

4.3.7. Journalists

4.3.7. Journalists

Colombia's 1991 Constitution enshrines the right to freedom of expression and freedom of information.730 No entity has regulatory powers over the press.731 On 9 September 2024, President Petro signed Presidential Directive 7 to strengthen freedom of expression and press freedom.732 While noting the existence of this framework, Colombia is described as one of the most dangerous countries on the continent for journalists.733 The Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (Relatoría Especial para la Libertad de Expresión, RELE) noted that it ranked second in the region for murders of journalists in 2024.734 Reporters Sans Frontières (RSF) stated that covering certain topics such as the environment, armed conflict, armed groups and corruption can draw harassment, intimidation and violence.735 Sources indicate that hostility towards the press has been exacerbated by stigmatising statements made by the authorities,736 including by President Petro over the recent years,737 government spokespersons and officials, and against women journalists in particular.738 Sources reported on several cases of legal proceedings and investigations against media outlets during the reference period,739 including orders to reveal information related to journalistic investigations.740 RSF reported that the high-risk situation for journalists was exacerbated by the expansion of armed groups and other criminal actors operating across large regions of the country.741 Sources noted that the reported attacks on journalists were mainly conducted by illegal actors, including criminal gangs and armed groups.742 The Freedom of the Press Foundation (Fundación para la Libertad de Prensa, FLIP) reported that several types of attacks against journalists show a 'significant increase' between 2023 and 2025, from digital attacks and to threats, illegal surveillance by state agents, and aggression by armed and criminal groups as well as sexual violence.743 In 2024, the FLIP recorded 530 attacks against 330 journalists, including 215 incidents of threats, 20 cases of forcibly displaced journalists, 4 cases of exiles, 2 kidnappings and 3 murders. RSF reported 5 media professionals killed between 2023 and 2025.744 The RELE recorded the murder of at least 7 journalists and media workers in 2024.745 Sources reported that another journalist survived an attempted murder in 2025.746 According to the FLIP, the increase of violence against the media is connected to the escalation in armed conflict, with attacks increasing each year since the 2016 FARC-EP Peace Agreement.747 Incidents of violence against journalists by individuals participating in demonstrations are also reported in the context of media professionals covering social protests in several cities around the country, such as harassment, verbal attacks, destruction of journalistic material, death threats and physical assault.748

Journalists are among the individuals at risk who can theoretically seek the assistance of the UNP,749 established in 2011750 for the protection of media professionals amongst 16

categories of citizens.751 However, the process can be lengthy as it can take between 4 and 7 months to address a threat, and measures are described by sources as 'completely impractical' 752 and 'insufficient'.753 Sources gave the view that the UNP is facing a crisis due to lack of means and allegations of corruption.754 At least two journalists have been reported to have been murdered between 2022-2024 while under protection measures from UNP,755 while others continue to receive death threats from armed groups in 2024-2025.756

- 730

  RSF, Colombia country page, n.d., url; Colombia, Constitución Política de Colombia, url, Arts. 20, 73

- 731

  Media Journalism Research Center, Colombia – Government, Politics and Regulations, 6 April 2023, url, p. 21

- 732

  Colombia, Directiva Presidencial 07, 9 September 2024, url; Colombia, Presidencia de la República de Colombia, Gobierno firma directiva presidencial para fortalecer libertad de expresión y libertad de prensa, 9 September 2024, url

- 733

  RSF, Colombia country page, n.d., url; OAS, RELE, Relatoría Especial para la Libertad de Expresión, Informe Anual 2024, 3 March 2025, url, para. 360

- 734

  OAS, RELE, Relatoría Especial para la Libertad de Expresión, Informe Anual 2024, 3 March 2025, url, para. 362

- 735

  RSF, Colombia country page, n.d., url

- 736

  FLIP, Presidente Petro persiste en su estrategia de deslegitimar el periodismo, 16 May 2024, url; OAS, RELE, Relatoría Especial para la Libertad de Expresión, Informe Anual 2024, 3 March 2025, url, para. 360

