If yes, how often and under what circumstances do you refer to it?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Daily</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Once a week</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Several times a month</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least once a month</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whenever I feel like</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. Does your media house discuss/talk about the need for journalists to adhere to the professional code of ethics?

| Yes | No |

a) If Yes, how often and under what circumstances?__________________________

10. Does your media house have an in-house editorial policy or guidelines for journalists?

| Yes | No |

If yes, are these accessible and adhered to?
Please explain: _______________________________
Personal safety, security and protection

12. Do you face any security risks and threats in your daily work as a journalist?
   - Yes
   - No

   a) If Yes, Please list some of the risks and threats you face in your work
   ____________________________________________

14. How frequently are you subjected to these risks/threats that you have listed above?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Daily</th>
<th>Once a week</th>
<th>Several times a month</th>
<th>Once a month</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

16. Who are the people/organisations/agencies that violate rights of journalists in your area?
   _______________________________________________________________________

17. Did you report to anyone about the threats?
   - Yes
   - No

   a) If Yes, who did you report to? __________________________

19. Did you find out why you had been threatened?
   - Yes
   - No

   a) If Yes, kindly explain. ____________________________________________

21. In your professional work, how do threats to your life affect your ability to fully report stories?
   a. Seriously
   b. Somehow
   c. Not at all
   d. No sure

   Please explain.________________________________________________________
Defence and Protection

22. Do you have any skills on how to avoid and reduce your exposure to these risks and threats?

Yes | No

a) If yes, please list some of the skills/tools you have to reduce those risks and threats ____________

24. Have you been trained on journalists’ security, safety and protection?

Yes | No

a) If yes, who trained you, where and when? ________________

26. Does your news organization have a safety and security plan in place if you or your colleagues are in danger?

Yes | No

a) If yes, kindly explain what you mean? ________________

b) If yes, do you think these safety measures are sufficient?

Yes | No

d) If No, how can they be beefed up/enhanced? ________________

28. As a journalist, can you safely carry your equipment e.g. camera, recorder and display your badge while on duty?

Yes | No

Please explain: __________________________________________

30. Which one of the following statements have you ever heard about? (Tick all that apply)

a) Journalists should not take risks in pursuing a story if they think they might be killed or injured.

b) A journalist can refuse a dangerous assignment

c) Media houses should provide journalists with safety equipment while going for dangerous
assignments
d) It is important for journalists to have safety training.
e) Media house should provide journalists with personal insurance covers
f) No story is worth a journalists’ life

31. How have security risks and threats affected the way you relate and get stories from your sources?
a) Seriously
b) Somehow
c) Not at all
d) Not sure

Please explain.______________________________________________________________

32. In case of any emergency, what are your first steps of action? (list as many as possible)
____________________________________________________________________

33. What is the biggest pressure that can force you to release information that you clearly know that if accessible to the police or another entity will compromise seriously your source or endanger your life? List as many as possible. Kindly share your experience.
____________________________________________________________________

34. Do you know any organisations (national and international) that support journalists facing threats and attacks because of their work?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

a) If yes, which organisations do you know?______________________________

36. Do you think it is important to monitor and document abuses against journalists?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

If yes, please explain the importance:________________________________________
Do you know of any organisations doing this work? If yes, kindly name any that you know __
____________________________________________________________________
Digital Security

38. How do you access your internet? (you can tick more than one choice)
   a. Computer in cyber cafes
   b. Desk top at home
   c. Desk top in the office
   d. Using my laptop
   e. Computers at a resource centre
   f. Through my mobile phone
   g. Other (specify)

39. Do you make backups of your data?
   
   Yes   No

41. Which anti-virus programme do you use in your computer? ________________
42. How often do you change your passwords?
   a) Daily
   b) Weekly
   c) Monthly
   d) After three months
   e) Annually
   f) Never
   g) Others

43. How many other people know your password?
44. Do you use the same password for all your accounts?
45. What kind of equipment do you use in your daily work? ________________
46. Which of these are shared or personal? ____________________________

47. If you are offered an opportunity for training in personal safety, security and professional ethics, what kind of skills would you need? ____________________________

Thank you for your time.
Appendix II –
Interview Guide for Key Informants

Dear respondent,

Thank you for accepting to respond to this questionnaire which has been developed to know how journalists working in Uganda are aware about their personal safety and security/protection; and their adherence to the journalism code of ethics.

The study is commissioned by the Human Rights Network for Journalists-Uganda (HRNJ)
All information obtained will remain confidential.

Name: (Optional) _________________________________
Gender: _____________
Media House/Organisation: _______________________________
What is your position in the organisation? (Tick one)  _____________________________________

Safety/Protection/Security Landscape/Environment:

1. What are the most common safety and security issues/concerns and threats that face the media in Uganda today?
___________________________________________________________________

2. In which geographical areas (urban vs. Upcountry) do the media face the most risks and threats to their safety.
____________________________________________________________________

3. Which are the most common news stories/beats that compromise journalists’ safety and security?
____________________________________________________________________

4. What are the gaps that perpetuate the situation and allow for attacks against Journalists?
____________________________________________________________________

5. Are attacks and harassment against journalists well documented and publicised? Please explain
_____________________________________________________________________.

