

# Shadow Report on Media Freedom in Kosovo

*Association of Journalists of Kosovo  
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# Introduction

Media freedom and pluralism are fundamental pillars of the European Union's rule of law system, as well as a core prerequisite for EU accession. As public watchdogs, journalists and media professionals play a central role in holding decision-makers accountable and guaranteeing citizens' right to impartial information, particularly on issues of public interest.

Over the last few years, media freedom standards have declined across the European political space, prompting EU institutions to introduce new norms and tools to strengthen the protection of free and independent journalism. Landmark legislative initiatives introduced to safeguard media freedom include the Digital Services Act (DSA), the European Media Freedom Act (EMFA), and the anti-SLAPP Directive. Their recent adoption aims to harmonise media freedom standards across Member States, ensuring that journalists can operate in an independent and safe environment, free from undue political or economic pressure.

As part of the integration process, candidate and potential candidate countries, such as Kosovo, are required to align their domestic legislation with the EU *acquis communautaire*. Negotiations on the *acquis* are structured around specific chapters; notably, Chapter 23 focuses on Judiciary and Fundamental Rights, which encompasses media freedom and pluralism. These accession talks are often lengthy and complex, characterised by intense technical exchanges between the European Commission and national authorities. Within this framework, civil society organisations, experts, and professionals play a crucial role in monitoring the process, providing independent analyses of the situation on the ground, and offering recommendations to improve alignment with EU standards.

This Shadow Report provides an updated assessment of media freedom in Kosovo, focusing on the functioning of key media institutions, including the public service broadcaster and the regulatory body, as well as the safety of journalists and media professionals. By highlighting both the most critical challenges and positive steps forward, this report aims to inform the accession negotiations on Chapter 23, providing national and European decision-makers with concrete, actionable recommendations to foster meaningful internal reforms.

## Country context

Kosovo remains committed to its EU accession path with high public support, but domestic political gridlock has slowed reforms<sup>1</sup>. Early elections in February 2025 and a fragmented Assembly prolonged institutional formation, delaying media-related reforms. Observers note a sharp decline in press freedom over the past year: in 2025, Kosovo was ranked 99th in the World Press Freedom Index by Reporters Without Borders (RSF - down 24 places, the worst in the Western Balkans), while in 2026 it ranked 15 places higher<sup>2</sup>. International monitors highlight that while Kosovo's media landscape is pluralistic, recent years have seen rising censorship pressures and self-censorship<sup>3</sup>, especially within the Public Broadcaster.

## Media legislative framework

Kosovo's domestic legal framework formally provides strong guarantees for media freedom. The Constitution guarantees freedom of expression<sup>4</sup>, media pluralism, and the prohibition of censorship, while also granting every person the right of access to public documents<sup>5</sup>. In addition to these constitutional protections, the media sector is regulated through a wider set of laws, including the Law on the Independent Media Commission (IMC)<sup>6</sup>, the Law on the Radio Television of Kosovo (RTK)<sup>7</sup>, the Civil Law against Defamation and Insult<sup>8</sup>, the Law on Access to Public Documents, the Law on Protection of Whistleblowers<sup>9</sup>, the Law on Protection of Journalists' Sources<sup>10</sup>, and general legislation on privacy, data protection, elections, public procurement and language rights. The Law on Access to Public Documents gives everyone the right to request public documents without having to justify the request, including electronically, and the whistleblower law provides protection of identity, confidentiality of sources, immunity from liability in certain cases, and judicial protection against retaliation.

<sup>1</sup> [2025 Enlargement Package shows progress towards EU membership for key enlargement partners](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Kosovo, RSF, 2026](#)

<sup>3</sup> [2025 Enlargement Package shows progress towards EU membership for key enlargement partners](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Kosovo Constitution, Official Gazette, Article 40, Freedom of Expression](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Law on access to public documents, LAW NO. 06/L-081, Official Gazette](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Law on IMC, Law No. 04/L-044, Kosovo Assembly](#)

<sup>7</sup> [LAW NO. 04/L-046 ON RADIO TELEVISION OF KOSOVO](#)

<sup>8</sup> [Law No. 02/L-65, CIVIL LAW AGAINST DEFAMATION AND INSULT, Kosovo Assembly](#)

<sup>9</sup> [LAW No. 06/L-085 ON PROTECTION OF WHISTLEBLOWERS](#)

<sup>10</sup> [LAW NO. 04/L-137 ON THE PROTECTION OF JOURNALISM SOURCES, Official Gazette](#)

Kosovo's media laws lag behind EU norms. The EU report stresses the need to align with the new European Media Freedom Act (EMFA) and the Anti-SLAPP Directive requirements<sup>11</sup>. Key draft laws are pending: a revised law on the public broadcaster and a law protecting journalists' sources have not been adopted<sup>12</sup>. The 2008 civil defamation law remains unchanged and does not meet European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) standards<sup>13</sup>. Notably, following the Association of Journalists of Kosovo (AJK)'s formal submission of comments to the Constitutional Court challenging the Law on the Independent Media Commission<sup>14</sup>, the Court annulled the 2024 media law. AJK had argued that the law-making procedure, as well as provisions regulating the composition and functioning of the IMC, the definition of online media, and the complaints council, were incompatible with Kosovo's Constitution and undermined media freedom, the independence of the IMC, and the principle of gender equality. The Court's decision therefore confirms the importance of AJK's legal intervention and highlights the urgent need for a new IMC law drafted in line with constitutional guarantees and European standards.

The main weaknesses of Kosovo's media framework lie in implementation, institutional independence, and alignment with newer European standards. In practice, journalists continue to face delays, refusals, and inconsistent interpretations when requesting public documents, despite clear legal guarantees. AJK has repeatedly warned that public institutions often fail to properly distinguish between open and sensitive documents, leaving access to information dependent on administrative discretion rather than predictable legal standards. Since 2020, all media outlets have moved online. The country enjoys broad internet access and a pluralistic online media environment, but this has developed largely without a coherent framework on media ownership transparency, online media self-regulation, platform accountability, and safeguards against state overreach. For this reason, the legal reform agenda should not be limited to one law only: it should ensure that the IMC, RTK, source protection, defamation, access to information, whistleblower protection, online media regulation and anti-SLAPP safeguards function together as a coherent media freedom framework aligned with the Constitution, ECtHR standards, the EU acquis, the EMFA and the Anti-SLAPP Directive.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> [Kosovo\\* 2025 report](#)

