

DOSSIER

FRAMING THE VIOLENCE:

a typology of aggressions against journalists and press freedom in Peru



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ABSTRACT – This study examines the Peruvian context in order to propose a comprehensive typology of aggressions against journalists and media outlets. Analyzing data from 2022 – a year characterized by political turmoil in Peru – the authors introduce a six-factor classification of attacks, accounting for the type of harm, means of aggression, identity of the attacker, underlying motivations, frequency of attacks, and vulnerability of the victims. This typology suggests a potential connection between politically motivated attacks and efforts to obstruct the normative role of the press.

Keywords: Freedom of expression. Press freedom. Post-truth. Safety for journalists. Violence against journalists.

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ENQUADRANDO A VIOLÊNCIA: uma tipologia das agressões contra jornalistas e a liberdade de imprensa no peru

RESUMO – Este estudo usa o caso peruano para propor uma nova e ampla tipologia de agressões contra jornalistas e meios de comunicação. Empregando uma abordagem abrangente, os autores analisaram dados de 2022 – ano marcado pela turbulência política no Peru – e propõem uma classificação de seis fatores de ataques, distinguindo entre o tipo de dano, os meios de agressão, a identidade do agressor, as motivações subjacentes, a frequência dos ataques e a vulnerabilidade das vítimas. A aplicação desta tipologia também mostra uma possível ligação entre ataques com motivação política e a intenção de obstruir o papel normativo da imprensa.

Palavras-chave: Liberdade de expressão. Liberdade de imprensa. Pós-verdade. Segurança para os jornalistas. Violência contra os jornalistas.

ENMARCANDO LA VIOLENCIA: una tipología de las agresiones contra periodistas y la libertad de prensa en Perú

RESUMEN – Este estudio utiliza el caso peruano para proponer una nueva y amplia tipología de agresiones contra periodistas y medios de comunicación. Empleando un enfoque integral, los autores analizaron datos del año 2022 – marcado por la turbulencia política en Perú – y proponen una clasificación de ataques basado en seis factores, que distinguen el tipo de daño, los medios de agresión, la identidad del agresor, las motivaciones subyacentes, la frecuencia de los ataques y la vulnerabilidad de las víctimas. La aplicación de esta tipología también muestra un posible vínculo entre los ataques políticamente motivados y una intención de obstaculizar el rol normativo de la prensa.

Palabras clave: Libertad de expresión. Libertad de prensa. Posverdad. Seguridad para los periodistas. Violencia contra los periodistas.

Introduction

Over the last few years, we have witnessed a troubling growth in the number of attacks on journalists all over the world. This trend is consistent across various regions: pejorative remarks from governmental authorities and high-profile politicians, physical assaults, violent and public manifestations of rejection, online threats, disclosure of journalists' sensitive personal information on social media, and even murder or kidnapping of journalists reporting on illegal activities. The Peruvian environment is no different: press freedom is guaranteed formally, but not effectively upheld materially (Reporters Without Borders, 2022). The National Association of Journalists of Peru (ANP) registered 303 attacks on the press in 2022,

the highest number this century (ANP, 2022). Notwithstanding the alarming situation, some sporadic efforts to promote the safety of the journalistic profession have emerged, primarily from civil society organizations and foreign embassies (Calderón et al., 2022).

In this paper, we delve deep into the Peruvian landscape to propose a typology of attacks against journalists based on a situational assessment of these aggressions during the emblematic year 2022, during which political turmoil (a failed *coup d'état* by former president Pedro Castillo, followed by his removal and replacement by then vice-president Dina Boluarte) coincided with a significant increase in the number of attacks against journalists and media outlets.

Every typology is a model that frames differences (Foladori, 2005), and its usefulness lies, like other analytical forms, in presenting in a simple manner what is otherwise complex. The creation of our typology is based on grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). After an initial review of the reports of threats against journalists generated by the Instituto Prensa y Sociedad (IPYS) and ANP, we identified certain specific trends that allowed us to create relevant categories (Baumer et al., 2017) that better depict the environment of hostility towards the press. While our study utilizes the Peruvian case for illustrative purposes, the typology we propose for the collection and study of aggressions against journalists could apply to other contexts.

This new typology also provides an initial explanation for the increase in the number of attacks that journalists are facing in Peru. By properly ascertaining the identity of the aggressors and the motivations behind the attacks, we can preliminarily assess that this unsettling trend is connected to an intent to obstruct the role of the press, as considered by the normative theory (Siebert et al., 1956; Christians et al., 2009). Hence, the proper characterization of these aggressions also highlights the shortcomings of the legal and institutional instruments required to prevent, protect, and procure justice for journalists.

In the first section, we describe the current legal and sociological literature regarding the characterization of attacks against journalists and the main reports drafted by multinational NGOs. In section two, we provide some contextual information regarding Peru, the deterioration of trust in mass media, the rise of political discourse against media, and the proliferation of draft laws against freedom of expression. We also consider criminal cases brought against journalists and recent attacks from violent groups.

Section three is dedicated to the formulation of our proposed typology of threats, based on the six variables previously described. Subsequently, we apply our newly formulated taxonomy to 137 of the most detailed threats or harms to journalists reported by the IPYS and ANP during 2022. Before concluding, we highlight some of the key findings deriving from the application of our typology to the 137 cases of aggression against journalists in Peru.

In addition to contributing to the existing literature on violence against journalists and press safety, this paper can serve as a starting point for discussing the public policies aimed at eradicating violence against journalists (Carrol, 2022) and implementing practical solutions in the three areas that are part of the State's obligations: prevention, protection, and procurement of justice (Unesco, n.d.).

