

“In Colombia, the question is:
Who is going to kill us?”

Developing Prevention, Protection, and Prosecution Mechanisms for
Female Journalists in Colombia

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Colombian Context

Long history of violence

- Thousand Days' War (1899–1902)
- *La Violencia* (1948–1966)
- Armed conflict (1960s–)
 - Actors
 - Government
 - Left-wing guerrillas
 - Right-wing paramilitary groups
 - Drug-trafficking organizations (DTOs)
 - Civilians
 - At least 220,000 dead



Generalized Violence

Violence against the press

- 130 out of 180 countries
- +150 journalists murdered since 1960s
- 515 attacks in 2019

Gender-based violence

- 90% of victims are women
- Underreporting at 80%
- Only 5% of perpetrators convicted

“A Dangerous Intersection”
Violence against female journalists

Case Study

- Jineth Bedoya Lima
 - Colombian journalist
 - Covered law and order matters
- Kidnapped in May 2000
 - Tortured, sexually assaulted
 - Held hostage for 16 hours
- Case became a symbol of impunity
 - Only three people sentenced
 - Masterminds remain free
 - Kidnapped again in 2003
 - Threats still recurrent



“On the body of Colombian
Jineth Bedoya Lima is written part of
her country’s dark history”

Martha Soto, Colombian journalist



Turning point

- In 2019, her case was submitted to the **Inter-American Court of Human Rights**
 - First case to touch upon:
 - The intersection between violence against the press and gender-based violence
 - Sexual violence in the context of the armed conflict
- Court's decisions are **binding** for Colombia

Why now?

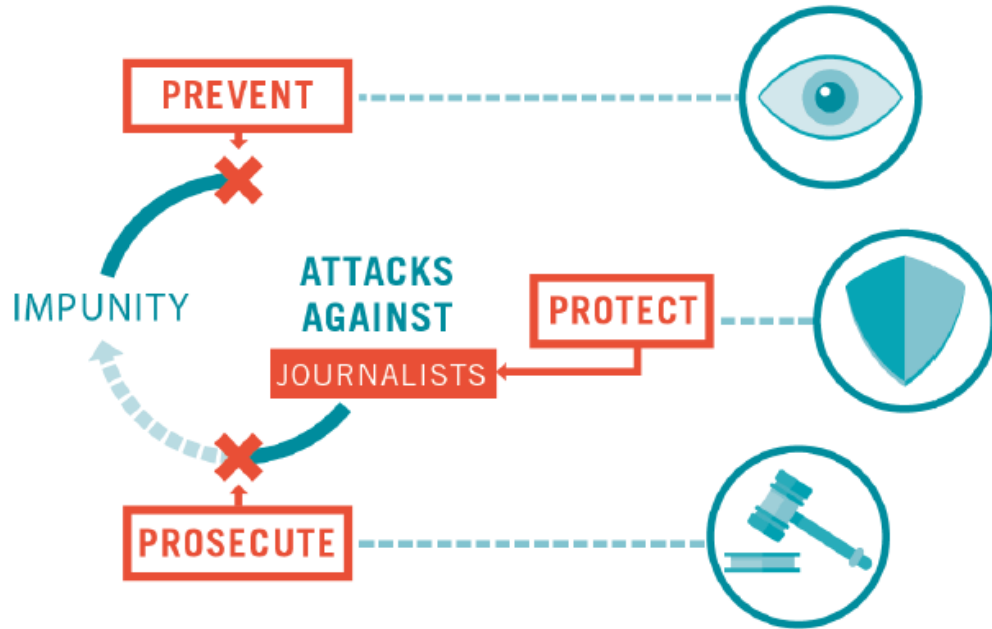
- Armed conflict officially ended in 2016
 - Institutions are more **independent** and **effective**

Source: World Bank 2019



How to solve this issue?

- PPP Approach
 - Prevention
 - Protection
 - Prosecution
- UN Resolution 33/2 (2016)



Procedures

International
Law

Colombian
Domestic Law

Good Practices
(other countries)

Prevention Mechanisms

Recommendations

- Threats
 - Improve and integrate threat-monitoring mechanisms, while making them gender-sensitive
- Education
 - Implement educational initiatives to more effectively address violence against female journalists in a post-conflict society

Protection Mechanisms

Recommendations

- **Protection Program** (*Programa de Protección*)
 - Restructure the National Protection Unit by correcting its systemic problems and incorporating a gender-sensitive approach to it
- **Reparation**
 - Develop non-monetary reparation measures to restore part of the dignity that was stolen from the women journalists of Colombia

Prosecution Mechanisms

Recommendations

- Investigation
 - Enhance investigation procedures, offering more rapid, and thus more adequate responses
- Impunity
 - Condemn impunity by strengthening rule of law and State effectiveness

Compliance

- **Government** policy rather than **state** policy
- Compliance *vs* effectiveness
- Higher level of compliance
 - Colombia = 44%
 - Other States = 36%

“On the body of Colombian
Jineth Bedoya Lima is written part of
her country’s beautiful history”

Martha Soto, Colombian journalist

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