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> [AGK dorëzon në Kushtetuese komentet lidhur me Ligjin për KPM-në](#)

## Journalists' safety and working conditions

Kosovar journalists continued to operate in an increasingly hostile environment during the reporting period, marked by verbal attacks, obstruction in the field, online harassment, threats, and growing legal and administrative pressure. During the reporting period, AJK recorded 75 cases of physical and verbal attacks or threats against journalists<sup>15</sup>, including obstruction of journalists' and media workers' work, threats, and harsh language directed at the media. The same report noted that, during the electoral campaign, senior-ranking officials, including the Prime Minister, used offensive language against the media, contributing to a public climate in which journalists are delegitimised rather than protected. AJK and the SafeJournalists Network have similarly warned that political rhetoric against the media intensified during 2025, particularly in the context of the election campaign. AJK documented cases in which journalists and media outlets were publicly targeted by political actors, including through derogatory language, accusations, and obstruction during campaign events. In one case recorded by AJK, Prime Minister Albin Kurti<sup>16</sup> and Vetëvendosje officials were reported to have intensified attacks on media and journalists during the campaign, including through language portraying some media as part of a "Bermuda Triangle" seeking to "sink Kosovo"<sup>17</sup>.

Legal pressure has also become a growing concern. Journalists and media freedom organisations report an increase in strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPPs), as well as defamation claims that appear aimed at discouraging critical reporting. The European Commission noted one SLAPP case during the reporting period and underlined the need for Kosovo's legislation to align with the EU anti-SLAPP Directive. The SafeJournalists 2025 Kosovo report further notes that Kosovo still lacks a specific anti-SLAPP framework, while SLAPP-type lawsuits and civil defamation cases have produced a chilling effect on investigative and public-interest journalism.

Administrative barriers further restrict journalistic work. Although Kosovo's Law on Access to Public Documents formally guarantees access to official information, implementation remains weak.

<sup>15</sup> [January 2025-May 2026](#)

<sup>16</sup> [Attack on the media and media organizations, Gjilan, 4.3.2025, AJK](#)

<sup>17</sup> [Sulm ndaj medieve dhe organizatave mediale, Prishtinë, 7.2.2025](#)

The European Commission found that journalists face regular delays or obstruction when requesting public documents, while Serbian-language media face additional challenges in accessing information in Serbian due to inadequate implementation of the Law on Languages<sup>18</sup>. SafeJournalists similarly reported that public institutions often lack the capacity or personnel to handle access-to-information requests efficiently, resulting in delays and, in some cases, failures to provide legal justification for denial or limitation of access.

Working conditions remain another structural weakness undermining media freedom. The European Commission concluded that journalists' working conditions remain poor, often involving low salaries, short-term contracts, and uncertain legal status. SafeJournalists' Kosovo report confirms that approximately one quarter of journalists continue to work under fixed-term contracts, while many others are employed through temporary or short-term arrangements<sup>19</sup>. It also notes delayed payments, limited access to social protection, stagnant wages, and the absence of collective bargaining structures, particularly in the private sector. Aside from RTK, Kosovo still lacks a formal journalists' trade union structure, leaving AJK as the primary actor advocating for journalists' labour rights.

These economic vulnerabilities have direct consequences for editorial independence. Low pay, insecure contracts, irregular payments, and limited newsroom resources increase journalists' exposure to pressure from owners, political actors, and advertisers<sup>20</sup>. SafeJournalists warns that such conditions discourage investigative journalism, contribute to self-censorship, and push some journalists to seek alternative careers. IREX's Vibrant Information Barometer has also identified self-censorship, political retaliation, verbal attacks, restricted access to information, and SLAPP lawsuits as recurring pressures affecting Kosovo's media environment.

There have been some positive institutional developments, particularly in relation to judicial prioritisation of cases affecting journalists. In early 2026, AJK welcomed a one-year suspended sentence against a man who had made an "execution" gesture toward Nationale journalist Eriola Cacaj, cameraman Drilon Namani, and Betimi për Drejtësi court monitor Flamur Kabashi during a court hearing<sup>21</sup>.

<sup>18</sup> [Kosovo\\* 2025 report](#)

<sup>19</sup> [Indicators on the level of Media Freedom and Journalists safety in Kosovo](#)

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> [Threats Against The Lives And Physical Safety Of Journalists, Nationale and Betimi për Drejtësi, Gjilan, 30.01.2026, AGK](#)

The Kosovo Judicial Council's new Strategic Plan for Access to Justice 2026–2028 also represents an important step forward. The Strategy requires judges to prioritise SLAPP cases involving media and civil society actors, as well as cases concerning defamation and threats to the safety of journalists and activists<sup>22</sup>. This has been welcomed by the Coalition Against SLAPPs in Europe, the European Centre for Press and Media Freedom, AJK, and Lëvizja FOL as a positive institutional response to the misuse of litigation against journalists<sup>23</sup>. However, these developments have not yet translated into a consistently safe environment for journalists. Many threats remain unresolved, institutional responses are uneven, and journalists continue to rely heavily on AJK and civil society mechanisms for documentation, advocacy, and support. The European Commission has therefore urged Kosovo to strengthen the capacity of prosecutorial, judicial, and law-enforcement authorities to handle cases of violence and threats against journalists<sup>24</sup>, develop protocols and training for their protection, and establish early-warning and rapid-response mechanisms.

## Safety of Journalists and attack patterns

The 2025 reporting period must be read in the context of an electoral year marked by heightened political polarisation, prolonged institutional formation, and intensified public scrutiny of the media. Early elections in February 2025 and the fragmented Assembly delayed reforms and prolonged the formation of institutions, while international monitors recorded a deterioration in Kosovo's media-freedom environment. This political context shaped the safety climate for journalists because electoral campaigns tend to increase the visibility of media outlets, amplify attacks by political actors and supporters, and turn journalists into targets when their reporting is perceived as unfavorable.

AJK and SafeJournalists recorded 69 attacks, threats, pressures and other violations against journalists and media in 2025<sup>25</sup>, while the January-May 2026 monitoring report notes that official police statistics reflect only a part of the problem. According to the Kosovo Police, 13 cases were reported during the whole of 2025, while the broader AJK documentation captures a much wider pattern of threats, obstruction, online attacks, political delegitimization and pressure.

