

The Situation of Women Journalists and Other Women Media Workers in Ukraine: A Study by Women in Media NGO

Taking into Account Experience as of Early 2026



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“A woman cannot work 24/7,
especially if she has a young child.

Meanwhile, women who have
children often become very
effective employees because they
are good at time management,”

— one of the respondents.



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Foreword



Kateryna Levchenko,

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In the current situation of the full-scale war, the issue of gender equality in Ukraine takes on a new meaning and significance. It goes beyond formalities and becomes a practical realm of the government policy, indispensable for society's resilience, institutional efficiency, and the country's recovery.

The media sector is one of the key players in this process. It is precisely the media that shapes society's view of the war, recovery, the role of women and men in these processes; they also decide which voices are highlighted and which ones are left out. However, it is not only content per se that matters but also those who create it.

The study carried out by the Women in Media NGO is a major contribution to understanding the real situation of women journalists and other media professionals in Ukraine. It shows not individual cases but rather the big picture of women facing professional challenges, economic instability, psychological pressure and a significant amount of unpaid care work.

The results once again confirm that, despite the fact that women make up a significant part of the media sector, their work often takes place under conditions of increased workload and vulnerability. This is especially evident during wartime, when professional challenges are further exacerbated by safety risks, an experience of losses, displacement, and changes in family life.

On the other hand, the study demonstrates a high level of professional commitment and resilience among women media workers. Their daily work gives society access to verified information and ensures the necessary level of transparency and accountability in democratic processes.

These results are an important signal for public policy. They indicate the need to support the media sector systemically, with regard to the gender aspect. Among other things, this includes stronger mechanisms to protect women journalists against violence, development of psychological assistance programs, integrating the gender-sensitive approach into media development policies, and ensuring equal and safe working conditions.

I strongly believe that such studies should serve as guidelines for decision-making, both at the government level and at the level of professional communities and international support. Only together can we create an environment where women in the media can work safely and sustainably, being respected in their role.


I am thankful to the team of Women in Media NGO for their thorough work and consistent advocacy for gender equality in Ukrainian media.

About

The Russian armed aggression against Ukraine has significantly changed the working conditions of Ukrainian media. Newsrooms operate under constant safety risks, economic instability, relocations, and psychological stress. In these conditions, journalism remains critical for society as a source of verified information, a tool of democratic oversight, and a component of social resilience during the war.

On the other hand, it should be taken into account that most employees in Ukrainian newsrooms are women. They work as journalists, editors, producers, fact-checkers, communications officers, and media project managers. Even so, their professional experience during the war has not yet been sufficiently analyzed.

This study aims to obtain a more profound insight into the conditions of women's work in the media during the ongoing war. It analyzes their workload, financial stability, experience of discrimination and violence, state of mind, and the balance between their professional activities and care work.




●●● **This study is based on a survey of 218 women working in various segments of Ukraine's media sector: national and regional newsrooms, online outlets, TV and radio companies, and independent media projects.**

1 Gender Profile of Ukrainian Media 2025 / a study by Women in Media NGO and the National Council on Television and Radio Broadcasting of Ukraine. Access: <https://wim.org.ua/materials/gender-media-profile-2025/>

The survey was conducted at the end of 2025 and was supplemented by semi-structured interviews with journalists in early 2026.

Additionally, **the findings were compared with the previous round of the same study in 2022 to identify how women's experience in the media has been changing during the war.** Although these rounds are not a panel study of the same respondents, comparing them does provide an opportunity to identify general trends in the dynamics of professional workload, economic stability, and psychological welfare.



●●● **The research findings indicate that women in the media face multidimensional challenges.**

Professional activity during wartime is complicated by the economic instability of the media market, increased psychological stress, and a significant amount of unpaid care work. In many cases, these factors interact and exacerbate each other.

We believe that the working conditions of women media workers should be considered not only an issue of gender equality but also an important aspect of Ukrainian media's resilience during the war.

Summary

As of early 2026, the situation of women journalists and other women media professionals in Ukraine is shaped not by a single issue but rather by a combination of several long-term challenges, shows the study by Women in Media NGO. The full-scale war affected journalistic work not only in terms of content but also in terms of working conditions. For many women media professionals, professional commitments intersect with

- emotional exhaustion,
- economic instability,
- an increased workload
- and a significant amount of unpaid care work.

The data obtained indicate that the media sector largely relies on women's work, which is increasingly performed in a situation of complete exhaustion. Most respondents work full-time, but this employment guarantees neither a stable income, nor a sense of security, nor predictability of the future.

A comparison with the 2022 data indicates that the acute phase of shock caused by Russia's full-scale invasion into Ukraine has now morphed into chronic overworking. While previously, many solutions were perceived as a forced temporary measure, now, excessive workload, a lack of resources, and instability appear to have become the new norm of journalists' professional lives.

One of the most notable findings of the study is that psychological exhaustion has become a systemic phenomenon. Working with the subjects of war, constant exposure to danger, news of losses, concern for loved ones, power outages, unpredictability of the future and lack of opportunities to recover lead to prolonged stress. Newsrooms, on the other hand, do not always have reliable psychological support mechanisms; the responsibility for recovery therefore rests with the women media workers themselves.

An equally important finding is the deterioration of women media workers' economic situation. An overview of data from 2022–2026 indicates that even job retention does not strengthen financial stability, weakening it instead. A significant share of the respondents report a deterioration in their ability to provide for basic needs, a lack of savings, and the need to take on additional work or combine several employment forms. Thus, economic vulnerability in the media may have become a common experience rather than an exception.

The study also shows that women's professional workload cannot be viewed in isolation from their household and care work. For many respondents, paid work is followed by the so-called "second shift" at home: taking care of children and the elderly, maintaining the household, and supporting the family emotionally. During the war, this burden is often exacerbated by their partners being drafted into the army, forced displacement, or other changes in family life. Institutional policies to support work-life balance, equality, and non-discrimination, however, are either absent in newsrooms or remain partial and poorly implemented.

Another important finding is that even in the "predominantly female" profession of journalism, women still face gender-based risks. This includes sexism, psychological violence, online attacks, gendered disinformation, devaluation of professionalism, and in some cases, threats from people featured in the materials, colleagues, strangers, or government officials. Some women journalists do not seek help even if they encounter threats, which may indicate their distrust in protection mechanisms or the latter's limited impact.

On the other hand, the study also records women's adaptability, professional resilience, and commitment to their profession. Despite fatigue, financial difficulties, and high levels of stress, most respondents have no intention of abandoning journalism completely, rather highlighting the need for more humane, safe, and fair working conditions. Therefore, the key need currently lies not only with individual assistance to particular journalists but also with systemic changes at the levels of newsrooms, professional communities, donor programs, and government policies.

Overall, the study strongly suggests that supporting women in the media is not only an issue of gender equality; it is about the resilience of the entire Ukrainian media sector. During the ongoing war, the profession risks falling victim to chronic exhaustion without due systematic attention to journalists' safety, psychological welfare, economic stability, and working conditions.

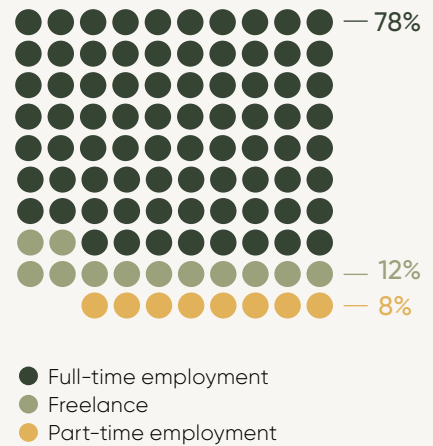
In the long term, this may lead to experienced women journalists leaving the profession altogether, leading to a shortage of diverse voices in the media and fewer topics and viewpoints covered for the broader public. Personnel shortages in newsrooms directly impact the quality of journalism and thus the media's ability to perform the function of social control and provide citizens with access to complete, verified information. During the war, it matters not only for the industry but also for the country's democratic resilience, as independent and professional media are the cornerstone of public confidence, combating disinformation, and keeping citizens informed.

Key Findings

01

Women make up a significant part of the media community, mostly working full-time.

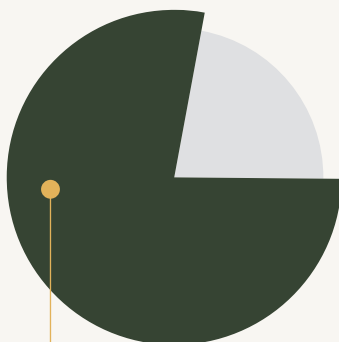
About 78% of the respondents work in the media full-time, while 12% work as freelancers and 8% work part-time. Formal employment, however, does not necessarily guarantee economic stability.



02

The financial situation of women in the media is deteriorating.

In comparison with 2022, 2026 sees a reduced percentage of those who can afford basic needs and savings, while the numbers of women who make enough money only for food or not even that are growing.



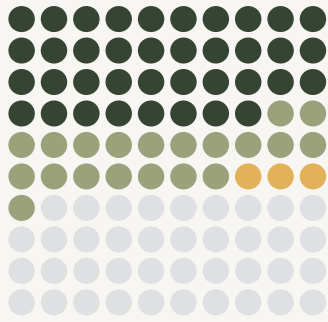
78%

of respondents reported that their workload has increased

03

Overworking has become the norm.

The absolute majority of respondents, 78%, indicate that the workload has increased, while only 6% report its reduction. The growing workload is linked to the staff shortages and structural instability of the media sector, leading to a permanent overwork mode. This leads to overwhelming fatigue among women in the media, who often have to perform care work at home in addition to their professional duties.



61%

of respondents spend a significant amount of time on care work

04 —————

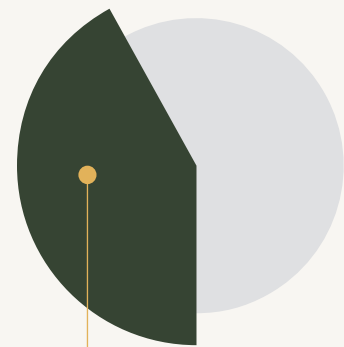
Professional work is often accompanied by a large amount of unpaid care work.

More than half of survey respondents spend a significant amount of time caring for children or other family members. Namely, 38% of respondents indicated they spend 3–4 hours a day on care work, 20% spend 5 to 8 hours, and 3% spend over 9 hours a day on care work. This creates additional workload, leading to the so-called “double burden,” a term characterizing women having to perform both professional duties and care responsibilities.

05 —————

Work-life balance policies are absent or only partially implemented in most newsrooms.

Only 26% of respondents confirm their existence, 23% report partial implementation, while 42% indicate there are no such policies in their newsrooms.



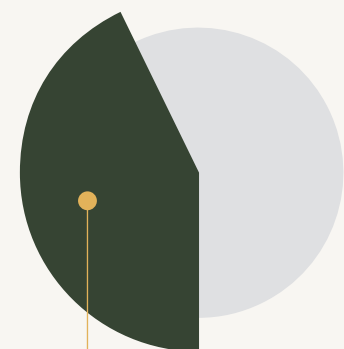
42%

of respondents report the absence of work-life balance policies in their newsrooms

06 —————

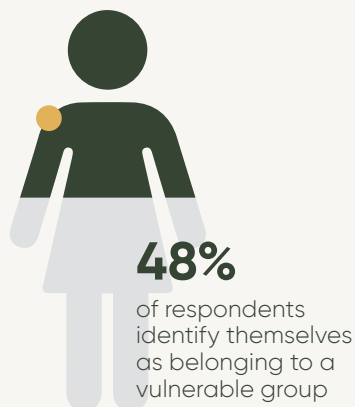
Experiences of threats and aggression remain widespread.

Although 57% of respondents report having never faced threats, about 43% report encountering various forms of aggression or threats, especially in the online environment. Such attacks are often gender-based and aim at discrediting women journalists.



43%

of respondents reported experiencing various forms of aggression and threats



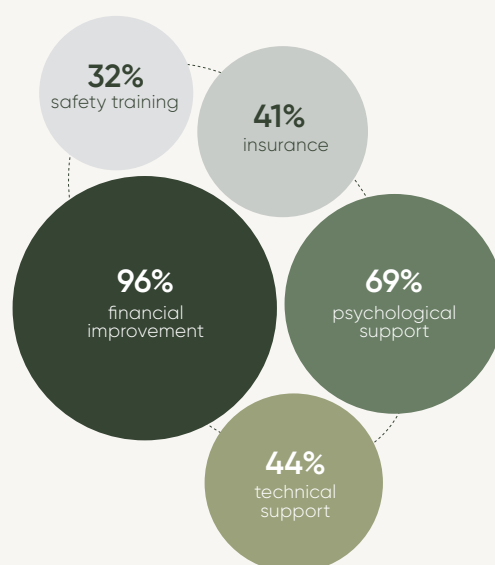
Vulnerability is multidimensional.

Almost half the respondents (about 48%) identify as representatives of one or multiple vulnerable groups. These most commonly are internally displaced women (20%), military partners or spouses (17%) and single mothers (11%). This suggests that professional challenges are often exacerbated by other social and economic risks.

Women have a distinctly systemic demand for support.

The most sought-after forms of assistance include improving the financial situation (96%), psychological support (69%), technical support (44%), insurance (41%), and safety training (32%).

The high interest in training on AI-related risks, digital security, and physical safety indicates that women journalists are aware of new professional threats and are ready to adapt to these challenges. It should be noted that each respondent could choose multiple options.



The combination of these requests indicates that the needs of women journalists go beyond short-term or ad hoc assistance.

They demonstrate the need for comprehensive and long-term support for women in the media as a professional group working in conditions of protracted war and facing increased professional risks, economic instability, psychological strain, and unpaid care work simultaneously.

Research Conclusions

For women in the Ukrainian media, vulnerability is the rule rather than an exception.

Almost half the respondents of the study identify as representatives of vulnerable groups, often multiple ones. These are internally displaced women (20%), military partners or spouses (17%), single mothers (11%), rural residents (8%), representatives of the LGBTIQ+ community (3%), women with disabilities (1%), and representatives of ethnic minorities (3%).

This demonstrates the importance of an intersectional approach to analyzing women's situation in the media.

The experience of professional challenges and vulnerabilities is shaped not only by gender but also by a combination of different social characteristics, including internal displacement, motherhood, living in rural areas, belonging to the LGBTIQ+ community, disability, or ethnic identity. As these factors overlap, they can increase the risks of economic instability, psychological exhaustion, or discrimination. Analyzing the experience of women's working conditions in the media therefore requires attention to the diversity of their experiences.

Formal employment does not guarantee professional stability.

Despite the fact that the majority of respondents are full-time employees (78%), a significant proportion work freelance or part-time. Almost two-thirds have undergone professional changes since the start of the full-scale invasion: 33% changed jobs or positions, 5% went freelance, 4.6% created their own projects, and 6% lost their jobs.

In open-ended questions, women have described reduced staff, adjustments in employees' job descriptions, and working during relocation.

This indicates that employment stability is often on paper only (in particular, the respondents indicate being unable to plan their lives in the long term) and requires constant adaptation to changes and uncertainty.

Overworking has become the norm.

The absolute majority of respondents (78%) indicate that the workload has increased, while only 6% report its reduction. The growing workload is linked to the staff shortages and structural instability of the media sector, leading to a permanent overwork mode. This leads to overwhelming fatigue among women in the media, who often have to perform care work at home in addition to their professional duties.

Double burden is a typical experience for most women in the media.

Alongside professional duties, many respondents also spend three to eight hours a day on care and household work (38% spend 3–4 hours, 20% 5–8 hours, 3% over 9 hours), while only 3% are not involved in care work at all. Thus, an increased professional workload is exacerbated by the uneven sharing of unpaid work, which leads to an increased risk of exhaustion and limits opportunities for recovery.

Institutional support in newsrooms remains fragmented or nonexistent.