- 737

  RSF, RSF alarmed by escalation in Colombian president's attacks against media, 5 July 2024, url

- 738

OAS, RELE, Relatoría Especial para la Libertad de Expresión, Informe Anual 2024, 3 March 2025, url, para. 360; NDTV World, Colombian President calls female journalists “dolls of the mafia”, 13 September 2024, url

- 739

OAS, RELE, Relatoría Especial para la Libertad de Expresión, Informe Anual 2024, 3 March 2025, url, para. 382; Inter American Press Association, Mid-Year Meeting Report, Colombia, 16 April 2024, url; FLIP, Fiscalía General de la Nación continúa acosando a Cambio, 14 March 2024, url

- 740

FLIP, De manera inconstitucional la Policía solicita a la W Radion revelar sus fuentes, 6 March 2024, url

- 741

RSF, Colombia country page, n.d., url

- 742

OAS, RELE, Relatoría Especial para la Libertad de Expresión, Informe Anual 2024, 3 March 2025, url, para. 360; FLIP, Bajo todos los fuegos: periodismo y nuevas guerras en Colombia, 10 February 2025, url, para. 4

- 743

FLIP, Cómo se vive y se sobrevive al periodismo en Colombia, 2025, url p. 11

- 744

RSF, Barometer, Exaction victims in Colombia between 2023 and 2025, n.d., url; Colombia One, Colombian Journalist Jaime Vasquez Murdered, 16 April 2024, url; El País, Jorge Méndez, el periodista comunitario que buscaba cambiar la imagen de La Gabarra y terminó asesinado, 28 June 2024 url; Caracol, Investigan el asesinato del periodista Luis Gabriel Pereira en Ciénaga de Oro, Córdoba, 11 May 2025, url; CPJ, Colombian journalist Mardonio Mejía Mendoza shot dead at home, 29 January 2024, url; CPJ, Colombian journalist Óscar Gómez Aguledo shot dead at radio station, 30 January 2025, url

- 745

OAS, RELE, Relatoría Especial para la Libertad de Expresión, Informe Anual 2024, 3 March 2025, url, para. 360; Caribe Afirmativo, Julio Alberto Zapata, reconocido locutor de San Rafael, fue hallado muerto en su casa, 23 April 2024, url; El Espectador, Asesinaron a Hilton Eduardo Barrios, excandidato a la alcaldía de Puerto López, 26 April 2024, url

- 746

FLIP, Rechazamos atentado en contra del periodista Gustavo Chicangana, 7 July 2025, url; CPJ, Colombian journalist, wife wounded in targeted shooting, 7 July 2025, url

- 747

  FLIP, Bajo todos los fuegos: periodismo y nuevas guerras en Colombia, 10 February 2025, url

- 748

  OAS, RELE, Relatoría Especial para la Libertad de Expresión, Informe Anual 2024, 3 March 2025, url, paras. 377-379

- 749

  France, OFPRA, Rapport de mission en République de Colombie, 28 November 2024, url, p. 83

- 750

  Colombia, Decreto 4065 de 2011, 2011, url

- 751

  UNESCO, National safety mechanisms in Colombia, n.d., url

- 752

  FLIP, Bajo todos los fuegos: periodismo y nuevas guerras en Colombia, 10 February 2025, url

- 753

  FLIP, Bajo todos los fuegos: periodismo y nuevas guerras en Colombia, 10 February 2025, url

- 754

  FLIP, Bajo todos los fuegos: periodismo y nuevas guerras en Colombia, 10 February 2025, url; France, OFPRA, Rapport de mission en République de Colombie, 28 November 2024, url, p. 83

- 755

  FLIP, Bajo todos los fuegos: periodismo y nuevas guerras en Colombia, 10 February 2025, url

- 756

  RSF, Colombia: Threats against investigative journalists escalate despite government response efforts, 31 October 2024, url

© European Union Agency for Asylum 2026 | Email: info@euaa.europa.eu