<sup>22</sup> [What does the Strategic plan 2026-2028 foresee for better access to justice, Betimi per Drejtesi](#)

<sup>23</sup> [CASE commends Kosovo Judicial Council for prioritising SLAPP cases, ECPMF](#)

<sup>24</sup> [Kosovo\\* 2025 report](#)

<sup>25</sup> All the cases cited in this chapter are reported on the [AJK and AJN database](#).

This gap is important: not every safety violation is reported as a criminal case, and many forms of political intimidation, public smearing, online harassment and obstruction remain outside official police statistics.

The electoral year was particularly sensitive because political actors increasingly framed critical media as hostile or politically aligned. The AJK database and its monitoring underline that inflammatory, stigmatizing, or polarizing statements by political leadership, even when they do not amount to direct threats, can create a hostile climate and serve as an inciting factor for later pressure by third parties. In this sense, the 2025 electoral context did not merely produce isolated incidents; it intensified a broader environment in which journalists were repeatedly delegitimised, obstructed, and exposed to public hostility for doing their work.

During 2025, non-physical threats and harassment remained one of the most frequent forms of pressure against journalists and media workers in Kosovo. According to the AJK and SafeJournalists Network database, 25 cases were registered under the category of “Other threats to journalists,” making up more than one third of the 69 total cases documented during the year. This category includes a wide range of incidents that may not involve direct physical violence but nevertheless restrict journalists’ ability to work freely and safely.

These included political and institutional pressure, aggressive public statements by officials, obstruction during field reporting, threats of legal action, online harassment, digital interference, and coordinated smear campaigns. These forms of pressure are particularly concerning because they can create a climate of fear, discourage critical reporting, and contribute to self-censorship, especially when they originate from public officials or individuals with political influence.

Several cases illustrate the nature of non-physical threats and harassment recorded during the year. Sami Kurteshi, a Vetëvendosje member of the Central Election Commission, was reported for assaulting journalists, while Acting Deputy Prime Minister Donika Gërvalla used offensive remarks toward Leonard Kërquki of T7. In another case, a TeVe1 crew was followed and intimidated by an unknown individual, demonstrating how journalists can be exposed to pressure even during routine field reporting.

Political and institutional pressure was also visible during the electoral period. Faton Peci, candidate for Mayor of South Mitrovica, announced lawsuits against several journalists, while Acting Prime Minister Albin Kurti called on justice and security institutions to investigate the publication of exit polls by three television stations. Although such statements may be presented as political reactions, when made by senior officials, they can have a chilling effect on media outlets and journalists covering elections, political accountability, and public institutions.

A number of cases also involved direct interference with journalistic work. Jetmir Muji, cameraman of Paparaci, was arrested and held at the Qendra Police Station in Prishtina after filming the close protection of President Vjosa Osmani near her daughters' private school. Damjan Portić of Radio Gorazdevac was obstructed by police near Peja while reporting. In another case, the Energy Regulatory Office invited journalists to a closed, off-the-record consultation without cameras, after which journalists boycotted the meeting. These cases point to broader challenges concerning access to information, treatment of journalists by public authorities, and the ability of media workers to report freely from public spaces and institutions.

Public denigration of journalists and media outlets was another prominent pattern. Speaker of the Assembly Dimal Basha attacked media outlets and journalists following his election to the position. Acting Prime Minister Albin Kurti denigrated Klan Kosova health journalist Arbreshë Uka after she asked a question about missing products in the healthcare system. Mayor of Prishtina Përparim Rama used inappropriate language toward Leonora Kolukaj of Reporterri, while Acting Minister of Agriculture Faton Peci used denigratory language toward Ermal Panduri. Nezir Kraki, MP of the GUXO–Vetëvendosje coalition, warned Xhezair Dashi of Nacionale not to ask questions that might “get the journalist into trouble.” Such statements are concerning because they delegitimize journalists in front of the public and may expose them to further attacks, especially in a polarized political environment.

The public broadcaster RTK was also affected by non-physical pressure and internal disciplinary measures. RTK management excluded six hosts from moderating news magazines, while three editors of RTK1 were sanctioned by director Rilind Gërvalla. These cases raise concerns about editorial independence, internal pressure, and the working conditions of journalists within the public service broadcaster.

Digital harassment and online interference formed another important part of this category. A manipulated video misrepresenting a statement by journalist Lirim Mehmetaj circulated on social media, targeting him personally and professionally. Vehbi Kajtazi's Facebook account was suspended after mass reporting of his posts related to the February elections, while the Telegram account of Urall Boshnjaku of Mitropol was hacked. These cases show that pressure against journalists is increasingly moving into the digital space, where attacks can affect both personal safety and the ability of journalists to communicate with the public.

Several incidents also reflected a gendered dimension. Vetëvendosje MP Fitore Pacolli attacked Blerta Foniqi Kabashi, editor at RTK, in a Facebook post after she interviewed her. Mayor of Prishtina Përparim Rama used sexist slurs toward Edona Gashi of Piranjat, while Visar Geci, adviser to Mayor Rama, verbally attacked and used sexist language toward Mediana Statovci of Koha. These cases show that women journalists are often targeted not only because of their professional work, but also through language that seeks to degrade them on the basis of gender.

Considering both the number and the nature of the cases, the situation in 2025 appears strained rather than improving. The 25 non-physical threats and harassment cases recorded by AJK and SafeJournalists Network show that intimidation, political pressure, public denigration, digital abuse, and institutional interference remained routine forms of pressure against journalists. While some journalists pursued legal remedies or filed criminal complaints, publicly available information rarely shows clear prosecutorial follow-up or final court outcomes. This limits the ability to assess whether cases are being effectively resolved and whether institutional accountability is improving.

Non-physical threats and harassment should not be treated as less serious simply because they do not always involve direct physical violence. These forms of pressure can restrict journalists' work, damage their professional reputation, increase the risk of further attacks, and weaken media freedom. In Kosovo's current political and media environment, the normalisation of such pressure remains one of the most serious challenges for journalists' safety and independent reporting.

In 2025, threats against the lives and physical safety of journalists remained among the most serious cases documented by AJK and the SafeJournalists Network. Four incidents were registered under this category, involving explicit threats of death or serious bodily harm against journalists and media workers. Although the number of such cases was lower compared to other categories of pressure, their severity makes them particularly concerning, as direct threats to life and physical safety have an immediate chilling effect on journalistic work and can discourage reporting on sensitive or controversial issues.