Less than a third of respondents confirm the existence of a work-life balance policy (26%), another 23% note its partial implementation, while 42% report there is no such policy. Only 19% of respondents confirm that their newsrooms have a policy of equality and non-discrimination, while 11% reported that there was no such policy, and 17% were unable to respond.

The experience of gender-based discrimination and threats is prevalent even if not universal.

Although 57% of respondents indicate having never encountered discrimination, many report having faced online attacks or gendered disinformation (15%), psychological violence (15%), sexism (13%), or the gender pay gap (8%). The situation with threats is similar: 57% had no such experience, but others reported pressure from strangers (13%), colleagues (7%), people featured in their materials (7%), and authorities (3%). There are, however, women who did not seek help even in the event of threats, which indicates a lack of trust in response mechanisms or their limited effectiveness. Thus, the problem lies not only in the fact of threats but also in the weakness of protection and response systems.

| The financial situation of women in the media is deteriorating.

In comparison with 2022, 2026 sees a reduced percentage of those who can afford basic needs and savings, while the numbers of women who make enough money only for food or not even that are growing.

| Editorial resilience coexists with individual vulnerability and the need for support.

Although 49% of respondents rate the resilience of their editorial offices as rather high, almost a third indicate a low or very low level of resilience. At the same time, the majority assess their own economic security as low or average, and professional insurance is only available to very few journalists. Key challenges for women in the media include economic instability, mental exhaustion, and excessive workload.

| The demand for support has become systemic.

The most sought-after forms of assistance include improving the financial situation (96%), psychological support (69%), technical support (44%), insurance (41%), and safety training (32%). The high interest in training on AI-related risks, digital security, and physical safety indicates that women journalists are aware of new professional threats and are ready for professional development. Notably, each respondent could choose multiple options.

The combination of these requests indicates that the needs are not about isolated assistance but rather about comprehensive long-term support of women in the media as a distinct professional group in wartime.

Data Comparison: 2022 vs. 2026

↘ Relocation

In 2022, for most respondents, relocation was a shocking event, often traumatic, which was linked to the decision to “go or stay.” 47% of respondents then had relocated, while 53% remained in their previous location, but this did not mean stability: it was accompanied by a constant balancing act between fear, uncertainty, and forced adaptation. The moves were chaotic and unplanned; newsrooms were transforming in an emergency mode, and work was interrupted by shelters, roads, and loss of telecommunications.

In the current study, relocation is no longer the key issue, but its consequences are structurally present: there is a significant number of internally displaced women (20%) who live in rural areas or have other aggravating factors of vulnerability. This indicates that relocation has ceased to be a one-time crisis event and has become a long-term condition.

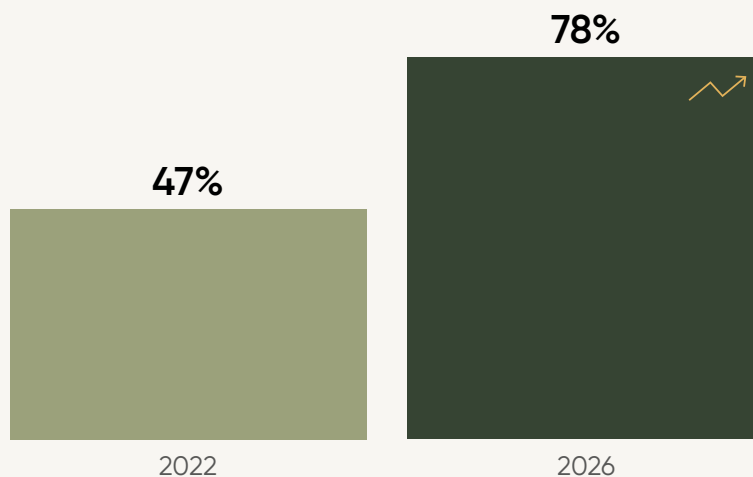
Key shift: from relocation as a one-time crisis to relocation as a long-term condition.
20% of respondents in 2026 are internally displaced women living with multiple vulnerabilities.

↘ Employment and workload

In 2022, 47% of respondents indicated that they remained in the same job but faced a major increase in workload. This was described as follows: 24/7, no days off, staff shortages, and physical exhaustion. At the same time, this overload was then perceived as a temporary mobilization—a sacrifice justified by war and social need.

In the current context, overload is becoming the dominant norm: 78% of respondents directly indicate that there has been more work; only 7% have not felt any changes, and 6% have felt that there has been less work. The fundamental difference is that now, the increasing workload is combined with a lack of financial security, a lack of policies to support work-life balance (as indicated by 42% of respondents), and a high proportion of psycho-emotional challenges.

Increase in respondents' workload



In 2022, instability was evident: 17% took on additional work, 12% changed jobs, 9% lost their job, and some changed the nature of their work within the same organization. The big picture was diverse but clearly indicative of a crisis.

In the current study, the majority declare full employment (78% of respondents), which may create the impression of relative stability. However, many respondents also share they take on additional project work or combine several roles to provide more income, since the paycheck at the main place of employment is insufficient to cover basic needs.

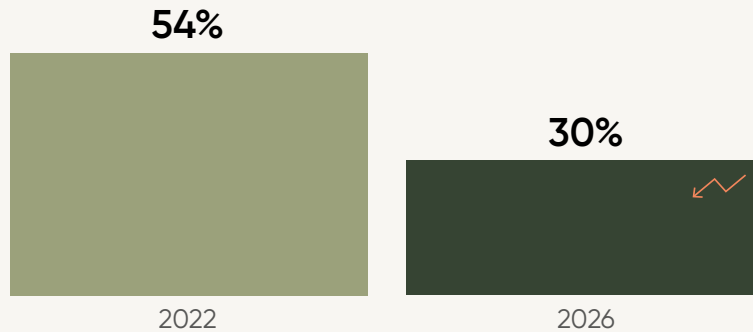
↘ Financial situation

In 2022, 45% of respondents reported a decrease in income, 27% reported no change, and 25% reported an increase, which was often offset by inflation. The drop was due to the shock of the first months of the full-scale invasion, a pause on the advertising market, and closure of media.

However, compared to 2022, 2026 sees not a recovery but rather a deterioration of economic vulnerability. According to the survey, only 30% of the respondents can afford food, clothing, and savings in 2026, a drop from 54% in 2022. Instead, there is a surge in the proportion of those who make enough money only for food but cannot afford clothes (54%); there is also an increase in the proportion of those who cannot cover even basic needs (5%). This indicates a cumulative effect of losses and a structural wage crisis in the media, which directly affects the psychological welfare, sense of security, and planning horizon.

Level of material well-being

(having enough money for food and clothing, and the ability to save)



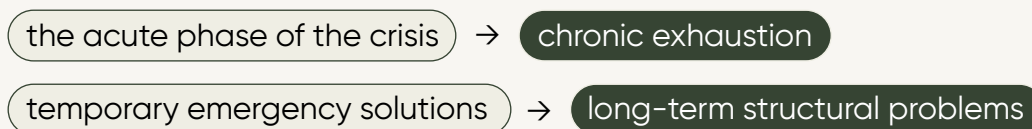
↘ War context and security

In 2022, working with war-related topics was a new experience for the respondents, meaningful and emotionally difficult at once. In the current study, war ceases to be a separate specialization: 36% of respondents work in relatively safe regions but regularly write about the war; 9% work directly in the combat zone; another 24% are not formally engaged in war journalism, but their topics constantly intersect with the war.

That is, **war becomes a universal context for media work**. Meanwhile, 181 out of 218 respondents do not have insurance, have average or low scores for physical, economic, and psychological security, and the demand for psychological and financial support is high.

↘ Conclusion: from an acute crisis to chronic exhaustion

A comparison of 2022 and 2026 captures a systemic transition:



While in 2022, the responses were largely in the spirit of “we will handle it because that’s the only way,” now, this sense of mobilization is depleting. Overwork, economic vulnerability, lack of insurance and systemic support are no longer perceived as temporary challenges, shaping a permanent context of professional life instead.

Recommendations

The research findings indicate that women in the Ukrainian media face systemic and long-term challenges. Thus, response to them should be not isolated but rather structural, aimed at improving working conditions and economic security and creating sustainable protection mechanisms.

In view of this, we have developed recommendations for various groups of stakeholders: newsrooms, media organizations, and international partners supporting Ukrainian media.

What newsrooms can do:

01. INSTITUTIONALIZE SUPPORT AND SECURITY POLICIES

Newsrooms should develop and implement formalized internal policies covering the issues of work-life balance, gender equality, combating discrimination and sexual harassment, and responding to online and offline threats. At the same time, it is crucial to not only adopt such documents but also ensure their real impact: clearly communicate the rules within teams, create transparent reporting procedures, and identify designated responsible employees and mechanisms for responding to specific cases.

See also: [“Steps for Newsroom to Take in the First 24 Hours Following an Online Attack against a Woman Journalist: A Step-by-Step Guide for the Media” / wim.org.ua/en/materials/24-guide-en/](https://wim.org.ua/en/materials/24-guide-en/)

02. REDUCE WOMEN’S CHRONICALLY EXCESSIVE WORKLOAD

In the situation of staff shortages and a fast-paced news cycle, newsrooms should regularly review the assignment of work responsibilities. It is best to provide for realistic workloads, regular recovery periods and holidays, and internal burnout prevention mechanisms. Recognizing excessive workload as a structural problem is the first step towards overcoming it.

03. RECOGNIZE AND CONSIDER CARE WORK AS PART OF THE WORKLOAD

Many women in journalism have unpaid care work in addition to professional duties. Newsrooms can support their female employees through flexible work hours, offering remote work, additional time off in difficult situations, and individual approaches to employees with partners in the military or children or to IDPs.

04. ENSURE FINANCIAL TRANSPARENCY AND EQUALITY

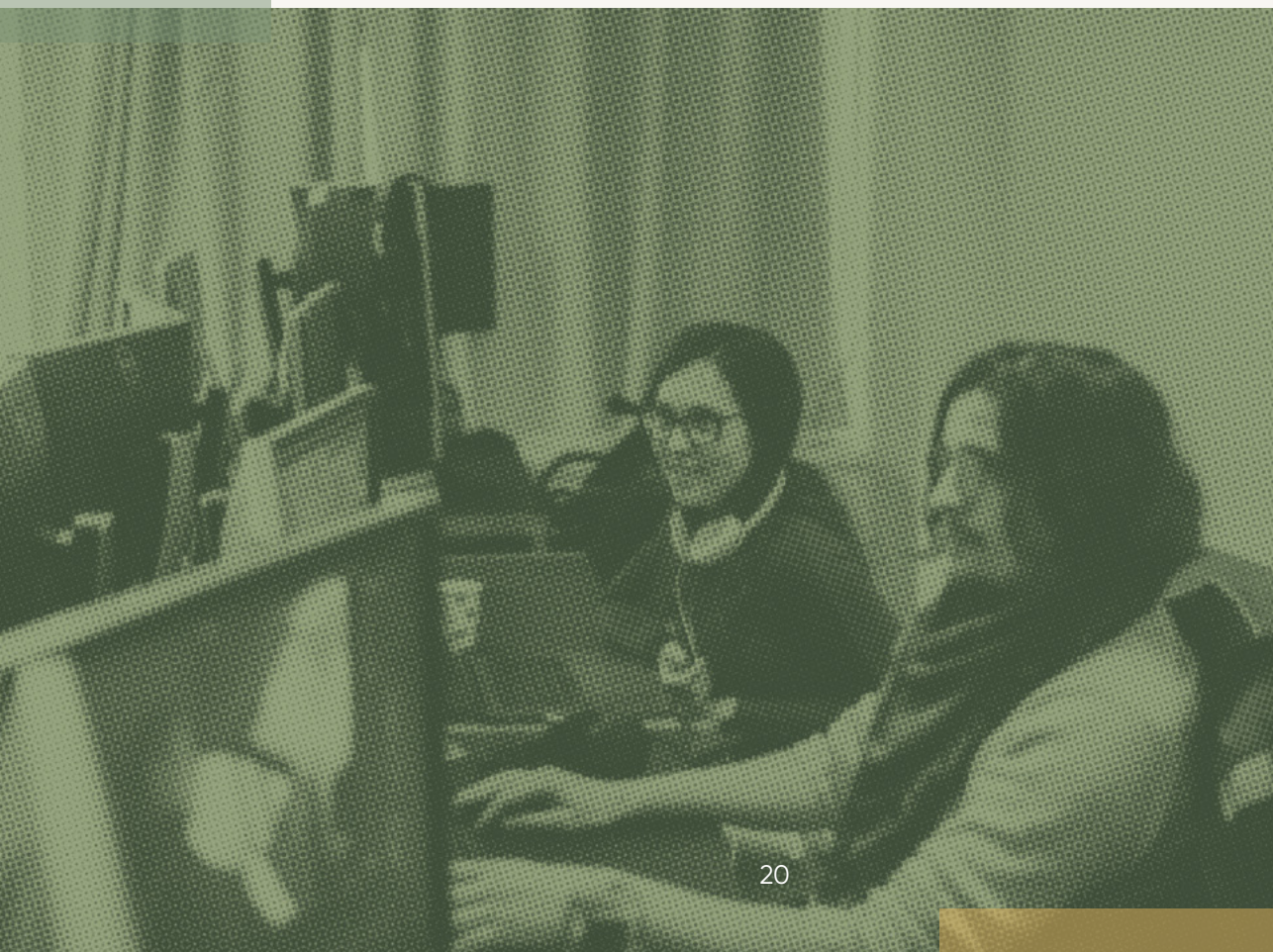
Newsrooms should implement regular internal pay audits to identify and reduce gender pay gaps. Financial transparency increases trust in teams and promotes fairer working conditions. We strongly suggest introducing graded pay systems that provide transparent salary ranges for each level of position and clear criteria for transition between them.

05. INVEST IN SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Investing in employee well-being is a crucial element of newsroom resilience. Newsrooms should consider providing medical and professional insurance; access to psychological support; training on security and crisis response. These should all be gender-sensitive programs.

06. DEVELOP LONG-TERM HR STRATEGIES TAKING INTO ACCOUNT VULNERABILITIES

Instead of case-by-case crisis response, newsrooms should develop permanent support programs for female employees representing vulnerable groups, including IDPs, women from military families, and single mothers. Such approaches help retain qualified staff and increase the stability of newsrooms.





What specialized media organizations and international development partners can do:

01. STRENGTHEN COLLECTIVE PROTECTION MECHANISMS

Clear mechanisms for supporting women journalists who face threats or discrimination should be developed. Such mechanisms may include: legal aid; public advocacy; mediation mechanisms; and professional organizations responding to cases of pressure or violence. The public response of the professional community is an important factor in deterring attacks.

02. REGULARLY MONITOR GENDER EQUALITY IN THE MEDIA

Regular comprehensive data collection provides for a better understanding of changes in the media sector. Regular research is necessary regarding: women journalists' working conditions; economic stability; the prevalence of discrimination, threats, and violence. One example is the Gender Profile of Ukrainian Media, which is annually conducted by the NGO "Women in Media" together with the Ukrainian media regulator.

03. INTEGRATE WOMEN JOURNALISTS INTO BROADER PROGRAMS TO SUPPORT WOMEN DURING THE WAR

Since many women in the media represent vulnerable groups (including internally displaced women, military partners/spouses or single mothers), they should be provided with access to social, legal, and psychological support mechanisms offered to women affected by the war.

See also ["Engaging the Media in a Gender-Responsive and Inclusive Approach to Ukraine Recovery Programs: Recommendations for International Organizations" / wim.org.ua/materials/recovery/](https://wim.org.ua/materials/recovery/)

04. CREATE PROFESSIONAL SOLIDARITY NETWORKS

The study shows that the combination of professional duties, care work, financial instability, and security risks gradually depletes solidarity within the professional community. Platforms for sharing experiences, professional mentorship, informal consultations, and psychological support can partly make up for this deficit. They offer practical solutions, foster a sense of community, and reduce the risks of professional burnout.