1 Literature review: theoretical framework and classifications of attacks on journalists

According to the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalism and the Issue of Impunity, "In recent years, there has been disquieting evidence of the scale and number of attacks against the physical safety of journalists and media workers as well as of incidents affecting their ability to exercise freedom of expression by threats of prosecution, arrest, imprisonment, denial of journalistic access, and failures to investigate and prosecute crimes against them." (Unesco, 2012). These threats collectively contribute to a deteriorating environment for press freedom which affects the social fabric by hindering the essential role of journalism in informing and connecting society to its immediate environment (Aguirre, 2016). These threats against the free press are, thus, threats against democracy: press freedom is a cornerstone of good governance and accountability, and a precondition for individuals and society to make informed decisions (Heyns et al., 2013).

Prominent human rights organizations and academic literature recognize the link between aggressions against the press and the undermining of freedom of expression. The NGO Article 19 explains that attacks against journalists – specifically, disappearances – serve as retaliation for the work of the press, which leads to self-censorship (Artículo 19, 2016).

The relationship between aggressions against the press and the undermining of freedom of expression is also supported

by numerous empirical studies in the Latin American region. For instance, Cabalin and Lagos' study shows the effects on journalistic independence due to pressures from employers and political actors in Chile (Cabalin & Lagos, 2009). In Ecuador, Checa and Barredo (2017) conducted a survey of media journalists and a Delphi panel with experts, concluding in 2008 that the most threatening actors for journalistic work were economic power groups (78%), media owners/directors (32%), the national government (31%), and advertisers (17%). The same measurement in 2015 showed that the most threatening groups were the government (53%) and economic power groups (52%).

In the same vein, Jurado and Morales (2024) explored the Mexican case based on research studies that analyze how the murder of journalists affects press coverage and causes self-censorship. Through a statistical analysis of more than six million tweets published by journalists and media organizations, the researchers found large reductions in the intensity of reporting among media outlets after acts of violence.

There is also important academic literature dedicated to analyzing and characterizing the aggressions faced by journalists and the media, and to a lesser extent, to forming typologies applicable to these threats. Within the first type, we find studies that describe and analyze different factors or characteristic elements of the aggressions. For example, Waisbord (2002) studies the characteristics of the perpetrators of attacks against male and female journalists. She comments on a study by the UTPBA (Buenos Aires Press Workers Union) and concludes that the attacks committed against journalists are not dependent on ideology (e.g.: participation of the victims in a political party or social movement). Instead, most of the victims were journalists who, at the time of the attacks, were working on controversial and sensitive issues such as corruption, drug trafficking, the environment, and human rights abuses.

Jurado and Morales (2024) focused their research on a specific agent of aggression: criminal groups, studying how the murder of journalists affected press coverage in Mexico. After compiling an archive of the largest Mexican news organizations and a dataset of more than six million tweets posted by Mexican journalists and media outlets, the authors demonstrate that states with the most violence against media workers between 2010 and 2015 experienced reductions in the number of active journalists and demographic changes among them. Similarly, Hughes and Márquez-Ramírez (2018) showcased that being

in an environment with criminal actors is positively associated with the incidence of threats against journalists. While the studies summarized above are centered on a specific aggressor, most of the academic literature reviewed does not provide a thorough depiction of all sources of attacks in a particular region or country (Hughes et al., 2017).

Nevertheless, several cross-national organizations have dedicated some of their work to describing the types of harm that journalists can suffer. At the Latin American level, we find a catalog developed by the Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (RELE), which is based on the rulings of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, distinguishing the following types of violations of freedom of expression: 1. Prior censorship, 2. Intimidation or threats, 3. Acts against physical integrity, 4. The loss or cancellation of other rights necessary for entertainment, 5. Arbitrary detention and unlawful or wrongful conviction, 6. Denial of access to public information, 7. Lack of protection outside of the workplace and 8. Murder (CIDH, 2011).

A report by the Foundation for Press Freedom (FLIP, 2015) partially follows the CIDH catalog of attacks, but makes a conceptual differentiation between the act of aggression and the harm caused to journalists. Indeed, FLIP asserts that these elements are normally undistinguished in the testimonies of the victims.

More recent reports from international organizations have shed light on the conditions of vulnerability faced by minority groups in journalism. The recent Unesco Director-General's report on the safety of journalists and the danger of impunity shows that the number of women journalists killed worldwide has increased from 9% in 2019 to 11% in 2022 (Unesco, 2022). In the 2020 Global Survey on Online Violence against Women Journalists, Unesco and the International Center for Journalists (ICFJ) found that 73% of the 714 women journalists in the 125 participating countries had been attacked online. According to the study, women journalists who faced other forms of discrimination, such as racism and homophobia, were more likely to be attacked and suffered greater consequences (Unesco, 2022).

The connection between the types of aggressions and institutional arrangements is partially studied by Waisbord (2002), who posits that existing laws in Latin America provide aggressors with powerful mechanisms to manipulate and damage the press. In this sense, certain legal frameworks can create incentives for actors interested in silencing the press to sporadically resort to coercive

means against journalists before the judiciary. Thus, the proposal and, in some instances, the passage of laws by several governments aimed at discouraging press criticism necessitates scrutiny of the explicit and underlying interests of governmental actors who may oppose the normative role of the press.

Regarding the second type of literature, some organizations and academics have presented different forms of typologies of these attacks against journalists, albeit centered on only one or two elements of aggression.

For instance, the recent work by Papadopoulou and Maniou presents a categorization of the threats to journalists and journalistic practices in authoritarian states and Western democracies during the covid-19 pandemic crisis. They establish categories based on the means used to cause harm: political, legal, economic, technological, physical, and psychological threats (Papadopoulou & Maniou, 2021). In a similar vein, Miller and Lewis (2022, p. 79) propose a classification that focuses on the means of aggression, identifying four key types of harassment commonly and nearly universally applicable for aggressions committed against women broadcast journalists by strangers outside their media organization: “(1) disruptive in-person harassment, (2) physical and abrasive in-person harassment, (3) online harassment as unwanted sexual advances, and (4) online harassment as threats and criticisms”.