The cases documented during the year involved threats via digital platforms, direct messages, public statements, and abusive language. They targeted journalists in different professional contexts, including reporting on public-interest issues, domestic violence, political developments, and matters involving public figures or organized groups. These cases show that threats against journalists' physical safety are not limited to one type of reporting, but can emerge whenever journalism challenges influential individuals, institutions, or groups.

One of the most concerning cases involved a series of online death threats directed at Klan Kosova and its staff. The threats were sent through texts and were considered serious enough to trigger police action. Following the reporting of the case, the Kosovo Police arrested a suspect, who was detained for 48 hours. This case illustrates both the seriousness of online threats and the importance of swift institutional response when journalists and media outlets are exposed to direct danger.

Another case involved a journalist of VOX Kosova, who received serious threats and abusive language while working on a story related to domestic violence. The nature of the case is particularly worrying because it shows how journalists reporting on sensitive social issues, including gender-based and domestic violence, can themselves become targets of threats and intimidation. Such incidents not only endanger the individual journalist but also risk discouraging media coverage of issues that are already underreported or socially sensitive.

A further incident involved a journalist of Kiks Kosova, who was publicly threatened with physical violence by the leader of a Kosovo national team supporters' group. The threat included degrading and violent language, including statements that the journalist would be dragged on the ground. This type of public threat is especially concerning because it can expose the journalist to further hostility by followers or members of organised groups, while also normalising violent language against media workers in public discourse.

The fourth case involved a death threat issued against journalist Vehbi Kajtazi. Following the threat, the police arrested a suspect. This case again demonstrates that threats against journalists' lives are not abstract or symbolic acts of intimidation, but incidents requiring immediate law-enforcement attention and serious prosecutorial follow-up. For journalists engaged in investigative and critical reporting, such threats can have long-term consequences for personal safety, family security, and willingness to continue reporting on issues of public interest.

From an institutional-response perspective, 2025 included examples of rapid police action in at least two high-risk cases, including the threats against Klan Kosova staff and the death threat against Vehbi Kajtazi. These responses are important and should be acknowledged as positive steps in the immediate handling of threats. However, publicly available information remains limited regarding prosecutorial follow-up, indictments, court proceedings, or final outcomes. This lack of information makes it difficult to assess whether these cases were fully resolved and whether the perpetrators were held accountable in a way that would create a deterrent effect.

The continued presence of death threats and threats of serious bodily harm, even in a relatively small number of recorded cases, shows that journalists in Kosovo continue to operate in an environment where professional work can expose them to direct personal danger. Such threats should not be assessed only as individual criminal incidents, but as attacks that affect media freedom, public-interest reporting, and citizens' right to information.

For this reason, threats against journalists' lives and physical safety require immediate police protection measures, prioritised prosecutorial handling, transparent follow-up by justice institutions, and public condemnation by state authorities. Without clear institutional accountability, even isolated death threats can contribute to fear, self-censorship, and the normalisation of intimidation against journalists.

AJK registered 13 cases categorised as actual attacks against journalists and media workers. These cases included incidents affecting the physical safety of journalists, obstruction during reporting, verbal intimidation in the field, and pressure during politically sensitive events. While not all cases involved direct physical violence, they constituted actual interference with journalists' work and, in several cases, created immediate risks for their safety.

Of the 13 cases documented during the year, four involved direct threats or attacks against individual journalists, while nine were related to the obstruction and intimidation of Klan Kosova reporting teams during election day coverage in different regions of Kosovo. The high number of incidents recorded during electoral reporting shows that elections remain one of the most sensitive contexts for journalists' safety. In politically charged environments, journalists covering polling stations, political developments, or electoral irregularities may become direct targets of party activists, supporters, or individuals attempting to influence or obstruct media coverage.

Several of the documented cases illustrate the range of attacks and obstruction faced by journalists during 2025. Sports journalists were attacked and threatened in Prizren, showing that journalists' safety risks are not limited only to political reporting. In another case, inflammatory rhetoric was directed toward journalist Adriatik Kelmendi, contributing to a hostile public climate against media professionals. A journalist of T7 television was obstructed by the close protection team of Acting Prime Minister Albin Kurti, raising concerns about the conduct of security personnel toward journalists during coverage of public officials. Similarly, Fikrim Dema of the Turkish Democratic Party of Kosovo obstructed a Kallxo.com journalist, demonstrating how political actors can directly interfere with journalistic work.

The most visible pattern within this category was the obstruction of Klan Kosova crews during election day. Nine Klan Kosova teams were obstructed while reporting from Prizren, Ferizaj, Gjakova, Vushtrri, Gjilan, Mitrovica and northern municipalities, Peja and Istog. In Prizren, incidents were recorded twice. According to AJK and SafeJournalists documentation, they mainly involved verbal intimidation and threats by individuals identified as activists or supporters of Vetëvendosje. Journalists were labelled as "traitors" and "enemies," while the media outlet was referred to as "Klan Serbia." Such language is particularly dangerous because it portrays journalists as political or national adversaries rather than as professionals carrying out a public-interest function.

A gender dimension was also visible in these election-related incidents, as most of the affected Klan Kosova teams consisted of women journalists and their cameramen. This is important because obstruction in the field can have a different impact on women journalists, who may be exposed not only to political hostility but also to sexist or degrading treatment.

When women journalists are targeted during live or field reporting, the consequences may include fear, withdrawal from visible reporting roles, and greater pressure on media outlets to limit their exposure in tense environments.

Overall, the pattern of attacks recorded in 2025 indicates a worsening environment compared to the previous year. The increase in attacks and obstruction, particularly during the electoral period, shows that journalists continue to face direct risks while performing their professional duties. These incidents also demonstrate that threats to journalists' safety do not occur only through explicit death threats or physical assaults; obstruction, intimidation, aggressive rhetoric, and interference by political actors or supporters can also restrict journalistic freedom and undermine the public's right to information.

From an institutional perspective, some cases were followed by reactions from media organisations and, in certain high-risk situations, by police response. However, publicly available information remains limited regarding prosecutorial follow-up, indictments, or final court outcomes. This lack of transparency makes it difficult to assess whether perpetrators are being held accountable and whether the institutional response is sufficient to prevent similar incidents in the future.

Attacks against journalists should therefore be treated as serious violations of media freedom, even when they do not result in visible physical injury. Any obstruction, intimidation, or interference with journalists during reporting affects not only the safety of the individual journalist but also the ability of the media to inform the public, especially during elections and other moments of high democratic importance.