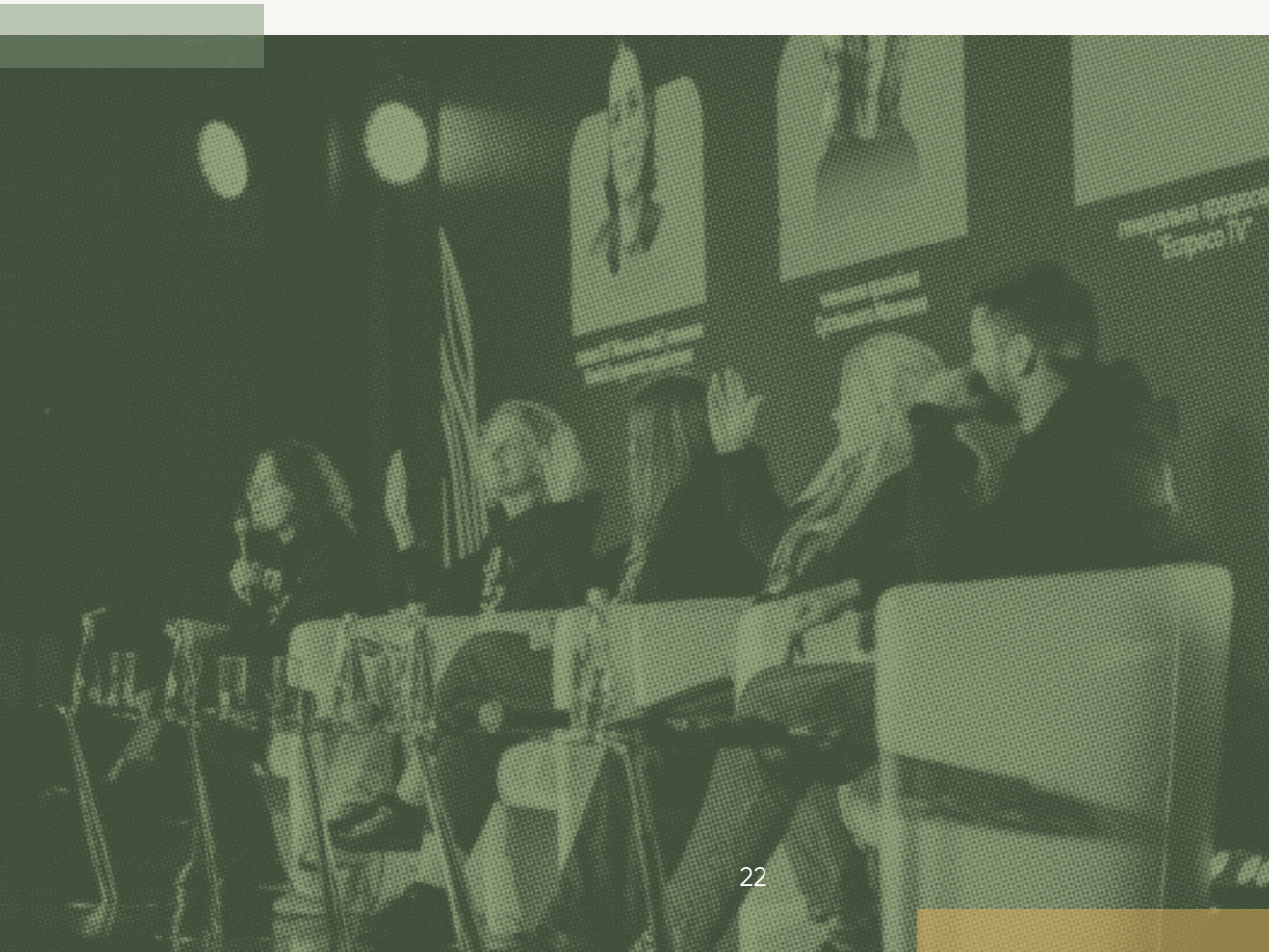
05. SHIFT SUPPORT FROM SHORT-TERM GRANTS TO LONG-TERM STABILIZATION

Data comparison over 2022–2026 shows accumulated economic vulnerability in the media sector. Due to this, support programs should cover newsrooms' operating expenses, decent pay for journalists, and support for team stability.

06. INVEST IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN THE MEDIA

In times of crisis, women often undertake additional professional and social responsibilities, but their access to management positions and resources remains limited. Supporting women leaders through management skills development programs; mentoring and professional networks; and financial instruments to launch and scale media initiatives will contribute to the formation of more inclusive and sustainable newsrooms.

See also: Policy paper [“Girls Just Wanna Have Voice: Strengthening Women's Leadership in the Ukrainian Media” / wim.org.ua/materials/policy-paper/](https://wim.org.ua/materials/policy-paper/)





What government institutions can do:

01. STRENGTHEN MECHANISMS TO PROTECT JOURNALISTS FROM THREATS AND VIOLENCE

The state must ensure an effective investigation of threats, harassment, and other forms of pressure on journalists, particularly gender-based and online ones (TFGBV – technology-facilitated gender-based violence). It is advisable to enhance the ability of law enforcement agencies to respond to crimes against journalists; to develop specialized training for cyber police and investigators regarding online threats and gender-based online violence; to provide proper qualification of such cases according to the law on obstructing journalistic activities.

See also: [Her Voice, Their Target: Gendered Online Violence against Ukrainian Women Journalists – a study / wim.org.ua/en/materials/online-gbv/](https://wim.org.ua/en/materials/online-gbv/)

02. INTEGRATE A GENDER-RESPONSIVE APPROACH INTO MEDIA SECTOR DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

In the formation of media development strategies, information policies, and journalism support programs, the government should take into account gender aspects. This may include: analyzing the conditions of women's work in the media; considering gender equality in the development of support policies for the media sector; integrating gender-focused approaches into government programs for media development.

03. SUPPORT SYSTEMATIC DATA COLLECTION ON THE WORKING CONDITIONS OF JOURNALISTS

Effective policies must rely on regular data on the situation in the media. The government can promote: regular monitoring of journalists' working conditions; collecting data on economic stability in the media; research into cases of threats, discrimination, and violence against journalists.

04. INTEGRATE JOURNALISTS INTO BROADER SUPPORT PROGRAMS DURING THE WAR

Journalists working in high-risk areas or covering the aftermath of the war often face high levels of psychological and security stress. Journalists should be provided with access to psychological support programs, recovery and rehabilitation programs, government or mixed social support programs.

05. PROMOTE THE SAFETY OF JOURNALISTS IN THE DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT

The rise of online threats and smear campaigns requires enhanced digital security policies. The government can develop cooperation with digital platforms to combat online violence, including gender-based violence; strengthen the institutional capacity of bodies responding to cybercrime; support digital security programs.

See also: *[When AI Turns Hostile: Gendered Threats Against Ukrainian Women Journalists – a study](https://wim.org.ua/en/materials/ai-study-unesco/)* / wim.org.ua/en/materials/ai-study-unesco/



Research methodology

The study “The Situation of Women Journalists and Other Women Media Workers in Ukraine” is the second stage of a systematic research of the gender aspect of Ukrainian media’s work during wartime. The first round was conducted by the Women in Media NGO at the end of 2022. The second assessment took place in late 2025–early 2026, that is, at the end of the fourth year of the full-scale war in Ukraine. This provides a dynamic picture of the situation of Ukrainian women journalists.

This study is a comprehensive attempt to discern how the war affects women in the media in the long term: how their professional roles, working conditions, level of safety, combination of paid work with care work have been changing, as well as what experiences they have had with discrimination or violence. Contrasting the results of 2022 and 2026 helps to identify not only isolated issues but also persistent trends and transformations in the media sector related to the situation of women media workers and caused by the full-scale war.

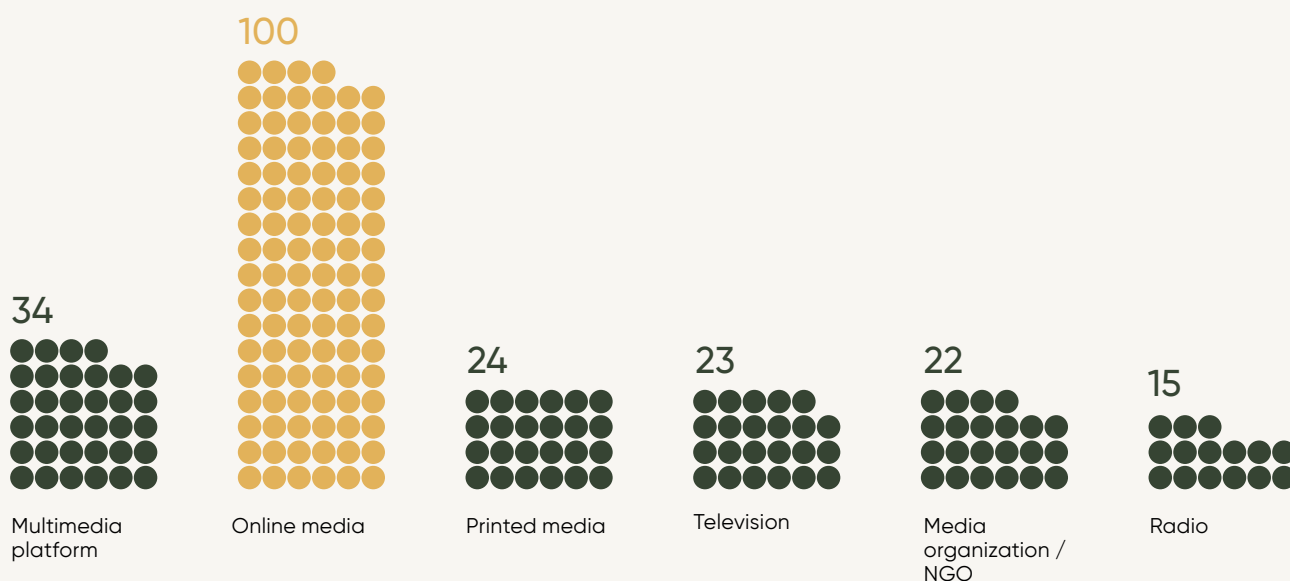
The study was conducted using a combined methodology of quantitative and qualitative methods. This approach is helpful to identify general trends and structural issues in the situation of women media workers and, furthermore, to gain a more profound understanding of the context, motivations, and subjective experience of respondents.

The qualitative part of the study involved 10 in-depth semi-structured interviews with women journalists and media workers. The interviews aimed to take a deep dive into the experiences of working in wartime, changes in professional roles, combining professional duties with care work, feelings of safety, and interactions with newsrooms and colleagues.

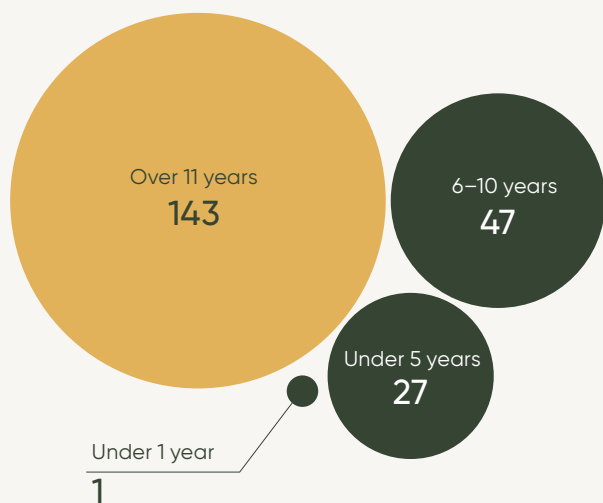
The quantitative part consisted of an online survey (questionnaire). It was filled out by 218 women working in the media sector in Ukraine. The questionnaire covered issues of employment, working conditions, professional changes, experiences of discrimination and violence, the presence of various editorial policies, safety, as well as socio-demographic characteristics. The survey was shared through the Women in Media network, media organizations, and social media.

The sample included representatives of various types of media: online media, multimedia platforms, television, radio, print media, as well as media and civil society organizations. The survey covered both local and regional, as well as niche media. The respondents included journalists, editors, heads of newsrooms and media organizations, media managers, SMM specialists, and other media workers with varying levels of professional experience – from the beginning of their careers to over 11 years of experience.

Media type [n]



Experience [n]

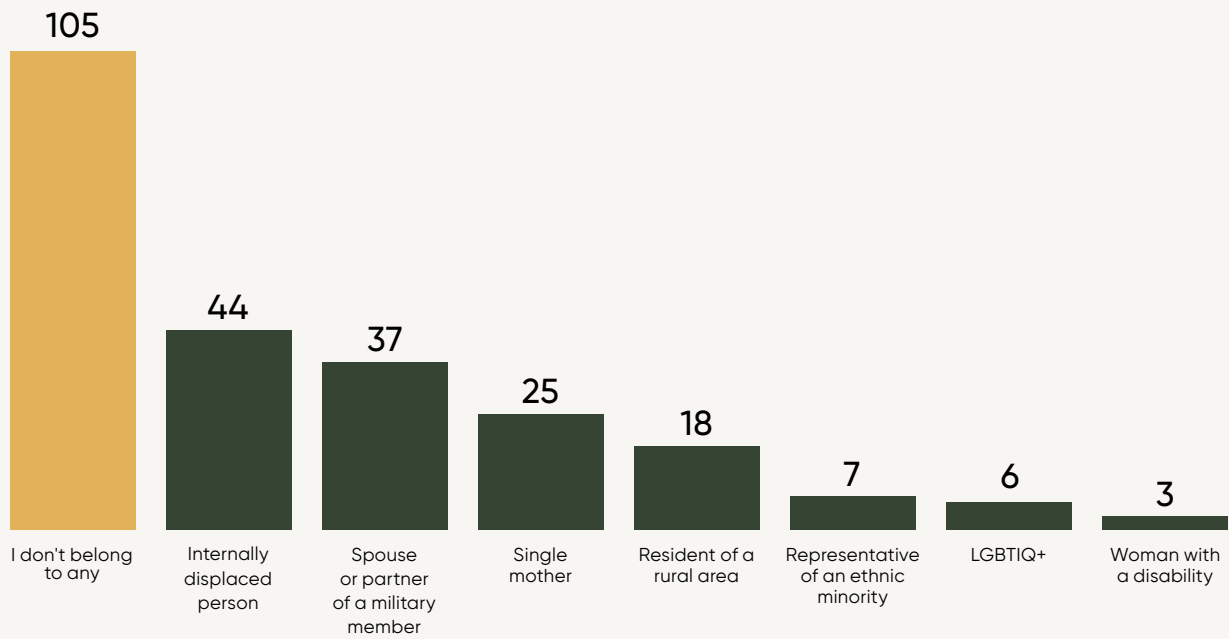


Role [n]



The survey also included women who were part of vulnerable groups, including internally displaced people, single mothers, partners or wives of military personnel, representatives of the LGBTIQ+ community, etc.

Vulnerable group [n]



The comprehensive nature of the study not only captures the state of affairs in early 2026 but also contributes to an understanding of the long-term impact of the war on women in the media. It helps to identify systemic problems and outline the main vectors to develop support programs, equality policies, and ways to overcome gender inequality in the Ukrainian media sector.

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Psychological welfare

“In 2023, I was so exhausted that I went to bed with a thought, ‘Maybe, tomorrow we won’t wake up.’ And when I did wake up, I thought, ‘Oh, we are alive again, time to go to work.’”

“I feel much more tired than in 2022. Back then, we were running on adrenaline.”