Slavtcheva-Petkova et al. (2023) propose a typology centered on the nature of aggression and its medium. This proposed matrix for conceptualizing and defining journalists' safety introduces two crucial pillars: personal safety and infrastructural safety. Within the first category, the authors distinguish between physical attacks and psychological harassment, and in the second category, the authors include digital surveillance and financial instability.

Other authors have also advanced classifications in collaboration with organizations that work in favor of press freedom and for the safety of journalists, such as the International Center for Journalists and Unesco. For instance, Posetti et al. (2020) propose a classification based on the means of harm. They specifically categorize online threats that women journalists have experienced into the following types: abuse through hateful language, harassment through unwanted private messages, reputational threats, threats of physical violence, threats to their professional standing, threats of sexual violence, surveillance, and image-based abuse. The authors further classified these cases of

online threats according to the type of perpetrator that displayed the conduct. Finally, they deepen their analysis by showing the types of effects suffered by the victims: mental health, insecurity, the need for medical or psychological support, work absence, and damage to their professional reputation or employment (Posetti et al., 2020).

Later, in a study for the International Center for Journalists in 2022, Posetti and Shabbir proposed a new classification of online violence against women journalists, which consists of the following 12 types: threats of sexual assault and physical violence, threats of harm to family members, hateful and sexually explicit abusive language, harassing private messages, threats to damage professional or personal reputations, digital privacy and security-based attacks, misrepresentation via spoof accounts and manipulated images – video and audio –, harassment in the form of fraudulent online orders, manipulated search results to malign and discredit the targets, coordinated ‘pile-ons’/ ‘brigading’/ ‘dogpiling’, orchestrated attacks involving State actors, and body shaming and associated sexist and racist critiques of women journalists’ appearance (Posetti & Shabbir, 2022). Once again, this specialized classification focuses on the type of conduct displayed by the aggressor.

At a national level, one of the typologies that explores various characteristics of this phenomenon is the one proposed by the ANP in 2022. This classification divides the alerts reported by journalists to the ANP in Peru during the year of its elaboration based on: 1) the type of attack (threat/harassment, physical and verbal aggression, judicial intimidation, cyberattack, stigmatizing speech, obstacles to the access to information, labor-related affectations, detention, and theft); 2) the type of aggressor (civilians, civil servants, security agents, unknown subjects, and employers); 3) the type of media affected (digital press, television, print press, and radio); 4) the gender of the victims (men, women or legal entities); and, 5) the geographical area in the country (ANP, 2022).

Freedom House & the International Center for Journalists proposed another typology in its 2020 report. It identifies the types of attacks reported on a survey of a group of journalists, bloggers, and human rights activists in 20 states of Mexico (Freedom House & International Center for Journalists, n.d.). This classification is based on the means of harm: physical attacks, SMS threats, lawsuits and complaints, infected computers, stolen computers, kidnapping, arrests, cracked accounts, e-mail threats, telephone threats, threats

against family members, and in-person threats (Freedom House & International Center for Journalists, n.d.).

The typology we propose in this paper aims to fill the gap in the existing literature regarding the proper ways to identify and classify the attacks against journalists through a comprehensive perspective. While most authors have focused on the means of aggression and some on the identity of the attackers, we propose a more detailed perspective that would allow the examiner to discern between the conduct displayed by the attacker and the harm caused to the victim. Furthermore, from a policy perspective, it is also necessary to differentiate between the identity of the aggressor and the motivation of the attack in order to better assess the possible shortcomings of the institutional and legal tools used to protect journalists and punish the perpetrators of violence. Another important factor considered in our typology is the condition of special vulnerability of the victims. Indeed, the various profiles of victims are key to determining the protective measures that journalists should receive (Berger, 2020; Torsner, 2017).

A second purpose of this classification is to assist in tracking aggressions and understanding them within their context. By doing so, not only do we seek to draw attention to the most recurrent attacks experienced by journalists, but we also intend to provide decision-makers and national authorities with sufficient data for adopting the institutional tools for the prevention, protection, and procurement of justice in these cases (Hughes & Márquez-Ramírez, 2018).

To ensure the safety of journalism, it is necessary to fully understand and assess the complexities and dynamics of journalistic risks and hazards (Harrison et al., 2020). Systematically compiling data on aggressions against journalists is a crucial step in tailoring interventions aimed at safeguarding them and their work (Torsner, 2017). Therefore, the monitoring of these cases is valuable for several actions, including (1) developing and implementing mechanisms to ensure the protection of journalists and the prosecution of their attackers; (2) measuring the effectiveness of political and legal actions of protection; (3) transcending partisan understandings of the topic to better raise awareness and build capacity on journalists' safety; (4) advocating for the state's obligation to fulfill its duty in providing protection and prosecuting the perpetrators; and (5) accountability, which is key to preventing recurrence and impunity (Berger, 2020; Heyns & Srinivasan, 2013; Torsner, 2017).

This study was inspired by and applies to the Peruvian case. We developed it considering the information made available by the

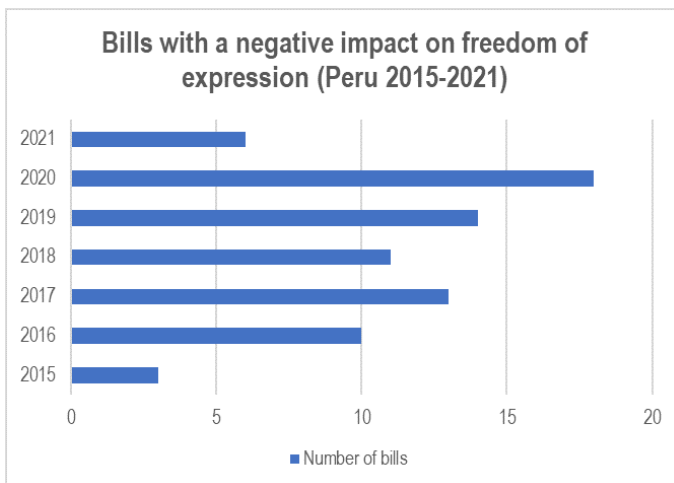
ANP and IPYS, addressing the increasing attacks on journalists and media outlets in the context of recent political protests against the current President and the Congress. Nevertheless, this typology could apply to other countries and geographic contexts, provided that the viability of information gathering about the factors and subcategories presented in our proposal is taken into account.