Last but not least, AJK registered 19 cases of threats and attacks against media outlets, media organisations, journalists' associations, and their representatives. This category includes a broad range of incidents, such as aggressive statements by public officials, smear campaigns against media organisations, obstruction of journalists during reporting, cyberattacks against online media, attacks on media property, and public attempts to delegitimise journalists' associations.

The number of cases recorded in this category indicates a slight deterioration compared to the previous year. In 2024, AJK and the SafeJournalists Network registered 14 such cases, while in 2025 the number increased to 19.

This increase should be understood in the context of 2025 being an election year, during which tensions between political actors and the media traditionally intensify. Many of the cases documented during the year were directly linked to electoral rhetoric, campaign activities, political criticism of media outlets, and public attempts to portray critical journalism as politically motivated or hostile.

Several incidents involved obstruction of media work in the field. During protests involving the Urban Traffic public enterprise, media outlets and journalists were prevented from reporting and faced obstruction in carrying out their professional duties. In another case, participants and Vetëvendosje officials at an electoral gathering in Malisheva obstructed the Nacionale team. Such cases show that journalists and media teams continue to face direct interference when reporting on politically sensitive events or issues of public interest.

A significant number of incidents involved aggressive and delegitimising statements by political actors. Faton Peci, candidate for Mayor of Mitrovica, attacked TV Dukagjini by calling it an “operational center of a criminal enterprise.” Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs and VV-Guxo MP Donika Gërvalla attacked journalists and media in two Facebook posts, referring to them in language that denied their professional role. Acting Prime Minister Albin Kurti blamed the media and journalists for Kosovo’s drop to 99th place in the Reporters Without Borders World Press Freedom Index, while during a gathering in Gjilan he referred to media outlets as “some oligarchs’ portals.”

The electoral campaign further intensified this pattern. Two days before the elections, Acting Prime Minister Albin Kurti verbally attacked the media, stating that “the portals are part of the Bermuda Triangle that wants to sink Kosovo.” Arlind Manxhuka, spokesperson of Vetëvendosje, labelled the media as a “parallel institution,” like Serbian parallel structures in Kosovo. Upon launching its parliamentary election campaign, Vetëvendosje also announced a boycott of Klan Kosova, T7 and TV Dukagjini, three of the main television stations in Kosovo. These cases are particularly concerning because when senior political figures publicly delegitimise media outlets, they contribute to a hostile environment in which journalists and newsrooms may become exposed to further pressure, harassment, or threats.

AJK and its leadership were also targeted during the year. Vetëvendosje officials used defamatory language against the Association of Journalists of Kosovo and its Chairperson, Xhemajl Rexha, launching a public smear campaign aimed at discrediting both the organisation and its Chair.

Attacks against journalists' associations are especially serious because they target the institutions responsible for documenting violations, advocating for journalists' rights and publicly reacting to attacks against media freedom. Delegitimising such organisations weakens mechanisms of protection and may discourage journalists from reporting violations.

The documented cases also included direct attacks on media property. TV Syri Vision in Gjakova was destroyed after an individual drove a heavy vehicle into its premises. In another case, the premises of the online media outlet Veriu.info were demolished in Mitrovica. These incidents differ from verbal attacks and smear campaigns because they directly affect the physical infrastructure of media outlets and can disrupt their ability to operate. Attacks on media property should therefore be treated as serious threats to media freedom and to the public's access to information.

Cyberattacks and online harassment were also present in this category. The online media outlet Buletini Ekonomik was targeted by a cyberattack, while the Betimi për Drejtësi team filed a criminal complaint against three online pages over continuous attacks and harassment. These cases show that attacks against media institutions increasingly occur in the digital space, where newsrooms can be targeted through hacking, coordinated harassment, mass reporting, disinformation, or online intimidation.

Another concerning incident involved Sami Kurteshi, a Vetëvendosje member of the Central Election Commission, who responded to a question from Besarta Hoti of Nacionale by saying: "You are criminal media, hired killers." Such language, especially when used by a public official in response to a journalist's question, is a serious form of intimidation and delegitimation which can expose journalists to further hostility and undermine their ability to freely ask questions in the public interest.

Overall, the cases recorded in 2025 show that media outlets and journalists' associations in Kosovo continued to face pressure from several directions: political rhetoric, electoral hostility, obstruction in the field, attacks on property, cyberattacks and smear campaigns. While most cases did not involve systematic physical violence against media institutions, their cumulative effect is significant. They contribute to a climate in which critical media are publicly discredited, journalists are portrayed as political enemies, and media organisations are placed under pressure for carrying out their democratic function.

For this reason, threats and attacks against media outlets and journalists' associations should be treated as serious violations of media freedom. They do not affect only one journalist or one newsroom; they weaken the broader media environment, undermine professional solidarity, and restrict citizens' right to independent and pluralistic information.

During the period 1 January – 31 May 2026, AJK registered a total of 19 attacks and incidents against journalists, media workers, and media outlets in its database. The nature of the cases recorded during this period shows a worrying deterioration in both the frequency and severity of attacks, particularly against women journalists and journalists reporting on politically sensitive issues.

Seven of the documented cases fall within the category of online attacks, death threats, verbal attacks, cyber incidents, and violations of privacy. These included online death threats against journalists Lirim Mehmetaj, Kushtrim Sadiku, and Kron Sadiku, as well as cyberattacks targeting the online media outlets Reporteri.net and VOX Kosova. Another serious incident involved the cutting of internet cables supplying the newsroom of the Paparaci portal, directly affecting the outlet's ability to operate. These cases show that pressure against journalists and media outlets is increasingly taking place in the digital space, through online intimidation, cyber interference, and attempts to disrupt the technical infrastructure of newsrooms.

Four of the 19 cases involved physical attacks. In two cases, journalists or moderators were attacked in the street, while in two other cases women journalists were physically attacked or obstructed during field reporting. One woman journalist was obstructed by the close protection team of Prime Minister Albin Kurti, while another was attacked by a citizen at the scene during reporting. These incidents are particularly concerning because they occurred while journalists were performing their professional duties and directly interfered with their ability to report freely and safely.

A particularly alarming trend during this period is the increase in attacks targeting women journalists. Six of the 19 documented cases targeted women journalists, which represents a significantly high proportion compared to previous years. At the same time, the nature of the attacks against women journalists has become more severe and more personal.

In one case, a woman journalist's personal information was shared in a group with thousands of male members, after which she was harassed with messages and explicit photographs. This constitutes not only online harassment but also a serious violation of privacy and a form of gender-based digital violence aimed at intimidating and silencing her.