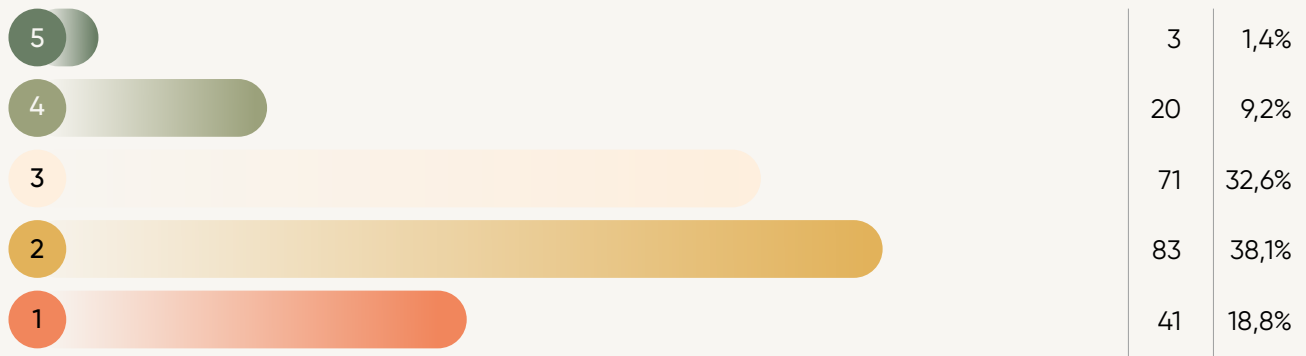
The study showed that the most serious challenges faced by women media workers during the full-scale invasion are not related to security or financial stability but rather to their psychological wellbeing.

The vast majority of respondents, both in the quantitative survey and in-depth interviews, said that they were in a state of psycho-emotional exhaustion. **To a large extent, this is due to the protracted war: as of the moment of the study, the full-scale invasion is nearing four years, and accumulated fatigue has been increasingly transforming into a state of chronic exhaustion and professional burnout.**

This is also due to the difficult conditions in which women journalists need to work. They include regular shelling, which has become part of the daily routine in many Ukrainian cities, including Kyiv, and an unstable situation in the energy system leading to regular power outages. Notably, the quantitative survey took place over November–December 2025, when the power situation, particularly in Kyiv, was not as difficult as in February 2026. **The level of psychological stress among women media workers has thus probably increased rather than decreased since.**

In the quantitative survey, the largest group of respondents, 83 journalists (38% of the total number) assessed their psychological welfare at 2 points out of 5. This figure points to a persistent feeling of distress and exhaustion and indicates a systemic nature of the problem rather than isolated crises.

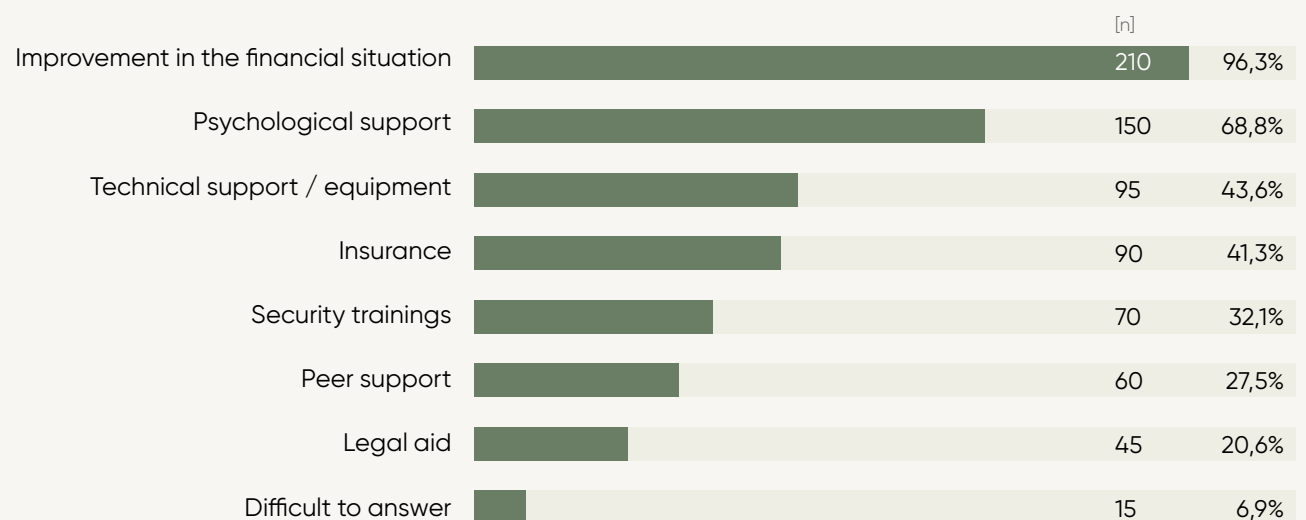
Psychological security



Another 41 respondents (almost 19%) rated their psychological welfare at the minimum level, 1 point out of 5, which further emphasizes the depth of psycho-emotional difficulties in the professional environment. In contrast, only 3 respondents, or about 1.4% of those surveyed, gave their psychological wellbeing the highest score (5), which indicates that psychological stability among women media workers is practically nonexistent.

The answers indicating the **need for psychological support** are therefore very telling: 150 respondents directly indicate that they urgently need it. Another 32 study participants reported experiences of psychological violence, further increasing risks to mental health and feelings of safety in the professional environment.

Required aid



Overall, the data appear to indicate that women media workers' psychological welfare is one of the key yet least visible challenges faced by the industry during the full-scale war.

Among the key reasons causing a deterioration in women media workers' mental health are the excessive workload and chronic overtime, which have become systemic during the full-scale war. The workload is not only intense but also uneven, changeable and thus unpredictable. The respondents described a situation of constant instability, where periods of excessive workload are followed by gaps, and uncertainty with projects and income is exacerbated by the absence of clear rules in the interaction with newsrooms, especially international ones, and donors.

The human factor becomes an additional cause of stress in the professional interaction. **Journalists feel difficulty working with foreign colleagues, who often fail to understand the Ukrainian context and safety risks fully yet insist on dictating how and what needs to be filmed or written.** This creates additional tension and a perceived loss of agency in the workplace. This is further aggravated by the inner conflict between the desire to work in the field and the reality of the war making this type of work dangerous or impossible.

For many journalists, the excessive workload, which certainly existed even before the full-scale war, has turned from short-term fatigue into a profound, lasting burnout.

One of the study participants describes her condition in 2023 as follows:



“In 2023, I was so exhausted that I went to bed with a thought, ‘Maybe tomorrow we won’t wake up.’ And when I did wake up, I thought, ‘Crap, we are alive again, time to go to work.’”

She adds that this is not about one-time fatigue; it is rather a consequence of exhausting working conditions and new responsibilities brought by the war. After the first year of the full-scale invasion, the respondent was actually on the verge of quitting: *“I was planning to leave the company because I thought I couldn't give it anything anymore.”*

While over time, the situation partly stabilized in some cases, a sense of uncertainty persists in the background. *“I cannot say I feel the same way as in 2023, but there is still this sense of uncertainty, not knowing what may happen tomorrow,”* says one journalist.

Some media workers made radical decisions to change the format of their work due to the chronic overload.

“I worked in linear shows and news programs for over ten years and, honestly, I was really tired. So I left this process over 2023–2024,”

says one respondent, explaining that she felt this was the only way to preserve her mental health.

Some study participants have been trying to develop their own survival strategies due to being constantly overwhelmed. One of them describes this as conscious blocking of burnout: *“I essentially prohibited myself from burning out. I allow these feelings only on the weekend. I manage the organization and have to constantly support the team and motivate people to move forward. If I lose motivation, I will not be able to share it with others.”* This strategy, however, does not eliminate the causes of exhaustion but rather masks it.

The respondents also see a clear distinction between different stages of the war in terms of their psychological wellbeing.

“I feel much more tired than in 2022. Back then, we were running on adrenaline,”

recalls a journalist who was working in Odesa at the beginning of the full-scale war.

She describes her work as incessant when she could not disconnect from the newsfeed even after her shift, and there was neither sleep nor rest. *“There was a feeling that you couldn’t miss anything; it felt like everything hinged on that,”* she explains. She adds that the adrenaline of the first year gave her a boost of energy, but this resource eventually ran out.

In addition, the respondents speak of the workload connected with the need to work on several projects at once to ensure financial survival.


“Fatigue. Enormous fatigue. I have been the sole content maker in my media outlet for 3.5 years, and not only in mine, so I take on additional gigs to survive,”

says a research participant..

The overlapping of full-time work, project-based employment, and responsibility for one's own income creates a vicious circle of overload that is difficult to escape without systemic support.

The psychological wellbeing of media workers depends not only on professional workload, but also on the larger context of the full-scale war. External circumstances, such as constant shelling, an unstable situation in the energy system, and news from the frontline, become a constant backdrop of journalists' work and daily life, giving them no space to recover.

The respondents recall power outages to be one of the most traumatic experiences in the first years of the full-scale invasion. For some, this was the straw that broke the camel's back.



“I felt the major impact of the 2022 power outages. I remember how I was lying at home, it was very cold, and I told my husband how to dress me for my funeral, just in case. I think my depression started with the outages. I respond to them worse than to the war itself,”

says one participant.



She adds that even strategies to become more autonomous, such as spending all the savings on an expensive power station, bring rather short-term relief than a lasting sense of security. The constant threat of shelling also remains a significant factor in psychological pressure. Even if the journalists were not in critical situations themselves, the constant awareness of the risks remains.

“I have not been in critical situations myself, but we all know journalists who came under fire,”

says a respondent.

The situation is further complicated by the fact that most Ukrainian newsrooms are unable to provide insurance for their employees, particularly those working in combat zones, as it is too expensive. This, however, makes the position of media workers even more precarious.

News from the frontline, especially when it moves closer to journalists' hometowns, also affects their state of mind. Respondents describe growing anxiety during daily monitoring of hostilities. *“Now that the frontline is creeping closer and we see the enemy advancing in the Zaporizhzhia direction every day on DeepState, it eats at you, of course,”* says a journalist.

The professional duty to write about somebody else's pain and losses is an additional source of exhaustion.



“Sometimes it becomes difficult because you constantly have to write about people’s pain. It would be wrong not to, that’s the time we live in. But it is becoming very difficult to find something positive,”

shares a respondent.



An additional set of factors affecting women media workers’ psychological wellbeing is connected with their **family circumstances**. Caring for children, parents, or other family members is often combined with a lack of partner support, as many journalists’ husbands serve in the Defense Forces of Ukraine. This creates an additional burden and at the same time exacerbates the feeling of loneliness and responsibility, sometimes also leading to a sense of financial instability.

One respondent describes how the reality of the full-scale invasion changed her perception of life overall:

“The senses have become more acute compared to what it was like before 2022, and everything seems harder, even physically.”

Her husband has been serving in the military since 2022, and their young child barely sees their father. *“Over two years we must have had about 60 days when they were together.”* This background also contributes to complex internal conflicts and feelings of guilt. The respondent admits that she often considers joining the army as well and feels an inner tension between wanting to serve and motherhood.

For some journalists, their personal lives have effectively been put on hold by the war.

“I have no personal life now. Only household and work. My personal life has been on hold for over three years now because my husband is in the military,”

Another respondent points out the changing roles in the family and additional responsibility she’s had to take on during the war: *“I took on the role of the ‘adult’ in the family: safety issues, moves, rent, chores, it was all my job.”* Awareness of this responsibility also leads to anxiety about the future: *“I understand that if I ever have children, and I really want that, I have no idea how I will handle all of this.”*

In combination, these external and family circumstances create a constant backdrop of tension that is compounded by the professional workload, significantly undermining the psychological welfare of media workers during the ongoing full-scale war.

The research highlighted that the issue of psychological recovery and support becomes one of the key challenges for women media workers in a lasting wartime environment. Continual encounters with traumatic content, such as reports on deaths, injuries, and destruction, create a risk of vicarious trauma from which it is impossible to fully isolate.

“There are days when you just become a person writing about rubble, bodies, wounded people, and destroyed houses all day long. This sometimes makes me very depressed,”

describes this experience one respondent.

In these conditions, journalists are looking for ways of at least partial psychological recovery. One strategy they use is an intentional shift to other types of materials: large, complex, but more life-affirming stories. *“These are stories about doctors, about police officers who went to the frontline and came back, perhaps with a disability; about the military, about people who stay strong,”* shares a respondent. She adds that these materials are also emotionally challenging but rewarding, as they give her a sense of mission. *“There’s more life there. And I feel like I’m accomplishing an important mission... this really relieves me a bit.”*

Some study participants had experience with professional psychological support but this was mostly one-time opportunities connected with grant programs rather than systemic newsroom policies.



“There was a period when I could receive psychological support as part of a grant program. I did a few sessions with a psychologist... I see nothing wrong with that. It actually helped,”

shares a journalist who sought professional help.

Meanwhile, another respondent has overtly brought up a lack of institutional support from her newsroom in terms of psychological support. *“The media outlet does not provide psychological support. Unfortunately. If somebody needs it, they need to find it on their own.”*

With systemic help largely amiss, journalists develop their own individual recovery practices. For many, reviewing their priorities and clear work-life boundaries has become an important resource.

“Work still occupies a significant place in my life, but now, there are things I would not put on the back burner. Such as sports,”

shares one respondent.

Regular exercises become not only physical rehabilitation but also a means of psychological stabilization and a means to regain control over one's body and time. Similar logic applies to relationships with family. Caring for loved ones started taking prevalence over work: *"Previously, I could overlook or postpone something personal because of urgent work. Not anymore. If the choice is between mine and theirs, it'll be theirs."*

This does not mean abandoning professional responsibilities but allows for building a more stable balance in the long term. Yet, even with individual strategies, tension never fully goes away. **The respondents often mention chronic sleep disturbances as one of the most common problems.**

"For example, I have very disturbed sleep... It's become a habit of my brain," says one participant describing her inability to relax even in a relatively safe environment. Constant readiness for air raids, air defense sounds, and shelling becomes embedded in the body and does not go away even with a change in location. In this context, journalists also bring up the need for a more profound recovery, particularly in formats that provide for distancing from everyday tension.

"I would really like to take a breather... So, yeah, I would love to go on a retreat or something,"

says one respondent.

For some of the study participants, intentional limitations on worktime and protecting time off have become key elements of recovery.

"I have adopted the rule that the weekend is meant for rest,"

says one journalist.

Even in work-related emergencies, she tries to keep most of her days off free. In some newsrooms, some approaches gradually turn into internal rules: any work during a day off should be offset by rest during the next week. *"I really feel this need both for myself and for the team. The weekend is sacred,"* shares the respondent.

Some respondents also talk about bodily and everyday practices as important ways of stabilizing. For some, these involve movement and physical activity.

"In the past two years, if I am having a hard time I need to get up and go somewhere... it is movement that saves me. Staying still no longer helps."

For others, these are simple repetitive actions that give them a sense of accomplishment and control: cooking, cleaning, and manual work. In some cases, work actually becomes a way to calm down, to get something done and thus reduce the inner tension.

Communicating with children is an important resourceful activity for some women in the media.

This opportunity to talk to them as equals, share emotions, and spend time together creates a sense of connection with life beyond the war and work. Additional recovery practices include learning new skills, such as driving, which some respondents describe as a method to shift attention and relieve stress in a profound way.

There is a noticeable discrepancy between responses received in the quantitative phase and the comments in the in-depth interviews.

In the survey, most respondents directly indicated the need for psychological support, particularly in the format of individual therapy sessions. These responses correlate with the overall level of psychological exhaustion recorded in the study and indicate the respondents' awareness of the problem and willingness to seek help. During in-depth interviews, however, journalists were often skeptical about the prospects of individual therapy.

Some interviewees directly said they saw no point in long-term therapy as the main recovery method. Instead, they believe it would be most beneficial to take a long break from work without the need to constantly think about income, deadlines, and professional responsibilities. *"There are several options. Primarily – no work. This is the first thing that helps,"* explains one journalist. She adds that burnout is not only due to the war but also due to the very organization of work and a sense of uncertainty: fear of losing work or needing to fully change the professional format.