2 Increasing hostility towards the press in Peru

Freedom of the press in Peru might be facing its most problematic time in recent history. From an institutional and legislative perspective, major progress has not been attained in a significant period. The last major piece of legislation that favored the work of journalists passed in Peru was the Law of Transparency and Access to Public Information enacted in 2002. This law provided the procedural means for requesting information in the hands of any public authority.

Even worse, there has been a sharp increase in the number of bills and laws passed in the last six years that harm journalistic work (see figure 1). The most frequent subjects include defamation (bills aggravating the criminal punishment of journalists), defense or praise of criminal acts, and state advertising.

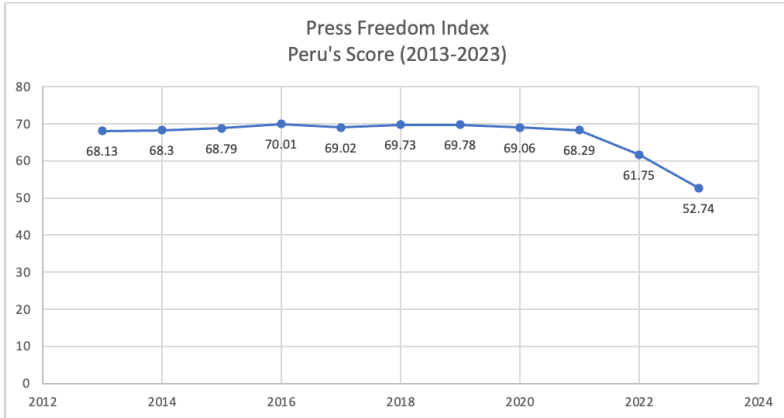
Figure 1



Calderon, A. (2022)

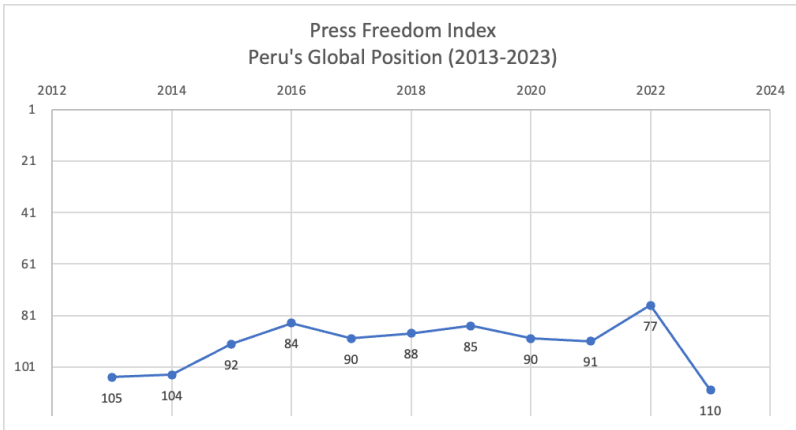
The Freedom of the Press Index elaborated by Reporters without Borders shows a steep downgrade in Peru's freedom of the press scores. Peru's global score drastically declined from 68.29 in 2021 to 52.74 in 2023, its lowest score in ten years (see figures 2 and 3).

Figure 2



Elaborated by authors based on The Freedom of the Press Index (Reporters without Borders, 2013 - 2023).

Figure 3

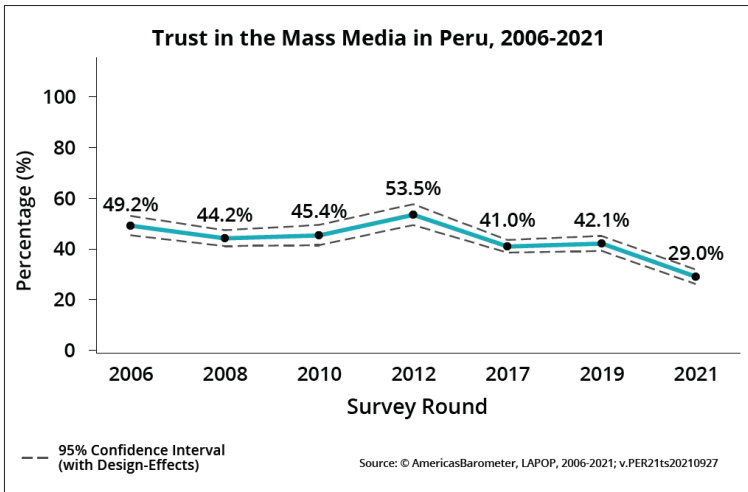


Elaborated by authors based on The Freedom of the Press Index (Reporters without Borders, 2013 - 2023).

Even more troubling is the current public perception of media outlets. According to a 2021 survey of the AmericasBarometer, only

29% of the public express high levels of trust in the mass media (Dunsizer, 2022) (see figure 4). Most Peruvians (71%) show low trust (Dunsizer, 2022). This is the worst result for mass media since the inception of the AmericasBarometer and the deepest decline in between surveys.

Figure 4



Dunsizer, A. (2022).