Additional cases involved women journalists working at the public broadcaster. Two women journalists at RTK did not have their employment contracts extended, including one who was pregnant at the time, despite the administration being informed of her condition. Such cases raise serious concerns about labour rights, gender discrimination, and the vulnerability of women journalists within media institutions. Together with the physical attacks against women reporters in the field, these cases show that women journalists are exposed to multiple and overlapping forms of pressure, including professional insecurity, online abuse, privacy violations, and physical obstruction.

The reporting period was also marked by smear campaigns and hostile political rhetoric against journalists and media outlets. Members of Vetëvendosje, the largest political party in the country, were involved in denigrating campaigns against media and journalists. Prime Minister Kurti used aggressive language against the media from the podium of the Assembly of Kosovo, while Lumir Abdixhiku, leader of the second-largest opposition party, also attacked journalists and media through public statements. Such rhetoric contributes to a hostile environment for journalism by delegitimising media work and exposing journalists to further threats, harassment, and public distrust.

Overall, the cases registered between January and May 2026 show that journalists' safety in Kosovo remains under serious pressure. The incidents include death threats, online harassment, cyberattacks, physical attacks, obstruction in the field, privacy violations, labour-related pressure, and political smear campaigns. The high number of cases targeting women journalists is especially concerning and indicates the need for stronger institutional, legal, and newsroom-level mechanisms to address gender-based attacks and protect journalists from both physical and digital forms of violence.

Finally, a serious concern during the first half of 2026 was the conduct of the Independent Media Commission (IMC), whose decisions raised significant questions regarding proportionality, legality, and respect for media freedom standards.

Over a period of two months, the IMC imposed more than €60,000 in fines on a number of television broadcasters, primarily in relation to alleged violations of the Code of Ethics during election coverage. Several of these decisions followed complaints submitted by representatives of the ruling party and targeted political debate programmes and current affairs coverage critical of government officials.

Particularly alarming were public statements by IMC representatives suggesting the possibility of banning a widely watched political debate programme, a measure that would severely interfere with freedom of expression and editorial independence.

Media organisations, civil society groups, and international actors, including the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ), expressed concern that these sanctions represented an unprecedented form of pressure on broadcasters and risked creating a chilling effect on journalistic work, potentially leading to self-censorship. Additional concerns were raised regarding the legality of some IMC decisions, with reports indicating that certain rulings may have been adopted beyond statutory deadlines. These developments contributed to a deteriorating environment for independent journalism and reinforced concerns over political influence on media regulation in Kosovo.

## Independent media regulator: Independent Media Commission

Regulatory oversight in Kosovo remained severely weakened during the reporting period, both because of unresolved legal uncertainty around the IMC and because of the regulator's prolonged institutional paralysis. The most significant development was the Constitutional Court's annulment of Law No. 08/L-289 on the IMC<sup>26</sup>, adopted in 2024<sup>27</sup>. The Court found that several provisions of the law were unconstitutional, particularly those regulating the appointment and dismissal of IMC members, which were considered to threaten the regulator's independence. AJK welcomed the annulment, noting that the law must be revised in line with the Court's findings. This judgment was particularly important because AJK and other media freedom actors had repeatedly warned that the law risked increasing political influence over the media regulator. AJK had submitted comments<sup>28</sup> to the Constitutional Court challenging the law, while SafeJournalists and other organisations raised concerns that the proposed framework could extend state oversight over online media, including video content, and weaken guarantees for the independence of the IMC. The SafeJournalists Kosovo report notes that the amended law introduced licensing requirements for online media publishing video content, marking a shift toward stricter regulation of internet-based journalism and raising concerns about restrictions on media freedom in the digital sphere.

The functionality of IMC remained a serious concern throughout 2025. The regulator lost quorum in January 2025 and, by May 2025, only two members remained, which significantly hindered its decision-making capacity, including during the electoral campaign. The IMC Appeals Board also remained without quorum, since November 2023, leaving parts of the complaints and appeals mechanism effectively blocked. The EU Election Observation Mission similarly noted that the IMC's paralysis during the 2025 parliamentary elections allowed media violations to go unaddressed<sup>29</sup>.

A partial institutional recovery took place in 2026, when the Assembly of Kosovo elected six new IMC members on 24 April 2026: Drita Morina, Besnik Berisha, Luljeta Aliu-Krasniqi, Hysni Mustafa, Suada Gjoković and Serpin Emrush<sup>30</sup>.

<sup>26</sup> [AJK welcomes the Constitutional Court's annulment of the IMC Law, 23.04.2025, AJK](#)

<sup>27</sup> [Kosovo MPs Adopt Independent Media Commission Law Despite Misgivings, 11.07.2024, BalkanInsight](#)

<sup>28</sup> [AJK submits to the Constitutional Court comments on the Law on the Independent Media Commission, 20.08.2024, AJK](#)

<sup>29</sup> [European Union election observation mission publishes its final report with 19 recommendations; genuine political will needed to reinforce democratic institutions, 15.05.2025](#)

<sup>30</sup> [Kuvendi votoi për bërjen e re të Komisionit të Pavarur për Media \(KPM\),, 24.04.2025, Betimi për Drejtësi](#)

On 5 May 2026, the newly constituted IMC elected Besnik Berisha as chairperson and Drita Morina as deputy chairperson<sup>31</sup>. Kosovo, therefore, still needs to adopt a new IMC law fully aligned with constitutional standards, the EU acquis, and the European Media Freedom Act. Until this is done, the regulator's renewed composition remains only a partial solution to a deeper legal and institutional problem.

## Public service broadcaster: Radio Television of Kosovo

Radio Television of Kosovo (RTK), the country's public service broadcaster, entered a prolonged institutional, financial and editorial crisis during the reporting period. The European Commission's Kosovo Report 2025 found that there had been no progress in establishing a long-term, sustainable and independent financing model for RTK, while the broadcaster continued to face serious budgetary, property, human-resource, and governance constraints<sup>32</sup>. The Commission further noted that the position of General Director had remained vacant since September 2024, while the RTK Board had lacked quorum since December 2024, preventing it from holding meetings or taking decisions<sup>33</sup>. Under these conditions, the Commission assessed that RTK had become "dysfunctional" and unable to fulfil its public-service role effectively.