For many respondents, this kind of break remains more of a dream than a realistic option. This is especially true for freelancers, for whom any type of break means losing income. *"There is no possibility to stop working and thinking about work,"* says one participant. Ideally, she says, these could be paid residencies, retreats, or programs that allow you to either work slowly on a large, long-term project, or take a break altogether without financial risk. *"A freelancer can't just 'take a break,'"* she emphasizes.

The situation is also aggravated by difficult life circumstances that limit the media workers' flexibility. One respondent talks about being responsible for the war-torn family: her little son lives abroad with his grandparents who evacuated from the occupied territory. In these circumstances, what matters most is safety rather than professional fulfillment or income, which further limits the space for recovery and makes any kind of break financially vulnerable.

Skepticism expressed in in-depth interviews regarding individual therapy is often not about denying its value per se but rather about prior experience where therapy did not meet expectations.

“A psychologist doesn’t really help me because they often say, ‘Maybe you need to find a different job.’ They don’t always understand the nature of journalism at war,”

explains one participant.

At the same time, some respondents say that therapy may be helpful not for “treating” the overall situation but rather to feel supported during difficult life decisions.

“I only turned to a psychologist once, when I was pregnant, and two professionals said the same thing: ‘You already know the decision. You don’t need therapy, you need support to get through this decision,’”

Financial (in)stability

“You cannot be certain of anything now.”

“In the scope of six months, yes. I wouldn’t venture to make any further predictions.”

The financial situation of women media workers in Ukraine was unstable even before the full-scale invasion. The level of income in journalism has traditionally depended on a number of factors: the position and role that a person held in the newsroom, the type of media, the type of content that a particular person worked with (news, analytics, investigations), as well as geography – namely, there was a noticeable difference between regional and national media, most of which are based in Kyiv. However, even under more favorable conditions, wages in the industry often remained low.

This is illustrated by [data from the research](#) by the Media Development Foundation indicating significant pay differences in journalism. The lowest incomes are typical of news reporters and journalists who create day-to-day content without editorial functions. Experienced journalists who combined writing with editorial work could expect higher incomes, but such positions were available to a limited number of employees.

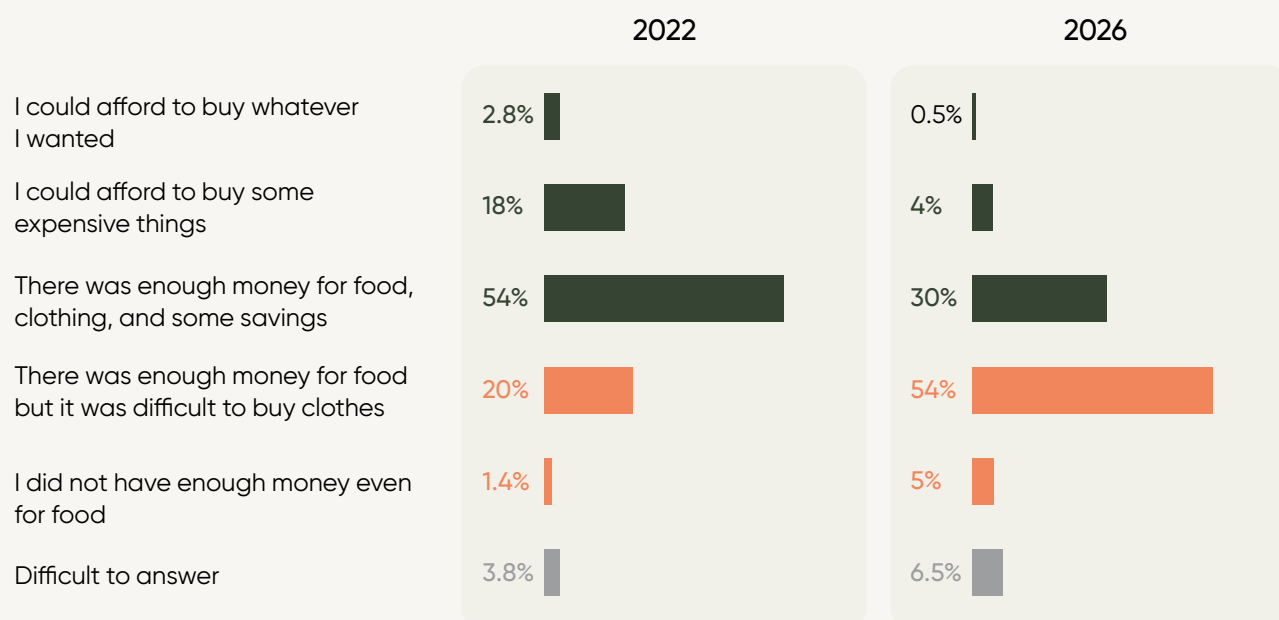
According to a [study](#) by the Women in Media NGO about the situation of women media workers during the war (2022), the respondents’ income had mostly dropped in comparison with the pre-war period. **Even in cases when income in UAH grew, the financial situation never improved due to inflation, exchange rate fluctuations, and the general increase in the cost of living.** Some respondents also noted they were spending additional income not on their own needs but on donations for the army.

Among those whose income decreased, the largest group was women who did not change their place of work but faced a significant increase in workload (34%). Losing the job was only the second most common reason for a decreased income (18%). Another 12% of the respondents noted that even with additional gigs, their total income remained lower than before the full-scale invasion.

These data thus indicate that **financial instability is not a situational consequence of the war but rather a structural issue** in the media sector, which became even more acute following the full-scale invasion and directly affects women media workers' wellbeing and professional resilience.

■ Dynamics of the respondents' financial situation in 2022–2026

A comparison of responses between 2022 and 2026 demonstrates a significant **deterioration of the financial situation** and an increased sense of financial instability.



In 2022, more than half the respondents (54%) said they had enough money for food, clothing, and some savings. Another 18% could afford to buy some expensive things, and 2.8% could afford to buy almost anything they wanted. At the same time, one in five respondents (20%) indicated that she only had enough money for food, and it was difficult to buy clothes. Extreme forms of financial vulnerability were less common: 1.4% reported that they did not have enough money even for food.

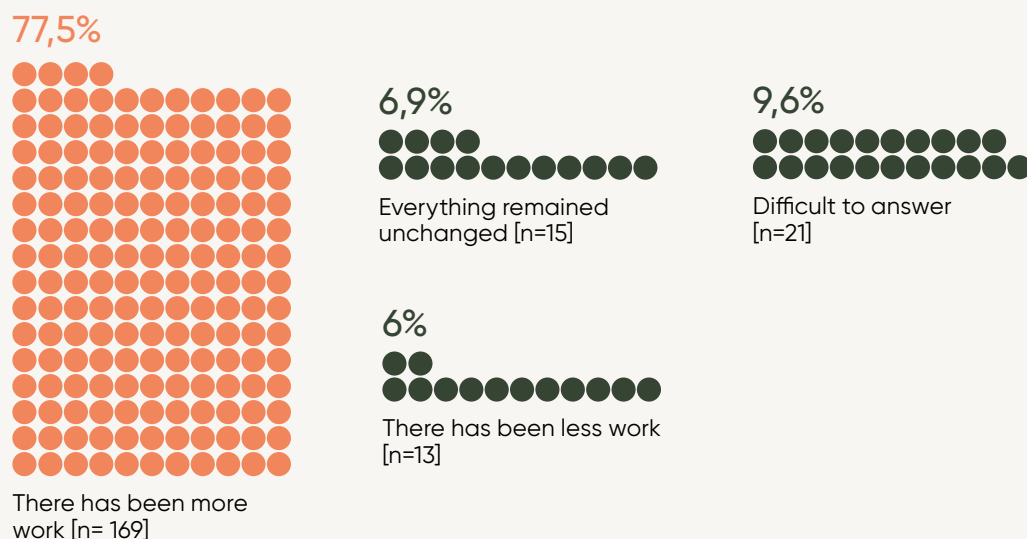
As of late 2025–early 2026, the structure of these responses changes significantly. The option “enough money for food but it is difficult to buy clothes” became the most common one at 54%. The share of those who are able not only to provide for basic needs but also to save money has almost halved down to 30%.

The group of women who can afford expensive purchases has also decreased sharply: from 18% in 2022 to 4% in 2025. Only 0.5% of respondents said they could afford to buy whatever they wanted.

The share of financially vulnerable groups has increased. The number of respondents who do not have enough money even for food increased from 1.4% to 5%. The share of those who find it difficult to assess their financial situation has almost doubled, which may indicate general income instability and a lack of predictability in their financial situation.

Increased workload

The deterioration in the financial situation is occurring against the backdrop of a significant increase in workload. More than three-quarters of respondents (78%) report having more work compared to 2022. Only 7% say there is no change in the workload, and 6% say it has decreased. Another 10% are unsure.



These data indicate a structural imbalance: in most cases, an increased workload does not contribute to an improved financial situation; quite the opposite. This situation reinforces the feeling of exhaustion and instability that respondents describe in other parts of the study.

Economic instability is one of the key challenges in the experience of women journalists. It is mentioned in one in two or three open responses, often as the only or main problem. In many cases, financial uncertainty is the only indicated challenge.

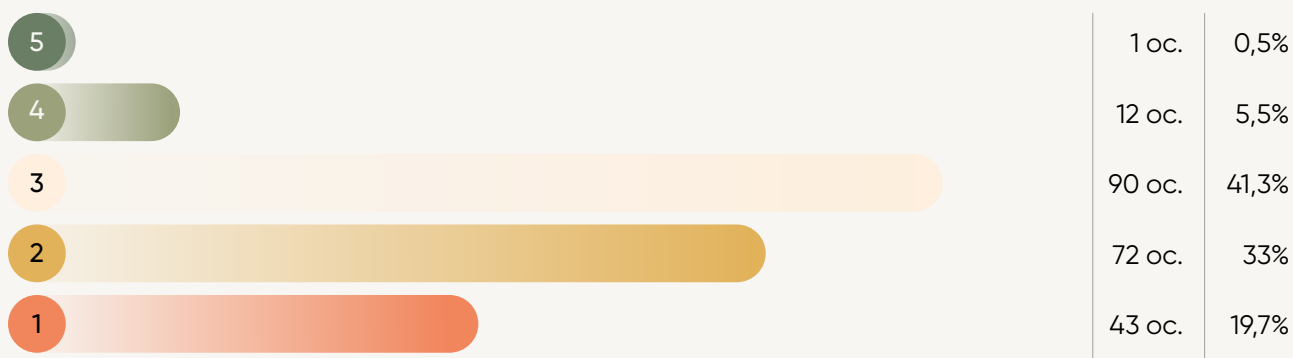
Challenges



Professional changes and financial vulnerability

The responses received in the survey show that financial instability is intertwined with professional changes. Only 26% of the respondents say that nothing has changed in their professional situation. Meanwhile, 33% changed jobs or positions, 6% lost their jobs, 5% went freelance, and another 5% created their own projects. Another 6% of the respondents were unable to clearly indicate their professional changes.

Economic security



A sense of financial instability is typical not only of those who work in less stable formats, such as freelance. The vast majority of respondents (78%) are full-time employees, another 12% work freelance or on project work, and 8% are part-time employees. Even so, it is women employed full-time who tend to describe their financial situation as vulnerable or less favorable compared to 2022. This shows that having a full-time position in the media does not guarantee financial

stability by itself, and economic risks increasingly become a common experience for women journalists regardless of the format of their employment.

In-depth interviews reveal much less clear-cut responses on the financial situation of journalists compared to survey responses. Some respondents note that their financial situation has not technically changed since the beginning of the full-scale invasion. **They speak of maintaining the usual workflow and income at the level of early 2022; however, they recognize this “stability” as relative in a broader context.**

Considering inflation, increased prices and the rise in the cost of basic necessities, maintaining income is not the same as maintaining the lifestyle. As one respondent notes, her situation has definitely not deteriorated, as they continue business as usual, and after the full-scale invasion started, her colleagues and she set up a civil society organization Zaporizhzhia Media Community that enables them to engage grant support, including for texts. **In this context, she says that war is not only about losses but sometimes also about new opportunities, while emphasizing the important role of support from management at her main place of work.**

Even in such stories, however, financial stability correlates with additional sources of income. Stability is often provided not only by full-time employment but also by grants, project work, or several roles at once. Some respondents also mention an improvement in their financial situation compared to the beginning of the full-scale invasion. As a rule, this is related to a job change or promotion. **However, these changes are almost always accompanied by an increase in workload and less time to recover.** One journalist mentioned she makes more now than she did before, especially compared with her job at a media outlet in Odesa, but this is still insufficient to feel financially comfortable. She is constantly thinking about additional sources of income despite the already overwhelming workload.

In-depth interviews often saw financial stability described not in terms of specific amounts but rather through predictability and security. The respondents felt it was important to understand whether they would have income at all in the coming months. One of the interviewees explains she does not expect money “from nowhere” and realizes that stability comes from hard work, but even with full-time employment, there is always a risk of not getting paid. It is fundamentally important for her to have confidence that if she works, she will get paid for it.

Donor and grant support also plays a role in financial stability, but respondents point out the changing rules over time. **According to their observations, starting in 2024, it has become much easier for individual entrepreneurs to receive mini-grants than for legal entities.** For media companies registered as LLCs, requirements have become tougher since 2023. In 2022, many procedures were simplified due to the general uncertainty; later, however, it all came back with more complicated application processes, more detailed reports, and heavier administrative pressure.

In-depth interviews also indicate periods of acute financial stress related to crises within the newsrooms themselves. Several respondents have mentioned January 2025 as a particularly tense

moment, when the suspension of USAID and other US budget funding created an atmosphere of uncertainty and fear for jobs. One of them describes this period as very stressful: **the team did not understand who would stay employed and who would be let go; there were many expectations and few answers.**

For some media, the loss of USAID funding meant a loss of about 80% of their budget and the need to prepare for a variety of scenarios, from best-case to worst-case. One interviewee indicated that the newsroom had to scale down production, suspend some work trips and shut down available job openings, redistributing the workload within the team instead. She noted, however, that within a few months after that, the media outlet managed to restore financial stability by engaging new donors. **According to her, as of the time of the interview, the organization is no longer in survival mode but rather in development mode.**

In contrast to these stories, there are some of deterioration in the financial situation. Declining engagement in journalism, either due to burnout or due to changing life circumstances or security needs, often directly impacts income. One of the respondents says that due to reduced participation at work, her financial situation has also worsened. **She has to do other work in addition to journalism and suggests that many people now work on several projects to maintain a livable income.**

Overall, the in-depth interviews reveal a complex and multidimensional big picture of women journalists' financial situation. **Even where there is stability or improvement, these are often accomplished by an increased workload, multitasking, and a constant sense of uncertainty.**

■ Feeling of stability

In-depth interviews demonstrate a conflicting, fragmented view of job stability and confidence in the future. While some respondents do have a sense of stability, it is very limited time-wise, hardly ever exceeding several months. One respondent phrased this very directly.

“In the scope of six months, yes. I wouldn’t venture to make any further predictions.”

For some media, this limited stability already means a somewhat organized situation. Respondents note that in Ukraine, long-term planning means six months or a year, and if a media outlet can afford it, this already indicates a certain level of resilience.

At the same time, even in relatively stable situations, the scope of confidence is clearly limited by the external war context. One of the respondents says that she feels confident at least until spring and specifically emphasizes this point in time, because *“everyone else is constantly talking about it: colleagues, the military, experts.”*

In her perception, spring becomes a perceived boundary, both in the context of the war, possible negotiations, and changes that may impact project funding. At the same time, when asked if she is worried about losing her job, she says unequivocally, *"No, nothing points to that. I don't think or worry about it. In this regard, I am calm now."*

For other respondents, the issue of stability is much more painful and closely connected to the structural nature of their media outlets. A journalist of a government-owned news agency shares that every year, when the budget is considered, the issue of funding is very acute. She understands in rough terms what part of the budget goes to regional newsrooms, but the very possibility that funding may not be approved or the agency format may change is a major concern for her. Especially the prospect of layoffs. **She directly mentions the fear that regional correspondents may become the ones to be laid off, even though she believes regional news cannot be properly made from Kyiv.**

In some interviews, confidence in the future per se is questioned. One respondent says that *"You cannot be certain of anything now."* She notes that 2025 brings even less confidence in comparison with 2023–2024. Back then, there was more funding, the frontline was farther away, and there was at least an idea that something could be planned for a period of six to nine months. Now, however, planning is just about calculating resources: there is enough money until the end of the year, and whatever may emerge or potentially be found at the end of the year is the maximum planning horizon available. She emphasizes that this applies to the finances, duties, and responsibilities of the team, but *"no one knows"* what will happen next.