The situation could have worsened over the last two years. The erosion of trust in the mass media in Peru has coincided with an increased perception of bias within major journalistic outlets in Peru. Moreover, there is a prevalent political narrative critical of the press, which stems from a perception of favoritism towards certain interests. As it is depicted in most cases of oral violence towards journalists (see annex A), aggressors frequently blame the press for its alleged prejudiced coverage and for protecting specific political or business interests.

A national survey conducted in May of 2021 revealed that 59% of the population believed the mass media to be biased. This was particularly evident during the presidential campaign that confronted future president Pedro Castillo and runner-up Keiko Fujimori. 79% of the respondents declared there was a media predilection for the latter (IEP, 2021). Most recently, in August 2023, a survey by Instituto de Estudios Peruanos (IEP) showed that 66% of the Peruvian population

had “little” to “no trust” in mass media.

After the election, then-president Pedro Castillo frequently antagonized the press through broad criticisms, public speeches filled with diatribes towards journalists, and perilous admonitions, including calling the press the “enemy of the people”, and suggesting a conspiracy between the media and the judiciary to oust him from office. In a classic post-truth strategy, the Peruvian ruler would recurrently portray himself as the victim, and the press as the victimizer (Calderon, 2022).

On several occasions, institutions like Defensoría del Pueblo (Peru’s Ombudsman Office) and the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression of the Inter-American Human Rights Commission have asked the Peruvian Government to refrain from making antagonistic and stigmatizing discourses against the press (Defensoría del Pueblo, 2021a, 2021b, 2021c, 2021d; OEA, 2022). National NGOs like Instituto Prensa y Sociedad, the Peruvian Press Council and the National Association of Journalists (ANP) have also issued warnings regarding the inflammatory remarks coming from high-ranked Peruvian officials, including the president himself, which endangered reporters, who often suffered oral and physical attacks from the president’s entourage and political supporters in pep rallies and public fora (IPYS Noticias, 2022).

Across the spectrum, extremist far-right groups, such as “La Resistencia” and “Los Combatientes”, among others, have organized public rallies outside the premises of some news organizations, at commercial venues where political books were presented, and even across the street from some journalists’ domiciles. During these gatherings, attendees would often insult journalists, shout aggressively, or throw objects at them (IDL Reporteros, 2022).

While several democracies have also experienced a deterioration of press freedom in the last decade, the recent years of political unrest in Peru have exacerbated an already hostile climate towards the press, resulting in an astonishing and unsettling increase in the number of physical and oral attacks against journalists. These attacks are studied and systematized in the next section.

3 Methodology: six elements for creating a comprehensive typology of aggressions against journalists

Considering the existing literature on the subject and the ANP and IPYS' reports of attacks against journalists in Peru during the last year, we propose a typology aimed at comprehensively understanding this complex phenomenon within its broader context. The six descriptive factors of aggression comprising our typology were the result of a comparison between the information available in the reports of ANP and IPYS, and the type of information that we considered to be useful for state authorities in order to perform their duties of prevention, protection, and prosecution in the event of aggression against a journalist.

To achieve this, we took into account the responses obtained from journalists, human rights defenders, police officers, prosecutors, and judges, among other public officials, during the workshops on "Journalism Safety and Freedom of the Press" conducted by the authors in March 2022. During the workshops, the participants answered questions related to the risks that journalists normally face, the type of aggression they had suffered or had been exposed to, the identity of the attackers, the context, and what type of events posed the greatest threats to the journalistic work, among others. As a result, this qualitative input informed the authors' report for Unesco Peru and the British Embassy in Lima titled "Roadmap to Strengthen Freedom of Expression and Safety of Journalists" (Calderón et al., 2022). These interactions served as a qualitative calibration of relevant elements in cases of aggression for both journalists and authorities.

3.1 Factor 1: type of harm

In general, most typologies of aggressions reviewed in section one are based on this factor, although some of them combine the type of harm suffered by the victim with the means employed by the aggressor. Our proposal distinguishes between these two elements. Characterizing the harm would allow the examiner to properly assess the type of remedies or compensation needed by the victim, while the information on the means of aggression would help select the preventive and protective measures required for each case. Hence,

we propose the following categories of harm as part of our typology: (1) physical, (2) mental, (3) against sexual integrity, (4) economic, (5) occupational, and (6) reputational.

The first category includes damages to the physical integrity (including life) and the health of journalists. Physical integrity refers to the right to preserve the structural and functional integrity of the human body, ensuring the health and proper functioning of organs (STC, 2019).

The second category involves impairments to mental functions or capacities, resulting in temporary or permanent, reversible or irreversible changes in previous comprehensive functioning (Poder Judicial del Perú, n.d.); this type of damage also includes emotional stress (Papadopoulou & Maniou, 2021), an increase in anxiety levels, feelings of depression and low self-esteem, personal life affectation (Papadopoulou & Maniou, 2021), and disorders resulting from post-traumatic stress (Poder Judicial del Perú, n.d.).

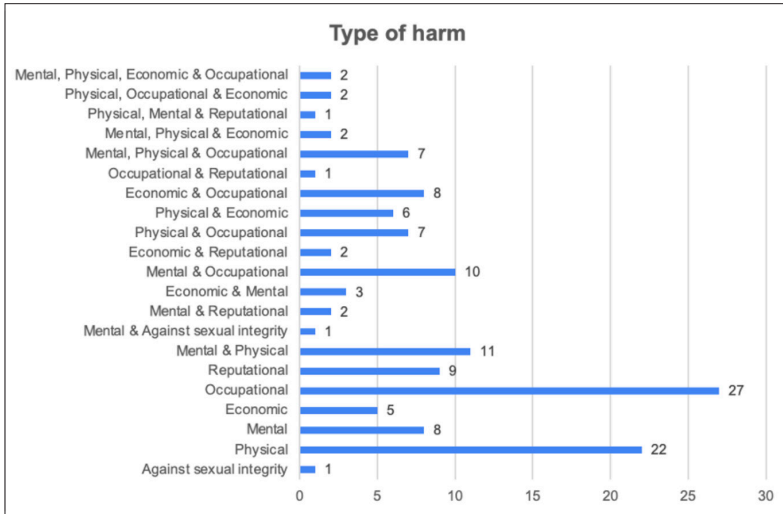
The third category encompasses effects on both their physical and psychological integrity, linked to one person's free exercise of their sexuality, identity, and the free development of their personality (Alcaldía de Bogotá, 2019).