The financial crisis is structural rather than temporary. RTK remains dependent on annual state budget allocations and ad hoc political decisions, instead of a protected, predictable, and independent funding model. According to media-sector research, RTK's total budget declined from approximately EUR 12.1 million in 2021 to EUR 10.7 million in 2023, while EUR 8.9 million came from the state budget in 2023. In 2026, international media freedom organisations warned that the draft allocation of EUR 8.9 million would cover only basic operational needs, mainly salaries, while the Law on RTK foresees funding of 0.7% of the state budget, which would amount to approximately EUR 22 million<sup>34</sup>. On that basis, the proposed allocation made up only around 40% of the legally foreseen level, leaving RTK with a major funding shortfall and exposing it to political and financial pressure.

<sup>31</sup> [Besnik Berisha elected as IMC Chair, 05.05.2025, EkonomiaOnline](#)

<sup>32</sup> [Kosovo\\* 2025 report](#)

<sup>33</sup> [Ibid.](#)

<sup>34</sup> [Mehmeti, Jeton. THE EXPANDING MEDIA LANDSCAPE, DECLINE IN JOURNALISTS' SAFETY, AND LOW MEDIA LITERACY. The Future of the Media in Kosovo– Facts and Trends, South East European Network for Professionalization of Media, January 2025.](#)

The impact of this funding model became visible in 2025, when RTK employees repeatedly faced delays in salary payments. In August 2025, international journalist organisations warned that RTK could run out of funds and be unable to pay its staff, calling on Kosovo's authorities to guarantee continued financing for the broadcaster<sup>35</sup>. By November 2025, AJK reported that RTK had entered its third week of unpaid salaries for around 700 employees, urging the Assembly and Government to find urgent legal mechanisms to allocate funds and ensure that RTK could continue operating without interruption. AJK stressed that RTK employees must be able to work in the public interest, free from financial and political pressure. Reuters also reported that RTK staff launched a strike in November 2025 after failing to receive October salaries, with employees stating that the broadcaster had been operating without a budget for two months.

Governance instability has further deepened the crisis. RTK's former General Director, Shkumbin Ahmetxhekaj, resigned in July 2024, citing seven months of political pressure and deep disagreements with the RTK Board over fundamental issues concerning the broadcaster's future<sup>36</sup>. AJK described this as a serious signal of political pressure on RTK and called on the Board to explain whether its decision-making had been influenced by political pressure. AJK also linked the crisis to the appointment of Rilind Gërvalla as Director of RTK TV (Albanian channels), noting his past affiliation with and financial support for Vetëvendosje, and warned that government officials and MPs had repeatedly shown a tendency toward partisan control of the public broadcaster<sup>37</sup>. SafeJournalists similarly assessed Ahmetxhekaj's resignation as a sign of serious institutional interference in RTK's editorial autonomy<sup>38</sup>.

Concerns over editorial pressure continued in 2025. In March 2025, AJK reacted after RTK Television Director Rilind Gërvalla sanctioned three RTK editors - Jehona Zhitia, Valon Bajrami, and Arton Mulliqi - for not broadcasting a report concerning the Government<sup>39</sup>. One of the editors stated that the report did not meet professional standards. AJK called the sanctions "brutal and unacceptable," arguing that editors of the public broadcaster must have full editorial independence and that such interference amounted to political pressure on RTK.

<sup>35</sup> [AJK in Support of RTK Employees, Calls for Immediate Resolution on Salaries, 05.11.2025, AJK](#)

<sup>36</sup> [Shkumbin Ahmetxhekaj resigns, Zana Spahiu appointed acting general director of RTK, Betimi per Drejtesi, 07.07.2024](#)

<sup>37</sup> [AJK: New Process for the Election of RTK's Television Director, 04.02.2023](#)

<sup>38</sup> [Political pressure towards RTK, Prishtinë, 07.07.2024, SafeJournalists Network](#)

<sup>39</sup> [AJK expresses concern over the measures taken against RTK editors, 12.03.2025, AJK](#)

In August 2025, AJK also documented the removal of six RTK journalists from screen and from the programmes they had moderated, including Blerta Foniqi Kabashi, Meneta Zekaj Nushi, Arton Mulliqi, Edona Musa-Mustafa, Jehona Zhitia, and Valon Bajrami, raising further concerns about editorial pressure and internal management practices at the public broadcaster<sup>40</sup>.

The crisis is also linked to RTK's weak legal and material foundations. The European Commission noted that 75% of RTK's total budget is allocated to salaries<sup>41</sup>, leaving very limited space for investment in equipment, production, digital transformation, or minority-language services. It also noted that the building housing RTK is in very poor condition and is not owned by the public broadcaster. These constraints affect the entire RTK system, including RTK2 and services for non-majority communities, where budgetary and staffing weaknesses are particularly visible.

A partial institutional recovery began in April and May 2026. On 24 April 2026, the Assembly of Kosovo elected six new RTK Board members from the Albanian community: Valmirë Thaçi, Flokart Aliu, Gëzim Brahaj, Xheraldina Cërnobregu, Fatmir Podrimaj, and Ilirjan Himaj<sup>42</sup>. However, candidates from the Serbian and other non-majority communities did not receive sufficient votes, meaning that the Board was not yet fully completed, and a new call was expected for those positions. On 5 May 2026, the newly constituted Board elected Dardan Beqiri as Chair, Xheraldina Cërnobregu as Deputy Chair, and appointed Zana Spahiu as Acting General Director of RTK<sup>43</sup>. In addition, Zana Spahiu was appointed Acting General Director in 2024, following the resignation of Shkumbin Ahmetxhekaj, who stepped down citing political pressure. Spahiu later resigned after RTK broadcast false information based on a report by the Bosnia and Herzegovina-based portal *Slobodna Bosna*<sup>44</sup> smearing two media outlets in Kosovo. Her resignation was presented as an act of disapproval of the newsroom's lack of professionalism and failure to uphold basic editorial standards. The appointment of the board members is nevertheless a partial improvement. Civil society, journalists' and media freedom organisations have indeed raised concerns about the legitimacy of the appointment process, citing a lack of transparency, unequal treatment of candidates, and non-compliance with minimum standards<sup>45</sup>.