One respondent remembers her experience in a USA-funded media outlet: **for almost ten years, she felt stability and had no doubts about the future.** However, the situation changed dramatically when political decisions in the US actually jeopardized the work of the media. She describes it as a situation of uncertainty that is extremely psychologically distressing.

Overall, the interviews show that stability of work during the full-scale war is perceived by journalists as a temporary, fragile phenomenon. Even where some stability exists, it is almost always limited by a short-term planning horizon and constantly dependent on external factors, such as donor decisions, state budget, political shifts, and the overall dynamic of the war.

Gender-related challenges at work

“There is a lot of discrimination. It’s just we don’t always understand how it manifests itself.”

“This was mostly expressed by high-ranking officials when we were involved in investigating corruption. When you are a woman and ask uncomfortable questions, [they can say]... ‘find a good husband and stop doing this BS.’”

Gender imbalance remains distinct in the Ukrainian media, with journalism remaining a mostly “female” sector. This is clear both from observations in the professional community and from sectoral research in recent years.

For instance, the third annual study [“Gender Profile of Ukrainian Media,”](#) conducted by the National Council of Ukraine for Television and Radio Broadcasting together with Women in Media NGO, recorded a prevalence of women in all professional categories in the media for the first time: from news writers and editors to managers.

Data were collected from June to September 2025. The research team received 245 responses from the media with a total of 7184 employees. The study found that in 2025, women constituted 57% of editorial staff, men – 43%. It was the first time in the history of this monitoring that women predominated in all professional categories in the media. In some newsrooms, the share of female journalists and reporters may reach 70–80%.

This dynamic is clearly linked to the full-scale war. Many men joined the Defense Forces of Ukraine, while women are facing a significantly bigger workload in newsrooms. Women increasingly combine several professional roles, take on management functions, and ensure stability in the work of newsrooms.

Despite the fact that journalism in Ukraine is a predominantly female profession, the respondents in our study emphasize that **gender bias in the media sector persists**. Most respondents believe that prejudice against women remains and manifests itself in various forms, **from questioning women's professional competencies to writing off their expertise or aggressive public criticism**. In the in-depth interviews, journalists mentioned multiple times that women tend to become targets of attacks, especially in open public spaces.

Notably, the respondents tend to face the gender pay gap less often. Interviewees would rarely mention the wage gap as a systemic issue. Only a few respondents encountered this in their newsrooms. This may indicate that inequality in the media is often manifested in such forms as access to managerial positions, resource allocation, workload, or professional development opportunities rather than in wage differences.



●●● **Online violence remains an additional gender-related challenge for women in the media.**

A study by Women in Media NGO dedicated to online attacks on women journalists in Ukraine demonstrates the scale of the problem and its direct impact on psychological wellbeing, professional productivity, and self-censorship practices. The study found that 81% of the surveyed women media workers had encountered one or more types of online violence in connection with their work. Only 19% of the respondents indicated that they had not experienced online violence. However, only one in five women journalists turned to law enforcement for help. The others either saw no point in this or were concerned about possible escalation if they did.

Research participants often reported multiple forms of online violence linked to the nature of their work. Among other things, attacks happened due to criticism of influential people, investigative journalism, and covering the topics of feminism, LGBTIQ+ rights, and other socially sensitive issues. **The most common type of violence is misogynistic language, which was encountered by 67% of the respondents.** 65% of women journalists reported sexist comments, insults, and other forms of verbal aggression aimed at undermining their professional reputation. 37% of the survey participants reported receiving online threats of death or physical violence.

Experience of discrimination

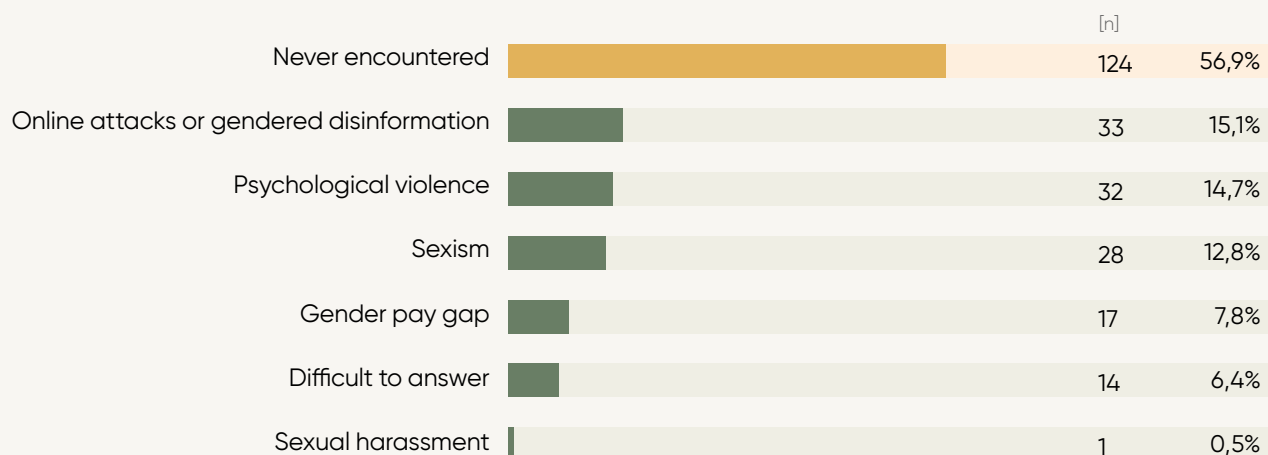
That is, despite the quantitative prevalence of women in journalism, they remain a vulnerable group facing systemic gender-related challenges. These challenges are manifested not in formal indicators, such as access to profession or wages, but rather in everyday work experience, safety level, psychological distress, and the need to constantly prove your legitimacy in the public space.

●●● Data of the quantitative survey conducted within this study confirm that gender-related challenges in women journalists' work are systematic rather than isolated incidents.

Namely, 124 women journalists reported having not been discriminated against at work in any form.

The most common manifestation of discrimination is online attacks, or gendered disinformation, reported by 33 respondents. It is closely followed by psychological violence, reported by 32 journalists. 28 respondents reported sexism in the professional environment. The gender pay gap was noted as a personal experience by 17 respondents, which correlates with the results of in-depth interviews, where this problem is present but rarely described as systemic. Another 14 survey participants indicated they found it difficult to answer the question, and one respondent reported sexual harassment.

Manifestations of discrimination

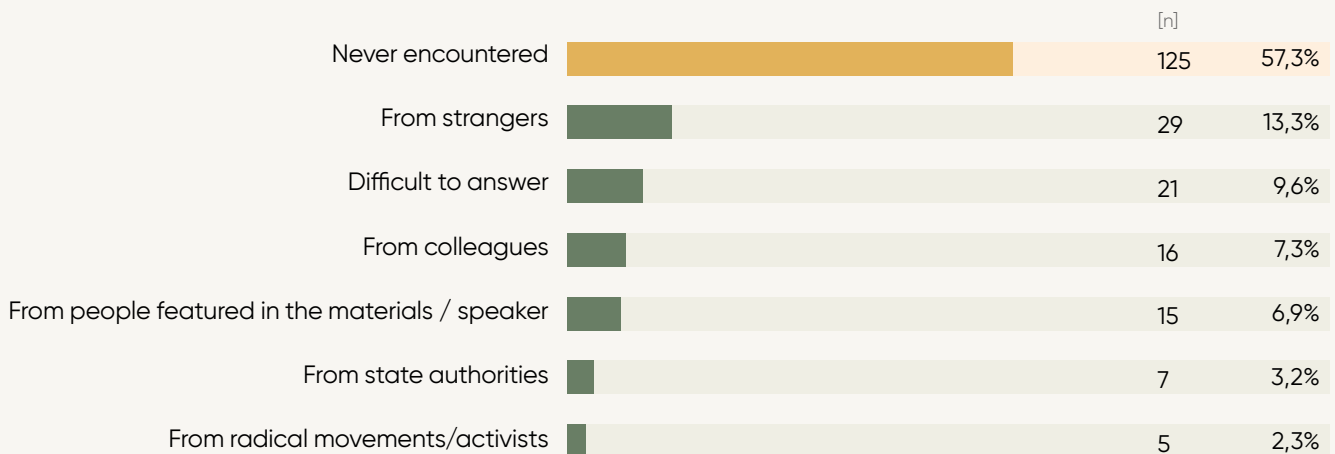


Threats related to professional work

Another section of the questionnaire was dedicated to threats and insults encountered in the line of work. 218 respondents answered these questions. Most of them, 125 journalists (57%) reported having never been targeted with threats. However, over 40% of the respondents had encountered this in various forms.

Most commonly, the threats came from strangers. This was reported by 29 respondents (13%). Threats from colleagues were mentioned by 16 survey participants (7%), and from characters or speakers by 15 respondents (7%). 7 journalists (3%) reported threats from government authorities, and 5 (2%) from radical movements or activists. Another 21 respondents (10%) found it difficult to answer this question.

Source of threats



It is particularly crucial to understand how women journalists respond to threats and whether they seek help. This section was also filled out by 218 respondents. More than half of them, 126 (59%) said they had never encountered threats and thus did not require any help. However, among those who had experienced threats, seeking help remains the exception rather than the rule.

17 journalists (8%) turned to their management or colleagues, making this the most common form of assistance sought. 8 respondents (4%) contacted law enforcement agencies, and 7 (3%) publicized the situation. Only 4 journalists (2%) contacted human rights or media organizations. However, 44 respondents (20%) did not ask for help despite threats, and 12 respondents (6%) found it difficult to answer the question.

Help in a situation of threats



Equality policies and institutional protection

Only 41 survey participants indicated that their newsrooms had equality policies. Regardless of other factors, this indicates a limited application of institutional mechanisms to protect journalists' rights and safety.

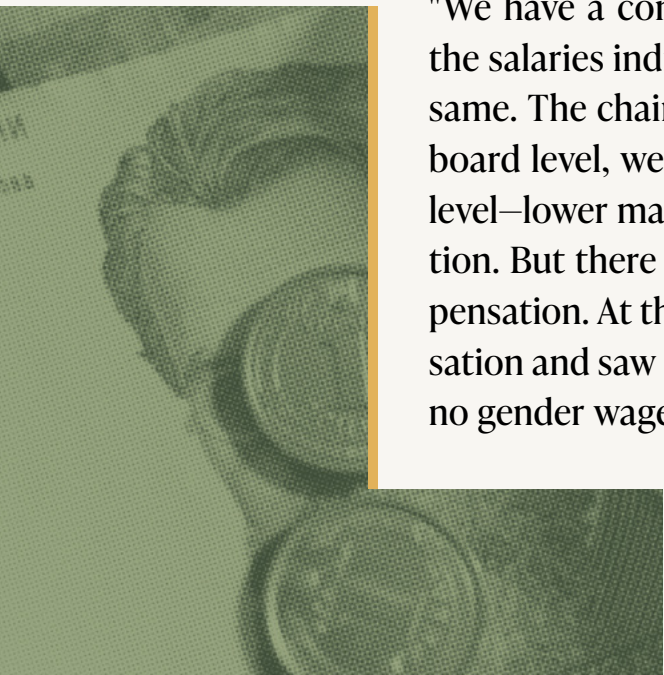
However, the in-depth interviews have demonstrated that the mere existence of equality policies does not necessarily guarantee adherence to principles of non-discrimination. **Formal documents are an important step, but without real implementation, internal response procedures, regular monitoring, and accountability for violations, they often remain on paper only.** Women journalists require not only the existence of these policies but also ensuring daily work in the newsrooms is in line with the declared values.

Гендерний розрив в оплаті праці

The issue of the gender pay gap remains one of the most debated in conversations about inequality in the media sector. **The quantitative survey data of this study shows that only 7% of the respondents directly experienced the gender pay gap.**

Some respondents have described newsrooms and media organizations with no gender pay gap or at least clear institutional regulations about this issue.

This is how it is explained by a research participant who works in the management of a large media company:



"We have a contractual remuneration system in the board, and the salaries indicated for board members in the contracts are the same. The chairperson is the exception, obviously. That is, at the board level, we do not have a gender pay gap. At the directorate level—lower management—there is also no gap in fixed remuneration. But there may be differences in the level of additional compensation. At the end of 2025, we did a full study of total compensation and saw the numbers by ourselves, which indicated we had no gender wage gap,"

says the respondent.

Similar comments have been made by journalists who work in newsrooms with clear internal rules and a transparent distribution of workload. *"No, there is no such thing. Especially since many men have joined the military, and in some newsrooms, women are in charge of everything. Men are actually the minority there."*

Another respondent also emphasizes equal pay within her newsroom and links this to the general corporate culture.

"As for remuneration, nobody divides us into groups here. In our newsroom, everyone gets equal pay for their work."

Another study participant points out that differences in remuneration that she has encountered were linked to different functional duties rather than gender. *"No. This was not the case in the media outlet where I work now, nor in the previous newsroom. I was lucky to work in newsrooms with proper principles. We may have different salaries if we have different positions and workloads, and that's normal. Everyone is paid according to their tasks. I think that's fair."*

However, some other respondents have described the gender pay gap as a near-invisible but persistent element of professional reality, especially in freelance, project work, and cooperation with international organizations.

Even those respondents who do not observe the gender pay gap in their own newsrooms point to the limitations in their own experience as a universal indicator:

“I don’t notice this in my newsroom. But my job is not the norm. We have a very high proportion of women; some departments are nearly all-female, so it is hard to talk about a systemic gender gap.”

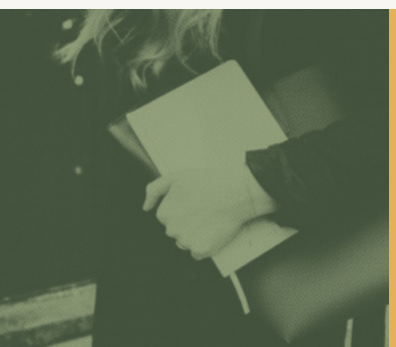
Normalized gender biases

However, gender bias in journalism does not always manifest itself in overt forms of discrimination. It rather exists as usual normalized practices in language, editorial decisions, distribution of topics and roles, and interactions of third parties with women journalists.

One respondent working in a management position in a large media outlet frankly speaks about the scale of the problem.

“There is a lot of discrimination. It’s just we don’t always understand how it manifests itself. As for sexism and sexual violence, this is strictly regulated in our company by relevant policies and response protocols. I have not personally encountered any examples of sexual violence and I am not aware of any cases of women suffering from this within our company. But as for manifestations of discrimination, they certainly exist. Because these are certain prejudices that we carry over from home, from school, from universities, from our environment, just from the street. These prejudices we have internalized are part of our identity. And they are really present. We need to develop a gender lens to see them, stop ourselves in time, and prevent these prejudices from spreading further.”

The participant also emphasizes that equality policies are not a sufficient tool for change alone.



“Policies alone have no hands or feet; they don’t work. This is just a document that the company should follow. As for the gender component in our company, it is often a matter of additional budgets that need to be spent on certain things. But even more often, it’s a matter of the corporate culture we’re working on, and a matter of additional workload. Because changing existing practices is difficult.”