The fourth category includes damages that undermine the economic or patrimonial resources of the journalists (Poder Judicial del Perú, n.d.) or their relatives, including loss of income and employment benefits, and loss or destruction of their equipment (Papadopoulou & Maniou, 2021). Also included in this category are the impacts generated on the economic independence or sustainability of the media organization or the independent journalists, affecting their sources of income, advertising payments, or provoking breaches of contracts. The fifth category includes affectations on the journalists' opportunity to report a news event or interruptions to their coverage, which could, in turn, affect or weaken their journalistic career. The last category includes possible intangible damages to the journalists' professional or personal reputation, including their credibility.

Applying this classification to the ANP and IPYS' reports of attacks against journalists in Peru in 2022, we found that out of a total of 137 reported cases, a significant number (60) of them involved physical harm: out of these, 22 involved only physical harm and 38 cases included physical harm along other types of harms. Occupational harm ranked as the second most frequent type of damage, with a total of 27 cases, followed by economic harm in third

place with 18 cases (see figure 5). It is worth noting that aggressions against the sexual integrity of journalists tend not to be reported to the public sources used to prepare our work, therefore, the number of reported cases must be observed with caution.

Figure 5



Elaborated by authors based on ANP and IPYS' reports of aggressions against journalists in Peru in 2022 as described in Supplementary Annex.

3.2 Factor 2: means of aggression

The next factor in our typology is the means of aggression. Several of the typologies summarized in section 1 focus on this factor, and usually describe to some degree what each aggression consists of. We propose a comprehensive classification that includes the following categories: (1) physical violence, (2) oral violence, (3) digital violence or harassment, (4) obstruction to news reporting, (5) theft or damage to reporters' property, (6) legal or institutional attacks, (7) reporters' dismissal, (8) economic attacks, (9) digital privacy attacks, such as spying or hacking and (10) physical harassment.

The category of physical violence encompasses physical and abrasive in-person harassment, including touching or throwing objects to inflict physical harm (Miller & Lewis, 2022). The second category refers to cases with little or no interpersonal communication

between the journalist and the offender, usually taking place from a distance; these may include cases such as stigmatizing speeches, smear campaigns, whistling, catcalls, shouting phrases like 'fake news', threats of physical harm and making obscene gestures toward journalists (Miller & Lewis, 2022).

The third category pertains to instances of oral violence conducted through technological means, such as online threats concerning one's physical safety (Miller & Lewis, 2022), and technological threats like digital surveillance cases, tracking practices, and bandwidth throttling (Papadopoulou & Maniou, 2021). This category also involves repeated requests for dates, solicitations for sex, comments about the journalist's body, criticisms about one's physical attributes (hair color, clothing, sound of voice, etc.), and images of genitalia. These aggressions are often framed as pseudo-anonymous attacks (Miller & Lewis, 2022).

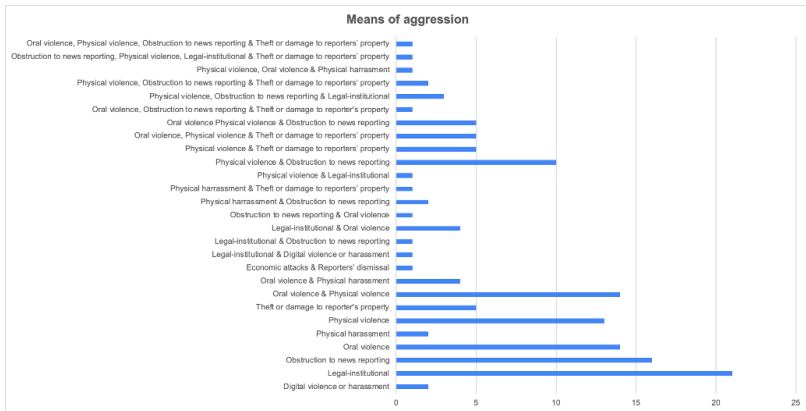
The fourth category refers to those attacks that – without incurring in the other categories – are intended to prevent journalistic work, such as police cordons, blockades, denial of access to public buildings or events, or revocation of journalist credentials by authorities or media organizations. The fifth category includes the destruction or impairment of a journalist's material possessions and work equipment, such as microphones, cameras, phones, tape recorders, or written notes. The sixth category encompasses laws and regulations that can affect news content and journalistic practices, and the arbitrary use of pre-existing laws (Papadopoulou & Maniou, 2021), as well as cases in which legal instruments are weaponized to target journalists, such as retention of personal documents, arbitrary arrests, and filing of lawsuits for defamation and other similar courses of legal action (Dad & Khan, 2020).

The seventh category refers to unjustified reporters' dismissal. The eighth category refers to those attacks that are made possible by economic means, such as unjustified cuts in budgets or a journalist's income. The ninth category involves attacks on digital privacy, such as espionage or hacking. Finally, the tenth category includes a wide range of hostile or intimidating actions, such as face-to-face threats, stalking, invasion of privacy, and any other form of behavior directed to unnerve journalists and discourage them from performing their duties.

Out of the 137 reported cases, 61 configured physical violence, 26 involved the utilization of legal actions; 17 were

considered instances of obstruction to news reporting and 14 were cases of oral violence (see figure 6).

Figure 6



Elaborated by authors based on ANP and IPYS' reports of aggressions against journalists in Peru in 2022 as described in Supplementary Annex.

