

# TRF's new tool for journalists to manage online harassment and abuse

Recently the Thomson Reuters Foundation (TRF) launched a new tool, TRFilter, to strengthen journalists' resilience to online violence. This comes as journalists face escalating threats and targeted attacks, with 70% of female journalists receiving threats of violence online.



Source: Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) [Media Foundation for West Africa \(MFWA\)](#) All over the world journalists are facing face escalating threats and targeted attacks

“Journalists’ mission of accurate and independent reporting is integral to the survival of a democratic society. It is imperative they have access to practical solutions that match the rapid evolution of the digital and legal warfare used to silence them,” says CEO of the Thomson Reuters Foundation, Antonio Zappulla.

This is the first tool available to journalists and media practitioners to document and manage online harassment and abuse, enabling them to regain control of their social media feeds, take action against perpetrators, and protect their well-being.



Sanef appalled by assault on the Times' photographer by Dudu Myeni

13 Apr 2022



## Limits exposure to abusive content

Developed in partnership with Google’s Jigsaw, TRFilter syncs with the user's Twitter account and uses machine learning technology to automatically recognise and flag harmful comments.

It limits journalists' exposure to abusive content by allowing them to hide comments and block or mute accounts at scale, without reviewing the content.

The tool also allows users to create reports to download and share with third parties as needed, for example their employer or law enforcement.

## Women journalists disproportionately affected

While many journalists are harassed in deliberate efforts to control the free flow of information, women are disproportionately affected.

Nearly three-quarters of women journalists have experienced online violence; threats include physical and sexual violence, and even death threats.

As women journalists report missing work to recover from incidences of harassment, quitting their jobs, and even leaving the profession altogether, this scourge of online violence has become a workplace safety issue.

Last year, TRF partnered with UNESCO, the International Women's Media Foundation and the International News Safety Institute to develop a range of practical and legal tools for journalists, media managers and newsrooms to address the challenges experienced by reporters and media workers and strengthen responses to online and offline harassment.

In addition to English, new versions of these guides have been made available in six languages – Russian, Arabic, French, Italian, Spanish and Chinese.



Another journalist murdered in the line of duty

13 May 2022



## **Mental health affected**

This barrage of abuse – intended to discredit or silence journalists - can take a significant toll on the victims, impacting their mental health, affecting their physical well-being and leading to self-censorship.

“After months of work alongside our partner, Jigsaw, I am excited to launch access to a tool that will empower journalists and media practitioners targeted by online violence around the world.

“The Foundation’s extensive experience of collaboration with global partners, combined with our unique ability to leverage the twin engines of media and the law, places us at the centre of international expertise to support media freedom and defend human rights,” says Zappulla.

“We will continue to work tirelessly to protect journalists and the future of independent media, to strengthen free, fair and informed societies,” adds Zappulla.

With a legacy of more than 30 years working to bolster the ecosystem for independent media around the world, TRFilter is the latest in a suite of initiatives that TRF, in collaboration with partners, has pioneered to offer journalists practical solutions to defend their mission of reporting the truth and protect them from persecution.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>