One of the most striking examples of the reproduction of gender biases is the visibility of women as experts in media materials, according to respondents. *"Take inviting women experts to speak for a story. It's much easier for a guest editor with 20 years of experience to invite people he knows. And with 20 years of experience, it's clear that his phone book is full of men. Looking for new experts takes extra time and effort."*

According to the respondent, changing this practice requires internal acceptance of the new norms rather than purely formal requirements. *"And changing this attitude, saying that we need to highlight women's expertise and agency and amplify their voices, is very difficult without some additional tool of motivation. A person should simply accept this as the norm: 'Okay, we will try to have at least 25% of women experts on air.' And this would already be a win, a step forward,"* she says.

In the in-depth interviews, respondents have also shared encountering discrimination while talking to people featured in their publications. *"This was mostly expressed by high-ranking officials when we were involved in investigating corruption. When you are a woman and ask uncomfortable questions, the response is very different. They can say to a guy, 'go away,' but to a girl, they'll say, 'go make borscht,' 'find a good husband and stop doing this BS.'" shares a journalist.*

At the same time, this experience is not universal for all environments. The same journalist notes that she encounters less sexism when working with the military: *"And, interestingly, when I started working more with the military, I started encountering sexism much less. Despite the fact that it is a very masculine environment, on the contrary, there is often a sense of mutual respect. There may be some jokes, but these are few and far between. To be honest, that's why I like going to the war zone: that's where I feel a normal, healthy attitude and respect."*

Workload vs family

"It often looks like I'm cooking something with one hand and drawing up an editing plan with the other."

"...When I come to my family after work, it's also work: organizing everything, fixing things, checking things, helping my parents. I go there to 'serve' my family, and I cannot rest."

"I cannot combine work and family life. I perform some functions only because there is an education system to which I can entrust my children for most of the day, and because my company offers the option of remote work."

This study has found that a significant proportion of women in the Ukrainian media are chronically overworked. This happens due to several factors: the full-scale war, economic instability, growing professional requirements and, at the same time, retaining a significant proportion of care work in the family.

Both the survey and in-depth interviews show that journalists increasingly wear several hats: they work on several projects at once to provide more income, take on additional tasks, freelance, and look for grant opportunities. The need for higher incomes, due to inflation, instability, or loss of a part of family income (often due to the partner being drafted or voluntarily joining the army) also prompts women to take on an increased workload.

However, there is also the so-called “invisible labor” beyond the professional realm. This includes household chores and care work, which Ukrainian society largely places on women. This includes childcare, help with schoolwork, daily living, emotional support for the family, and caring for elderly parents or other relatives. The full-scale war makes the situation even more challenging, since the partner may serve in the army, which leaves no option for sharing care work. **The woman often remains solely responsible for providing income and running the household.**

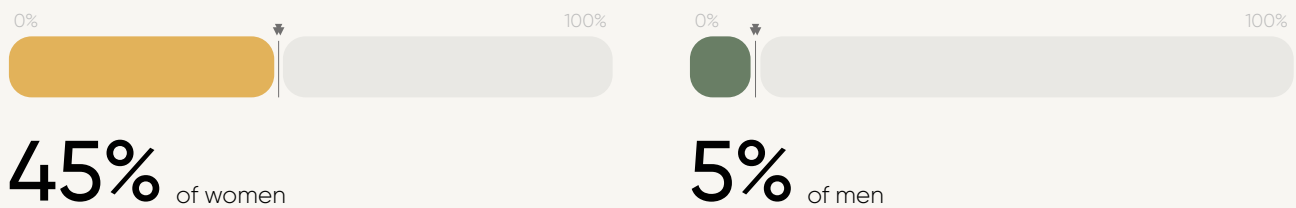
The problem of uneven distribution of care work is global, but in Ukraine it is exacerbated by the protracted ongoing war. For instance, according to the International Labor Organization (ILO), in 2023, there were 748 million people of ages 15 and above worldwide who were not part of the global labor force because of care responsibilities. This is a third of working-age population outside the labor market, and of them, women account for 708 million, and men only for 40 million.

Out of the labor market due to care responsibilities – 748 million people



The ILO report states that domestic and care responsibilities are the main obstacle to women's employment, while men tend to be unemployed for personal reasons, such as studies or health issues. In total, 1.6 billion women and 800 million men are unemployed worldwide. Of these, 45% of women and only 5% of men cite caregiving responsibilities as the main reason for their economic inactivity. Among women aged 25 to 54, this figure rises to two-thirds – that's 379 million women.

Care responsibilities as the main reason for economic inactivity

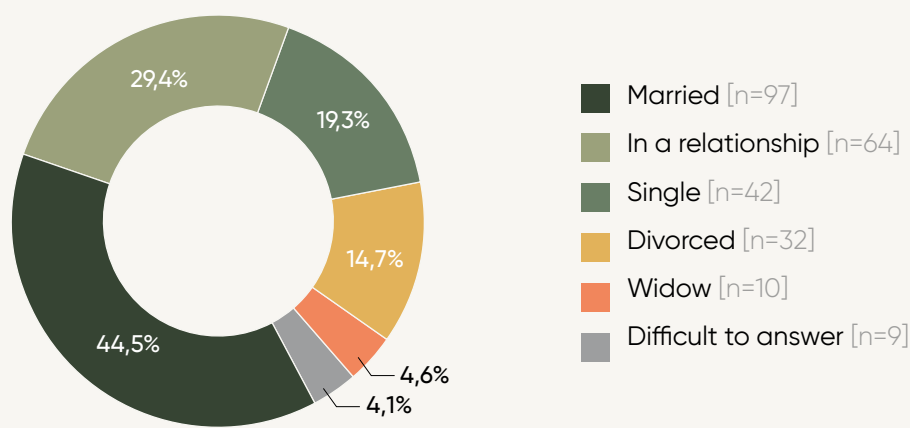


This illustrates that Ukrainian women journalists who have to take on a significant amount of care work as not an exception. Care work often becomes the factor blocking professional development and preventing a woman from working in the first place. However, the situation of women in the Ukrainian media is aggravated by the war context, economic instability, and a high level of stress due to journalistic work.

Interviewees in the qualitative part of the study repeatedly linked their fatigue and professional burnout to this double burden. This is not just about physical exhaustion but also constant internal tension: **the respondents felt unable to fully focus on work due to household duties yet simultaneously felt guilty for spending little time with family because of work.**

According to the survey as part of this study, feeling responsible for children or other family members is one of the key factors of media workers' daily workload during the war.

Marital status

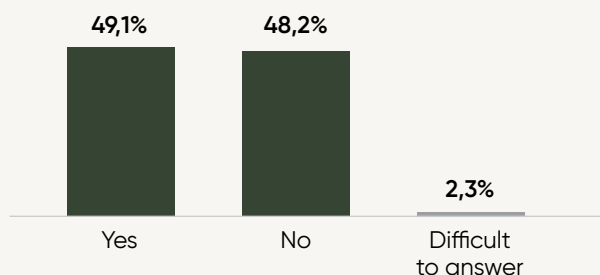


According to the survey, 44.5% of the respondents are married, 29.4% have a partner. 19.3% are single, 14.7% are divorced, 4.6% are widowed, and another 4.1% said it was difficult for them to answer.

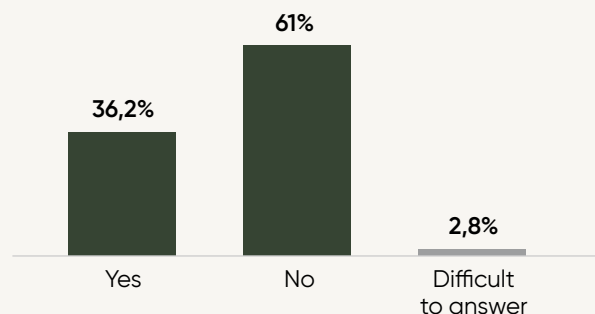
As demonstrated by in-depth interviews, the mere existence of a partner does not mean equal distribution of chores: some partners are serving in the army or otherwise physically absent, while others also work under increased workload. In such a situation, the woman tends to take on the bulk of both emotional and domestic responsibilities.

Almost half the survey respondents (49.3%) have children. This means that for a significant portion of those surveyed, the issue of work-family balance includes not only everyday life, but also full **parental responsibility**: organizing education, safety, leisure, medical care, and psychological support.

Children



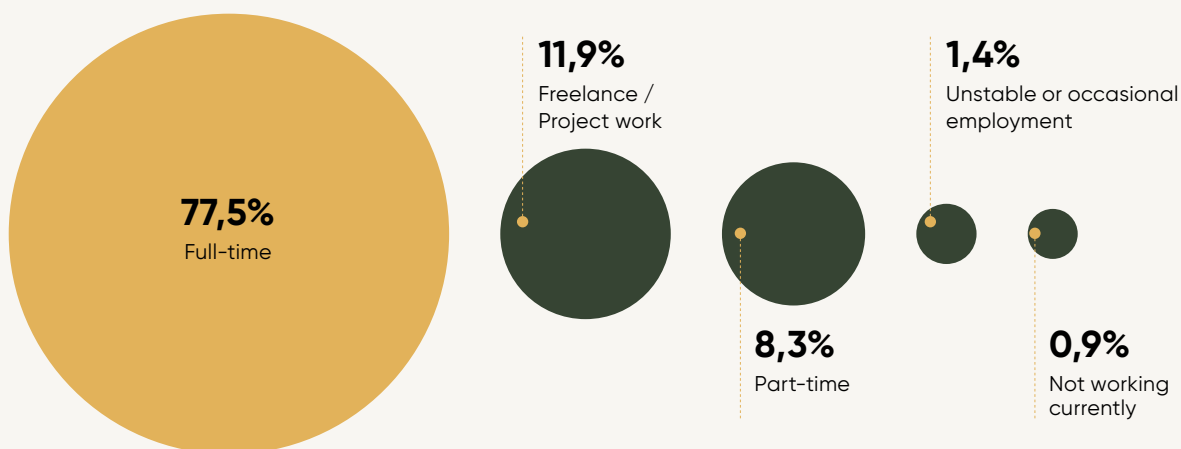
Need care



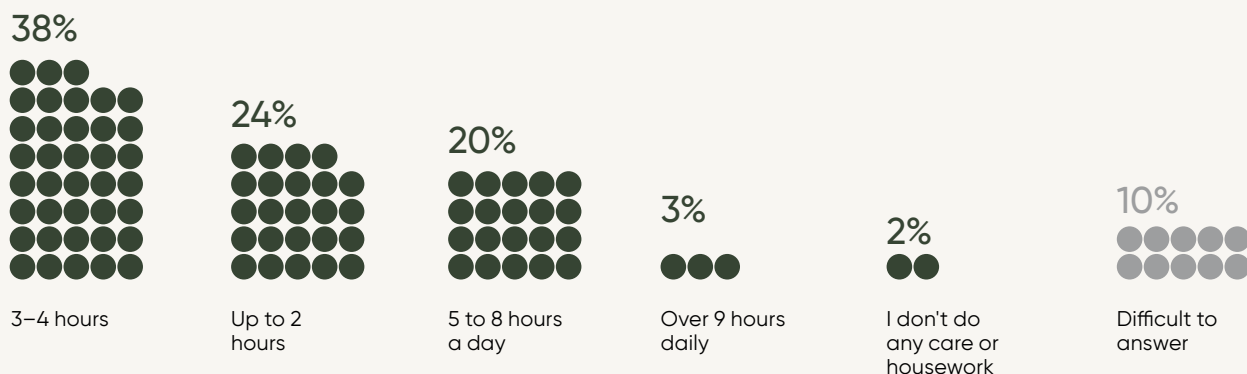
What is more, over a third (36%) reported having other dependents, such as elderly parents or family members with chronic illnesses or other needs. Thus, some perform the functions of mothers taking care of children alongside those of daughters caring for older family members. This care work may include not only care work per se but also financial responsibilities. Women spend money on these people's medical care, food etc.

At the same time, survey results indicate that 78% of the respondents work full-time. Almost 12% work as freelancers or in a project-based format, which often means unstable income and the need to take on more work to improve financial stability. Only a small proportion have part-time or occasional employment.

Employment



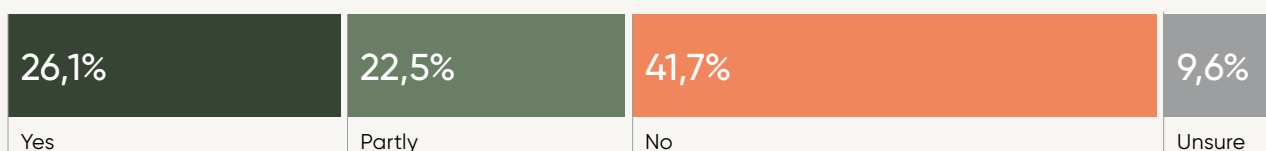
Time spent on care work and household chores is the most telling indicator. **Only 3% indicated doing no care work at all.**



That is, almost a quarter of all the respondents spend 5 or more hours a day on care work. **Together with the figures about full-time employment, it becomes evident from these findings that for many women, the work day is far from over when they are done with their professional duties. Instead, they take on a second shift at home.**

In this context, the issue of work-life balance policies in newsrooms becomes particularly acute. Only 26% of the respondents indicated having such a policy in their newsrooms. Another 23% say it is partially implemented. Meanwhile, 42% directly say there is no such policy in their newsrooms, while 10% are not aware of one.

Work-life balance support policies



This effectively means that for most media workers, work-life balance remains their personal responsibility rather than an institutionalized practice.

In-depth interviews show that theoretical flexibility in the media does not always translate into real balance. Often, it only changes the form of the workload: the work does not decrease but stretches over time, overlapping with care responsibilities.

One media manager with two daughters says:

“I cannot combine work and family life. I perform some functions only because there is an education system to which I can entrust my children for most of the day, and because my company offers the option of remote work.”

She says that even in newsrooms or companies that understand the needs of parents this is more of a way to keep the process going uninterrupted without a real reduction in the workload.

“When our employees take their children to school or kindergarten, we all know they’ll bring them back home, feed them, and go back to work remotely: answer messages, edit something, write something, make videos.”

The respondent, however, believes flexibility and remote work, as well as the possibility of independent time management, to be critical. She also dreams of more systemic solutions.

“It would be nice if employers could take on some of the routine household duties. Say, organize dinners for employees or provide cleaning services for families of employees working under a lot of stress.”

She also adds that women are often unable to take business trips because of having to take care of children. *“We really want to handle the issue of business trips for women with underage children so that women wouldn’t have to give up opportunities just because of issues with childcare,”* says the respondent.

Another participant describes how the so-called “rest time with the family” essentially means changing the type of work rather than actual rest.

“I try to spend at least a third or a half of my time with my son. But when I come to my family after work, it’s also work: organizing everything, fixing things, checking things, helping my parents. I go there to ‘serve’ my family, and I cannot rest.”

For many media workers interviewed, the work day has no clear boundaries. *“I do the same amount of work but in a different rhythm, it is just stretched out over time. If I worked on a material at night, I don’t do that during the day,”* says the journalist.

This “stretching out” becomes the norm, and families get used to working on the weekends. *“My family knows I often work on Saturday and Sunday. This summer, I worked almost every weekend.”*

However, there are examples of a more even distribution of care responsibilities. One respondent speaks of partnership as a key prerequisite for balance. *“My husband and I share the duties 50/50. One day he comes home from work earlier, the next day I do. I can go on business trips... I fully trust my partner,”* she shares.

However, even in such situations, women often neglect themselves.

“I don’t have enough time for my health and self-care. I try not to sacrifice sleep and get a minimum of seven hours. But sports, self-care, medical checkups are things I often sacrifice,”

shared one respondent.

Another one describes the reality of an infant’s mother.

“It often looks like I’m cooking something with one hand and drawing up an editing plan with the other.”