3.3 Factor 3: motivation of aggression

The motivation of the aggressor has also been included as a classification factor because a deeper understanding of this phenomenon requires a thorough examination of its most direct causes. In addition, by spelling out these motivations, authorities could determine the appropriate preventive and protective measures towards journalists.

The proposed categories for this factor are (1) political, (2) economic, (3) criminal-motivated activities, and (4) circumstantial. The first category refers to attacks that further certain political goals or discourses, such as propaganda, obtaining publicity, engaging in antagonistic dynamics with media organizations, or retaliating against journalists and media outlets. In some contexts, politically motivated attacks could be a way to censor or silence criticism. For classification purposes, this category does not depend on the identity of the aggressor, but on the probable motivation behind the attack.

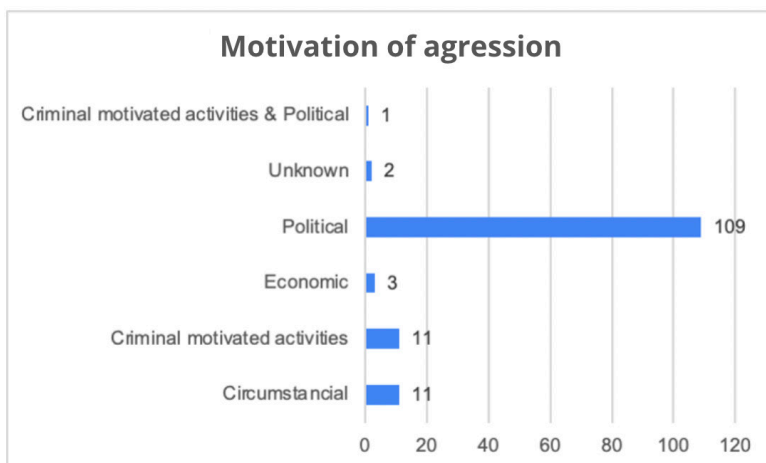
The second category refers to attacks that seek to either obtain economic benefits or safeguard a business. The third category includes attacks that aim to cover up certain illegal or criminal

activities or keep them out of the public eye. The fourth category refers to attacks that do not pursue a specially identified purpose but may occur during journalistic coverage.

The determination of the specific category of motivation is based on the testimonies made by the victims to ANP and IPYS. While the information might depend on subjective criteria, we consider this element of our typology to be necessary to help prevent future attacks and understand the circumstances under which they occur.

When applying this criterion to the 137 reported cases, we found that 109 of them were politically motivated, 11 attacks were criminally motivated, and 11 were circumstantial (see figure 7).

Figure 7



Elaborated by authors based on ANP and IPYS' reports of aggressions against journalists in Peru in 2022 as described in Supplementary Annex.

3.4 Factor 4: identity of the aggressor

This factor aims to break down the characteristics of the different actors who engage in aggression against the press. As a starting point, we have divided the factors into two categories: governmental and non-governmental.

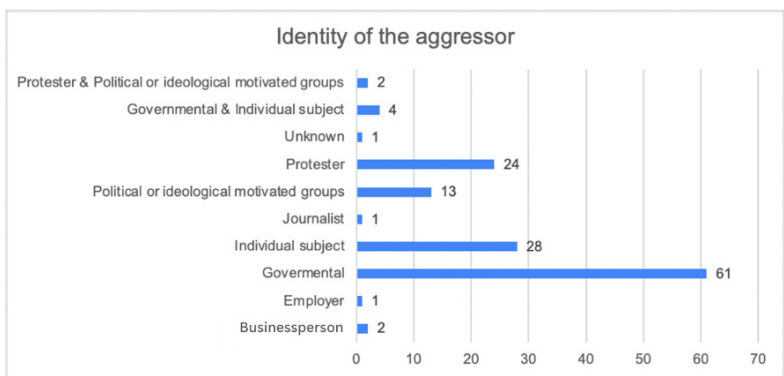
In the case of non-governmental agents, different types of actors are considered, including organized crime, politically or ideologically motivated groups, protesters, individual subjects, and businesspersons.

Government actors include state authorities and public officials who exercise power and authority on behalf of the government.

Organized crime groups refer to illegal organizations that engage in activities such as drug trafficking, extortion, illegal mining, illegal logging, and money laundering. These groups use violence against the press to prevent the exposure of their illegal activities. Politically or ideologically motivated groups are those that act based on specific political or ideological beliefs. These groups may include political parties, extremist groups, and guerrilla organizations, among others. Protesters are people who gather to express their discontent or support for a specific political, social, economic, or cultural cause. Sometimes, protesters may use violence against the press during public demonstrations, either as a way to express their frustration or as an attempt to control the narrative of events. Finally, businesspersons are individuals or groups of people who have commercial or economic interests in a company or industry. Sometimes, these actors may attack reporters or order attacks on the press to protect their commercial or economic interests, or to prevent the exposure of illegal or ethically questionable business practices.

We have identified that in 61 cases, the aggressors were directly affiliated with the Peruvian Government, including a wide range of public officials, such as police officers, judges, and members of the executive branch, among others (see figure 8).

Figure 8

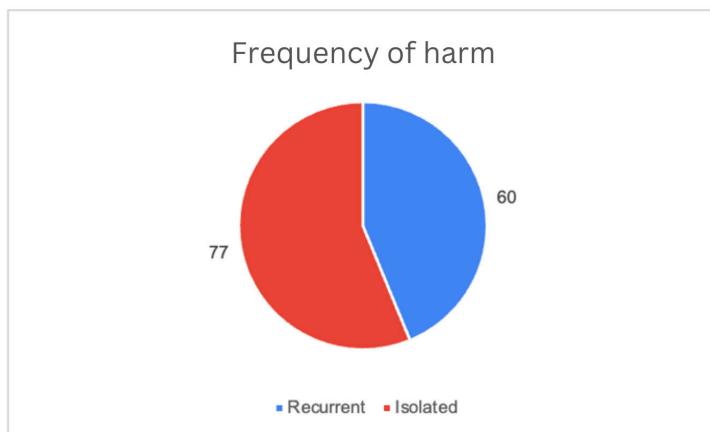


Elaborated by authors based on ANP and IPYS' reports of aggressions against journalists in Peru in 2022 as described in Supplementary Annex.