<sup>40</sup> [The Network of Women Journalists of Kosovo joins the Association of Journalists of Kosovo in strongly condemning the arbitrary removal of six RTK journalists from the screen and from the programmes they were hosting, 26.08.2025](#)

<sup>41</sup> [Kosovo 2025\\* Report](#)

<sup>42</sup> [The Assembly elected the RTK Board members from the Albanian community, while the candidates from non-majority communities did not pass, Kallxo, 24.04.2026](#)

<sup>43</sup> [Dardan Beqiri was elected Chair of the Board, while Zana Spahiu was appointed Acting Director of RTK, Telegrafi, 05.05.2026](#)

<sup>44</sup> [Dangerous campaign against media, 22.07.2024](#)

<sup>45</sup> [Sanja Vasić, Information in Kosovo: public service or instruments of power?, OBCT, 26/06/2026](#)

For national and international observers, the appointment process suffered strong influence from the ruling VV party, risking turning RTK into a propaganda tool rather than a functional institution serving the public interest.

These appointments represent an important step toward restoring RTK's governance structures, but they do not resolve the deeper crisis. The broadcaster still lacks a sustainable and independent financing model, a fully stable governance framework, and effective safeguards against political interference. For RTK to fulfil its constitutional and democratic role, Kosovo should urgently revise the RTK legal framework, guarantee adequate and predictable funding in line with European standards, ensure transparent and merit-based appointments, protect newsroom independence, and prevent the use of budgetary or managerial decisions as tools of political pressure.

## Recommendations

To guarantee an independent, pluralistic, and free media system, we recommend that

### **Kosovo's authorities:**

- Urgently adopt a **comprehensive media reform package** aligned with the Constitution, ECtHR standards, the EU acquis, EMFA, and the Anti-SLAPP Directive, including new laws on the IMC, RTK, source protection, and defamation.
- Ensure **effective implementation of existing media freedom guarantees**, namely access to public documents, whistleblower protection, institutional independence, ownership transparency, and safeguards against political interference.
- Acknowledge the protection of journalists as a fundamental prerequisite for upholding press freedom, and establish conditions that allow media workers and reporters to carry out their duties without fear or obstruction. They should avoid any inflammatory and discrediting language that damages the standing and legitimacy of the journalistic profession, and must publicly denounce all forms of intimidation, smearing, or mistreatment directed at members of the press, paying special attention to the gender-based dimension of threats and attacks faced by female journalists.
- Strengthen police, prosecutorial, and **judicial responses** to attacks against journalists by ensuring swift investigations, prioritised case handling, specialised training, and effective implementation of early-warning and rapid-response mechanisms. The adoption of the Strategic Plan 2026-2028 is a good practice that should be carefully implemented.
- Introduce strong **anti-SLAPP safeguards** in line with the EU and the Council of Europe's standards, and improve access to public documents, including clear institutional procedures, timely responses, legal reasoning for refusals, and equal access for media in all official languages.
- Improve **journalists' labour rights** and working conditions by promoting written contracts, introducing safeguards for timely salary payments, social protection, collective bargaining, and stronger safeguards against editorial, political, and ownership pressure.

- Adopt a new **Law on the Independent Media Commission** fully aligned with the Constitutional Court judgment, the EU acquis and the European Media Freedom Act, ensuring strong safeguards for the IMC's institutional, financial, and editorial independence.
- Ensure that all IMC appointments, including future Board and Appeals Board members, are conducted through transparent, merit-based, and depoliticised procedures, with full quorum maintained at all times.
- Restore the **IMC's effective regulatory capacity**, including licensing, complaint handling, electoral media monitoring, ownership transparency oversight, and enforcement of audiovisual standards, while avoiding disproportionate state control over online media.
- Adopt a revised **Law on RTK** that guarantees long-term, adequate, and independent financing for the public broadcaster, based on a protected, long-term, and sustainable funding formula rather than annual political discretion or emergency subsidies.
- Complete RTK's governance structures through **transparent and merit-based appointments**, including representatives of non-majority communities, and ensure that the General Director and Board can operate free from political interference.
- Protect RTK's editorial independence and labour stability by preventing punitive measures against journalists and editors, ensuring regular salary payments, improving working conditions, and enabling investment in production, equipment, and digital transformation

To ensure a safe environment for journalists and media workers in Kosovo, we recommend that Kosovo's authorities:

- Establish a **functional national mechanism for the protection of journalists**, including clear early-warning and rapid-response protocols for cases of threats, physical attacks, online harassment, cyberattacks, obstruction during reporting, and gender-based digital violence. This mechanism should ensure coordination between the Kosovo Police, prosecution, courts, media, AJK, and other relevant civil society actors.
- Strengthen **police, prosecutorial, and judicial responses** to attacks against journalists by ensuring swift investigations, prioritised case handling, specialised training, and effective follow-up in all cases where journalists are targeted because of their professional work. Designated police officers and prosecutors handling media-related cases should have strengthened capacities, clear mandates, and regular cooperation with journalists' organisations.
- Ensure consistent, timely, and public **condemnation of all attacks**, threats, smear campaigns, and intimidation against journalists and media outlets by state institutions, especially during election periods and other moments of heightened political tension. Public authorities and political leaders should treat attacks against journalists as attacks on democratic accountability and citizens' right to information.
- Develop specific **responses to political pressure and hostile rhetoric against journalists**, including accountability measures for public officials who use inflammatory, stigmatizing, sexist, or discrediting language against media workers. Institutions and political actors should refrain from portraying journalists and media outlets as political enemies, "mercenaries," "criminal media," or actors working against the public interest.
- Improve **data collection, transparency, and institutional monitoring** of attacks, threats, online harassment, cyber incidents, SLAPP cases, and other forms of pressure against journalists. Police, prosecution, and courts should publish periodic disaggregated statistics, including the type of attack, gender of the targeted journalist, institutional response, investigation status, indictments, court decisions, and final outcomes.

- Introduce and implement stronger safeguards against **gender-based attacks** targeting women journalists, including online harassment, doxxing, sexist language, privacy violations, explicit messages, physical obstruction in the field, and labour-related pressure. Institutions should ensure that gender-based digital violence against women journalists is treated as a serious safety issue and not dismissed as ordinary online abuse.
- Guarantee that journalists can carry out their work without obstruction by public officials, political parties, security personnel, private individuals, or institutional representatives. Special attention should be given to the safety of journalists during election periods, protests, court reporting, field reporting, and coverage of public officials, where risks of obstruction and intimidation are higher.

Finally, to ensure that Kosovo proceeds in its alignment with European and international standards on media freedom, the **EU, the Council of Europe, and the international community**, together, should work in close collaboration with Kosovar civil society, the journalists' association, and media freedom organisations, drawing on their expertise and first-hand experience to promote adequate, fair, and sustainable reform processes.

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