6. What is being done to respond and mitigate against attacks and harassments of journalists?

______________________________________________________________________

7. What specific action/response has your organisation/media house done to protect journalists?

______________________________________________________________________

8. Are you satisfied with the government’s response/mearsures to combat attacks/harassment against journalists?

______________________________________________________________________

9. If not, what specific action/policy measures would you recommend that the government take to end attacks/harassment of journalists?

______________________________________________________________________

10. Have you sought support from international human rights defenders’ for victim journalists? – if so, please explain

______________________________________________________________________

11. What other issues/concerns/threats do you think threaten/compromise journalists’ safety/security and protection?

______________________________________________________________________

Professionalism and Ethical Consideration

1. In your view, what is the level of journalist professionalism in Uganda?

______________________________________________________________________

2. In your view, what are the biggest professional and ethical issues that face journalists in Uganda today?

______________________________________________________________________

3. What are the biggest threats to professional and ethical journalism in Uganda?

______________________________________________________________________

4. How do you rate journalists’ adherence to their professional code of ethics?

______________________________________________________________________

5. What can we do to improve professionalism and ethical reporting amongst journalists?

______________________________________________________________________

Thank you
International best practices on safety and protection measures for journalists deployed in hostile areas (adopted from "Safety and Protection of Kenya Journalists: Is it common sense or common cents? by Kenya Media Programme)

Practical steps news/media organisations can take to minimise harm and ensure safety of its journalists

- Avoid keeping reporters in the office till late, particularly in conflict zones and allow them flexibility to work from safe areas in case of a security threat.
- Assign only qualified, senior and trained journalists on conflict reporting and have a written protocol/guide on safety and stay regularly and constantly in touch with reporters covering conflict.
- Make sure your reporters have all information about safety and the situation they will report on; also the conditions in the field, the routes and the terrain; don’t send reporters to report from active conflict sites until all security arrangements are in place.
- Hire a security expert to advice staff on security issues and encourage reporters to report and alert the organisation and the authorities to threats.
- Make sure your reporters have proper identification documents, especially when they are in the field.
- Immediately inform all relevant quarters if your reporter goes missing.
- Develop your own in-house safety protocols and emphasise adherence of a code of ethics and,
- If the editors want to make changes to a story or add information to a story, it should be discussed with the reporter first.
- Some reporters feel the stories do not carry their by-lines. While this may be important in view of safety of the reporter in case of sensitive information, the newsroom staff needs to consult the reporters who deserved to be credited for a difficult assignment.
- The newsroom staff should receive orientation about the sensitivities in the field and risks to reporters, preferably from reporters covering conflict so they are alert to the situation on ground.
Professional considerations editors/sub-editors should follow while editing stories to minimize harm to reporters covering conflict

- The newsrooms should, in consultation with reporters covering conflict and in view of the risks involved, prepare a standard stylebook for covering conflict.
- Expressions and headlines that may expose a reporter to threat or invite trouble should be avoided. Sensational headlines should be avoided.
- Newsrooms should ensure that a story is prepared keeping in view principles of responsible, ethical journalism.
- The News Desk should stay in touch with reporters covering the conflict zone; coordination between reporters and sub editors/editors should be improved.
- The News Desk should advise reporters, whenever necessary, on taking precautionary measures

Practical steps for journalists to reduce threats and risks

- Be vigilant to security/threat environment around you; read up and actively seek information on threats
- Do not entertain news and information from anonymous sources
- Avoid going alone to report from a dangerous area with a possibility of threat
- Know the geography and nature of people and place you will be reporting on
- Avoid going near active and live hostile/assault zones; keep considerable distance from the venue of immediate incident/action
- Learn basic first aid techniques
- Never violate curfew and never travel in an active conflict zone without proper permission from the authorities
- While it is important for the journalists to be impartial, organisations should do the same, without a tilt towards any of the warring parties and have a written policy that emphasizes ethics and professional neutrality
- Make sure your journalists and equipment are insured
- Arrange trainings on safety and security for your reporters
- Train your journalists in journalism best practices including ethics that can help minimise threats and risks
- Seek your reporters’ consent before sending them to a danger zone; never force or push them to file stories that may pose risk to their lives
- Don’t credit your reporters with a by-line in case of sensitive information or story/report; don’t publish stories with unidentified sources or those that are one-sided;
- Discourage the trend of breaking news from conflict theatres/field sites at the expense of reporters’ safety; don’t demand risky stories from your reporters in conflict zones
- Change the station of a reporter if s/he faces a security problem in a specific area