3.5 Factor 5: frequency of the aggression

Exploring the frequency of aggressive actions allows us to understand the nature of these behaviors over time, and determine if the attack was an isolated event or a recurrent conduct. The isolated type implies that the action was not repeated over time, but occurred as a single, damaging event. In contrast, recurrent attacks involve repeated occurrences over time, intensifying the harm while posing latent danger to the victims. The results of our study show 60 cases of recurrent aggressions (see figure 9). For instance, the pejorative public remarks from then-president Pedro Castillo and his prime minister, Anibal Torres, were part of a consistent pattern of conduct by public officials.

Figure 9



Elaborated by authors based on ANP and IPYS' reports of aggressions against journalists in Peru in 2022 as described in Supplementary Annex.

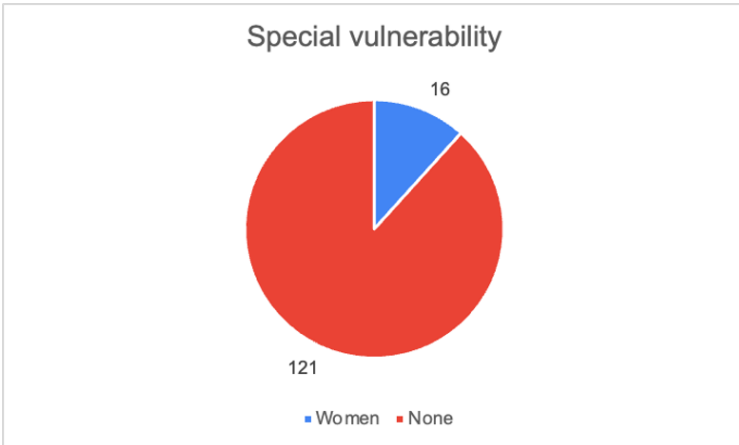
3.6 Factor 6: special vulnerability of the journalists under attack

Women, sexual and ethnic minorities are disproportionately affected by indirect violence, which can manifest itself as occupational marginalization, silencing in the workplace, or exploitative working conditions. The information from this category is useful for engaging in specific preventive and protective measures directed toward the

most vulnerable groups. Furthermore, in the procurement of justice, it should be considered whether the attacks were motivated by hatred in order to ensure the application of appropriate penalties.

When analyzing the Peruvian case, we found there to be a special vulnerability in the case of women, with 16 cases in which the aggressions were conditional to the gender of the journalist (see figure 10).

Figure 10



Elaborated by authors based on ANP and IPYS' reports of aggression against journalists in Peru in 2022 as described in Supplementary Annex.

4 Discussion and conclusions

By applying our proposed typology to the ANP and IPYS' reports of attacks against journalists in Peru during 2022, we observe a worrying recurrence of physical harm, both independently and in conjunction with other forms of damage, contributing to an environment of impunity.

The most frequent context for physical attacks against journalists is that of social protests. This was the case of the protests demanding the dissolution of Parliament and the resignation of the standing President of Peru, Dina Boluarte, after the failed *coup d'état* from former president Pedro Castillo. During these demonstrations in December 2022, multiple physical attacks against journalists from

different media organizations were reported. The dangers journalists in Peru are currently facing in the context of political and social unrest showcase the government's failure to respond decisively in protecting press freedom.

Another notable finding from our typology is that, in the majority of the reported cases, the main motivation was political. In addition, when analyzing this aspect alongside the identity of the aggressor, we find that the perpetrators of these attacks are mainly government agents, followed by individual subjects linked to them and politically or ideologically motivated groups. It is concerning that the people who should be most committed to preventing, protecting, and prosecuting aggression against journalists are responsible for the majority of these attacks.

While the roots of this phenomenon probably stem from socio-political polarization and general distrust towards the press, it is fundamental for Peruvian society that all political actors commit to deterring violence against journalists and to changing the current antagonistic narrative against them, exacerbated since the presidential campaign of 2021.

Likewise, two possible courses of action should be taken into account. Firstly, the adoption of legal instruments that compel government actors not to attack journalists and respect their journalistic labor, such as incorporating the status of a public official as an aggravating circumstance when punishing a case of aggression. Secondly, the possible links between institutional-political actors and politically or ideologically motivated groups must be studied in order to implement better targeted protective measures for journalists and also to investigate whether an instigation to violence has occurred.

Public officials and politicians ought to adopt a clear public stance concerning the violence against journalists. A first step in that direction is accepting that the public scrutiny and criticism stemming from journalists is a core value of democracy.

Regarding the frequency of the attacks, we find that most of them were isolated events. Such a situation represents an additional difficulty for investigative authorities, but it should be considered to equip them with sufficient resources to fulfill their task.

Although the vulnerability of the victim does not seem to be a significant factor in the reported cases of aggression against journalists in Peru, it remains a crucial element worldwide, according to the reviewed literature. Understanding this aspect is essential for

adopting effective measures to prevent attacks, ensure protection, and pursue justice.

The threats and attacks described and systematized in this paper are primarily detrimental to the targeted journalist but also have a strong societal impact and negative repercussions on freedom of expression, freedom of the press, and democratic values as a whole (Dad & Khan, 2020). Our research can contribute to a better diagnosis needed to adopt measures to prevent, protect, and procure justice for journalists. Supplementary research is needed to address the specific legal and institutional gaps that could drive some of the most frequent aggressions examined in our typology.

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