Help from family members becomes critical, but even then women try to formalize it as paid work to avoid exacerbating the problem with invisible unpaid work. *“When I ask my mother-in-law to help with my child, I pay her as I would a babysitter. It’s important for me to stay fair.”*

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Security and vision of the future

“There are no safe places in Ukraine... there was plaster falling off the ceiling. A helmet and a bullet-proof vest probably won't save you from this.”

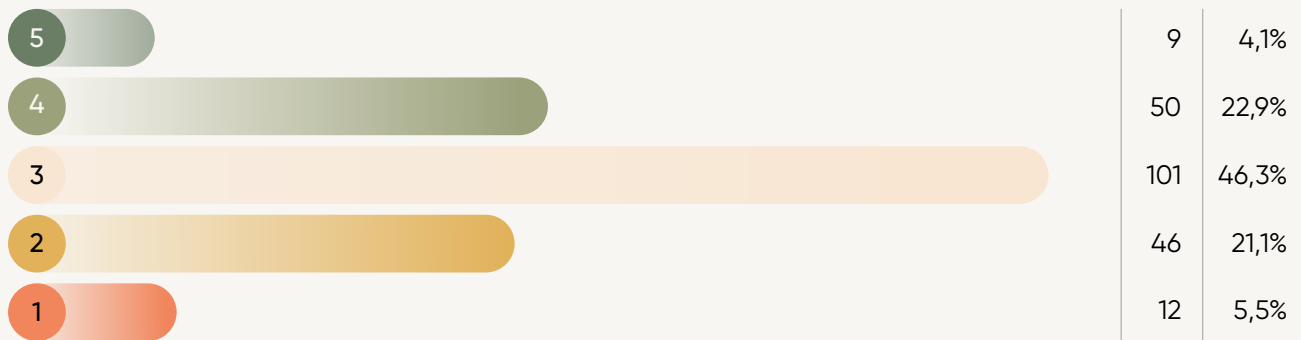
“I'm talking about physical and emotional safety in all parts of Ukraine because even the Zakarpattia oblast may be hit, while on the frontline, you are chased by FPV drones.”

The full-scale war has dramatically altered the basic sense of stability. Security, be it physical, economic, psychological, or digital, turned from a basic life requirement into a daily variable. As part of the study, we asked the respondents to rate their level of security on a scale from 1 (very low) to 5 (very high) in four aspects: physical, economic, psychological, and digital security.

All four categories are dominated by average and low scores, indicating a general sense of instability.

The largest proportion of respondents — 101 out of 218 — rated their physical safety at 3 points. Another 46 gave a score of 2, and 12 — 1 point. 59 women chose higher scores (4 and 5).

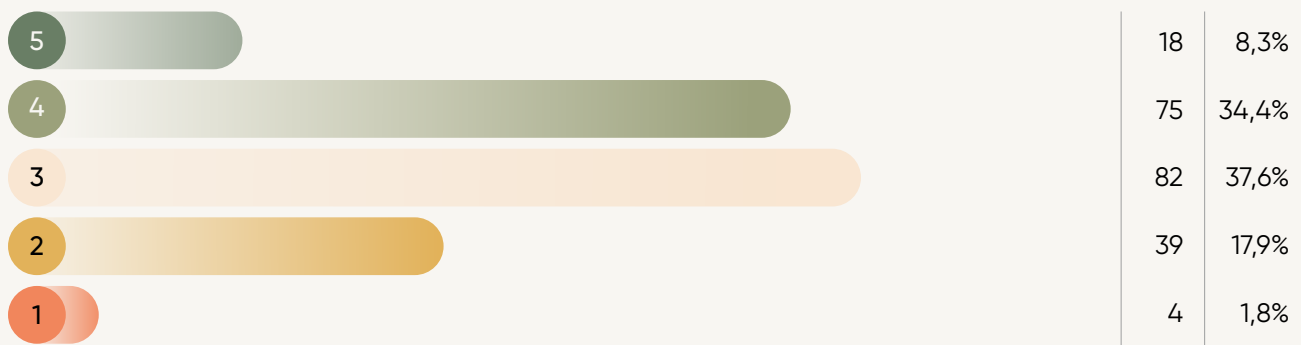
Physical security



The average score of physical security is about 3 out of 5, which indicates a rather “moderate” or “unstable” level of security.

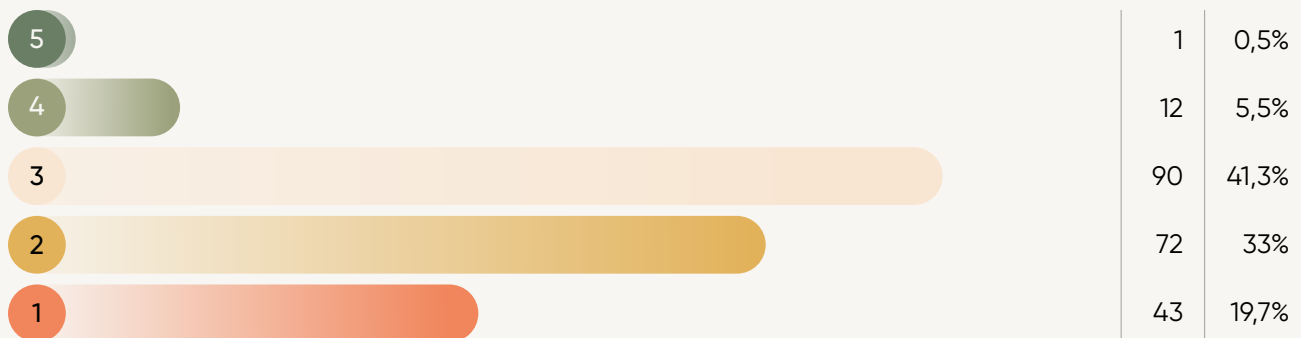
In terms of digital security, the scores are somewhat higher: 75 respondents chose 4 points, 82 chose 3 points. Only 4 participants rated it at 1 point. The average digital security score is about 3.3 out of 5, which is the highest among the four security aspects.

Digital security



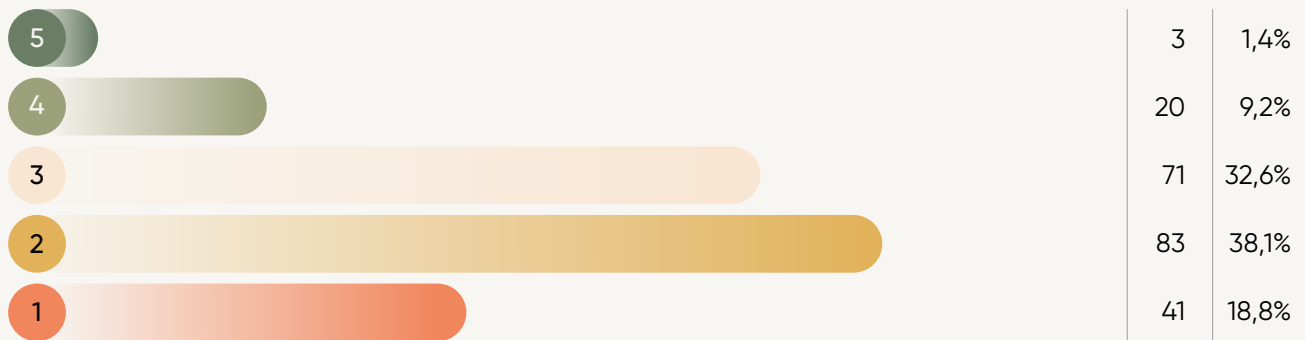
In the context of economic security, the respondents appear to be much more vulnerable. Only one respondent rated it at 5, and only 12 – at 4 points. 72 women rated it at 2, and 43 at 1. **The average score of economic security is about 2.3 out of 5, which is the lowest among all security aspects.**

Economic security



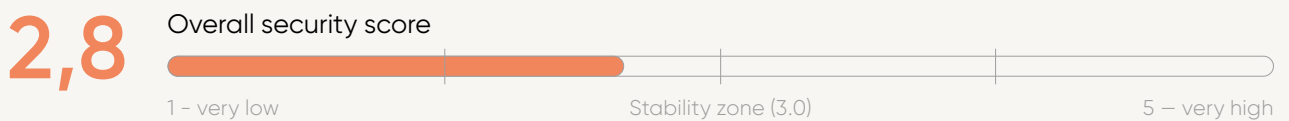
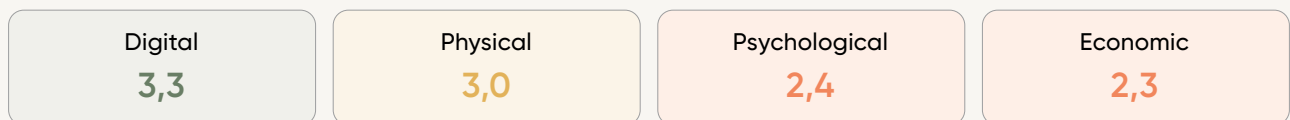
Psychological security also shows low scores: 83 respondents scored it at 2, 41 at 1 point. Only 23 women scored it at a higher level (4–5). **The average score is about 2.4 out of 5, reflecting a significant level of emotional exhaustion and prolonged stress.**

Psychological security



Looking at the average score of all four aspects, the total security score is about 2.8 out of 5. Thus, the overall sense of security among the surveyed women media workers is below the relative “stability zone.”

Low security scores directly correlate with what kind of help respondents consider most necessary. The absolute majority – 210 women – reported a need to improve their financial situation. This is the most common demand and a direct reflection of the low economic security level. 150 respondents need psychological support.



The following most commonly mentioned support methods include:

- technical support or equipment – 95;
- insurance – 90;
- security trainings – 70;
- peer support – 60;
- legal aid – 45.

In-depth interviews demonstrate that for women in the media, security is not an abstract concept but something lacking in various aspects of their daily work. One respondent has shared that the physical security and exhaustion of reporters remain the greatest challenges now.

“I’m talking about physical and emotional safety in all parts of Ukraine because even the Zakarpattia oblast may be hit, while on the frontline, you are chased by FPV drones,”

She adds that she lives in the western part of Ukraine, in relative safety, and feels that this can be viewed as a certain privilege. *“If you take a closer look, I sleep more than people in Kyiv do, and that’s an advantage in itself. But it’s not normal that we consider basic things to be advantages,”* she shares.

There is another aspect of risk related to publicity. Women journalists representing Ukraine at the international level are aware of their visibility as a factor of vulnerability.

“Everyone who has their voice in Europe, all Ukrainian media representatives or journalists immediately becomes the target for Russian attacks. These attacks can be online but also offline,”

says one respondent.

Respondents say that individual newsrooms try to develop response scenarios for crisis situations that may occur during the war, such as occupation. *“We have also discussed what we will do in case of occupation or threat of occupation: it will be dangerous to stay in the city, so we can’t,”* says one respondent.

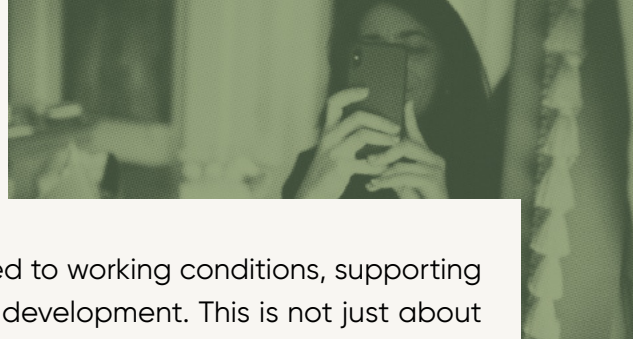
The in-depth interviews have revealed that not all newsrooms have proper shelters set up; personal physical security thus is mainly up to a specific journalist on their own. However, there are newsrooms with strict rules about shelters.

“We do have a shelter in the office, and we are really forced to go there. But what surprises me is a universal approach to all threats, when there are missiles on their way and when there is a reconnaissance drone flying by. I don’t always find it logical to stop working and take shelter.”

For some respondents, the issue of security is tied to the absence of an office as is. Working from home is thus a necessity rather than a choice. *“We don’t have an office. There is no point maintaining and paying for an office for one person now,”* says one journalist.

Another one adds that it is impossible to feel safe in Ukraine in 2026, even with the best shelter. *“There are no safe places in Ukraine... there was plaster falling off the ceiling. A helmet and a bulletproof vest probably won’t save you from this,”* shares the media worker.

Future



For most interviewees, the subject of the future is closely tied to working conditions, supporting women in the media, especially mothers, and professional development. This is not just about career ambitions but also about the ability to work in a system that recognizes human limitations and life circumstances. In the in-depth interviews, most respondents recognized that women journalists require practices helping them divide professional and care work at the newsroom level.

For instance, most respondents have mentioned a need for a more lenient attitude toward mothers with children. One respondent puts it this way.

“A woman cannot work 24/7, especially if she has a young child. Meanwhile, women who have children often become very effective employees because they are good at time management.”

It's not about privileges but about recognizing reality: motherhood does not reduce professional value, but it requires flexibility and understanding. The respondent calls it *“a more humane attitude towards mothers” that “can always be and should be improved.”*

Another participant speaks about the lack of systemic solutions, such as special days off for women during menstruation, which would become the norm, not the exception.

Some of the respondents, on the other hand, are not inclined to divide women and men. *“I wouldn't separate women and men here. It seems to me that the guys I work with face the same problems. We are all in the same boat,”* says one of the interviewees.

She also speaks that horizontal solidarity has improved during the war.

“The journalistic community has become much friendlier... We share information and contacts, advise one another on safer roads... This has become a large, living, friendly community of war correspondents.”

At the same time, some respondents are concerned about their future in the media due to changes in the work formats. One journalist is very frank about this: *“I am 41, and my colleagues are young people, keeping up with the times, very aware of new formats... I like writing large texts... but now the audience prefers TikToks and Reels. I don't have a TikTok account and can't even imagine what I would do there.”*

Another important topic is education and development. Some respondents have talked about interest in studying, but they face financial and time constraints.

“I have thought of doing an MBA multiple times. It is still out of my reach financially because I provide for my children by myself.”

Overall, most interviewees have said they see their future in journalism for at least the following year and beyond. Despite fatigue, emotional exhaustion, financial instability, or doubts about their own resources, none of them directly and unequivocally declared their intention to leave the profession. Some plan to remain in their current positions. Others are considering changing the format of their work, the subjects, or the level of involvement. However, in all the responses, there is a sense of attachment to the profession and awareness of its social importance.

At the same time, respondents emphasize the need for systemic changes in the media sector. This includes a more humane and fair treatment of women in newsrooms, real mechanisms to address online violence and public attacks against women journalists, the development of support programs for mothers with children, as well as broader safety and social protection policies. Women do not question their involvement in the profession but expect that the industry will evolve, becoming safer, more supportive, and sensitive to gendered challenges that have become particularly acute during the war.

About Women in Media NGO

Women in Media NGO – we empower each other and combat sexism in newsrooms and in content. Our goal is to unite Ukrainian women journalists into a community based on the values of mutual support, feminism, and professional development, as well as to promote the formation of gender-sensitive newsrooms and media, free from stereotypes and discrimination.

The Women in Media initiative was founded in April 2019 by Liza Kuzmenko and Viktoriia Yermolaieva, who were working together at Hromadske Radio at the time. It all started with a small Facebook group, which later grew into a powerful community that unites over 1,700 women journalists, editors, producers, and other media professionals from all regions of Ukraine and different types of media. In September 2019, Women in Media NGO was officially registered.

Our activities are focused on providing organizational, psychological, expert, and financial support for women media professionals, including in a peer-to-peer format. We also conduct analytical research, initiate advocacy events and actions, celebrate journalists' contribution into overcoming gender inequality, and organize educational opportunities.

In 2024, Women in Media NGO was shortlisted for the international IPI-IMS Free Media Pioneer Award, which celebrates organizations protecting freedom of the press and implementing innovations in the media sector.

Website | wim.org.ua/en/

Facebook | www.facebook.com/mediawomenUA

Instagram | www.instagram.com/wim_ua/

