

# **Safety of Media Personnel in Ghana: Findings from A National Survey**

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**&**

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# Freedom and Independence of Media

- “Freedom and independence of the media are hereby guaranteed.”
- “Editors and publishers of newspapers and other institutions of the mass media shall not be subject to control or interference by Government, nor shall they be penalized or harassed for their editorial opinions and views or the content of their publications.”

# Ghana: Private security of mining company assault media crew and resist arrest

Ghana · Safety Of Journalists

October 22, 2024



*Erastus Asare Donkor has distinguished himself as an environmental reporter*

Image credit: MFWA



JoyNews

@JoyNewsOnTV

**#DefendMediaFreedomGH:** A free and fearless media is at the heart of every democracy, exposes corruption and amplifies the voice of everyone – Albert Dwumfuor.



# Our Study

- Explore the nature and patterns of criminal victimization among media personnel.
- Investigate perceived risks of criminal victimization among media personnel.
- Examine feelings of safety in covering specific issues and institutions.
- Understand the confidence of media personnel in key institutions to protect them.

# Data and Methods

**Wave 1:** August – November 2021

**Wave 2:** May – August 2023

Media Personnel

National survey

Online survey platform – Qualtrics

Link circulated on media platforms

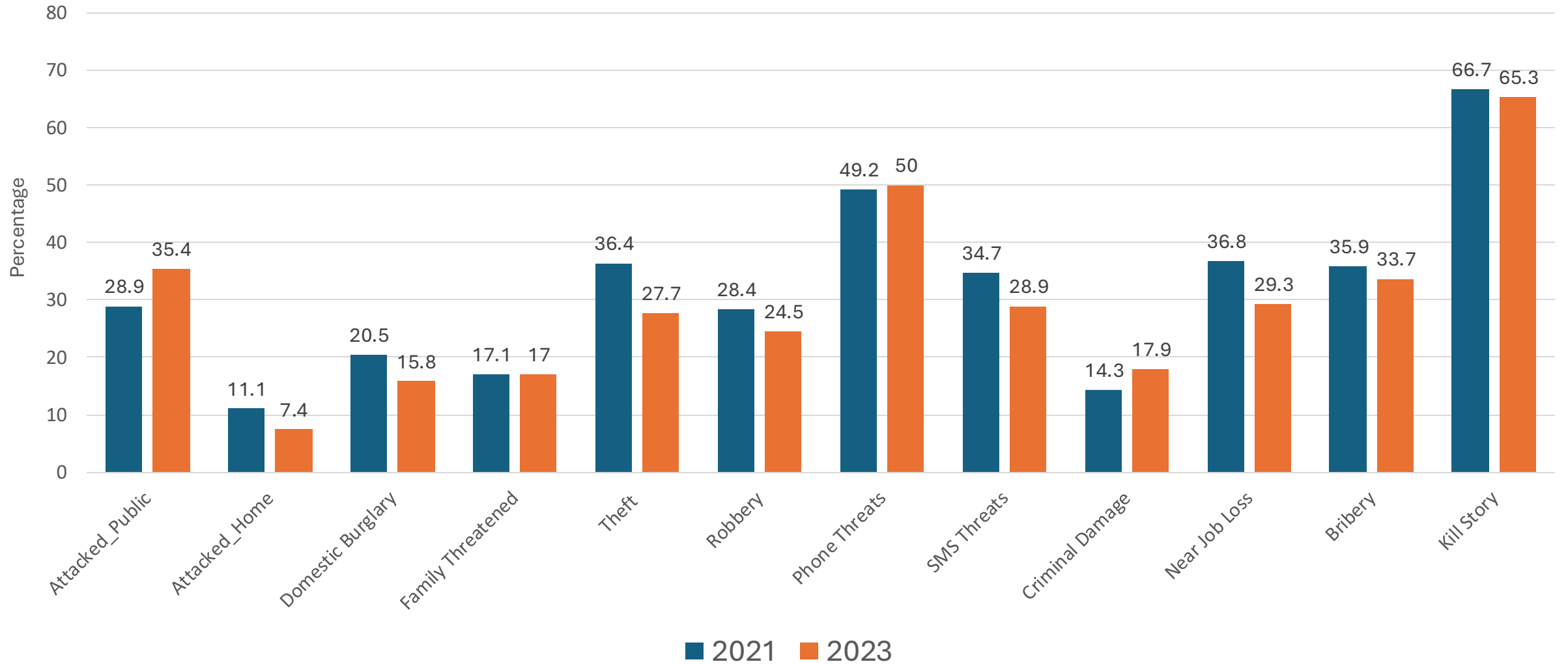
Ethical Approval – University of Cambridge

# The Research Participants

- Wave 1: 122 media personnel
- Wave 2: 101 media personnel
- Gender:
  - 78.8% male
  - 17.2% female
  - 4% preferred not to say
- Experience: 7 months – 32 years (mean = 11 years)

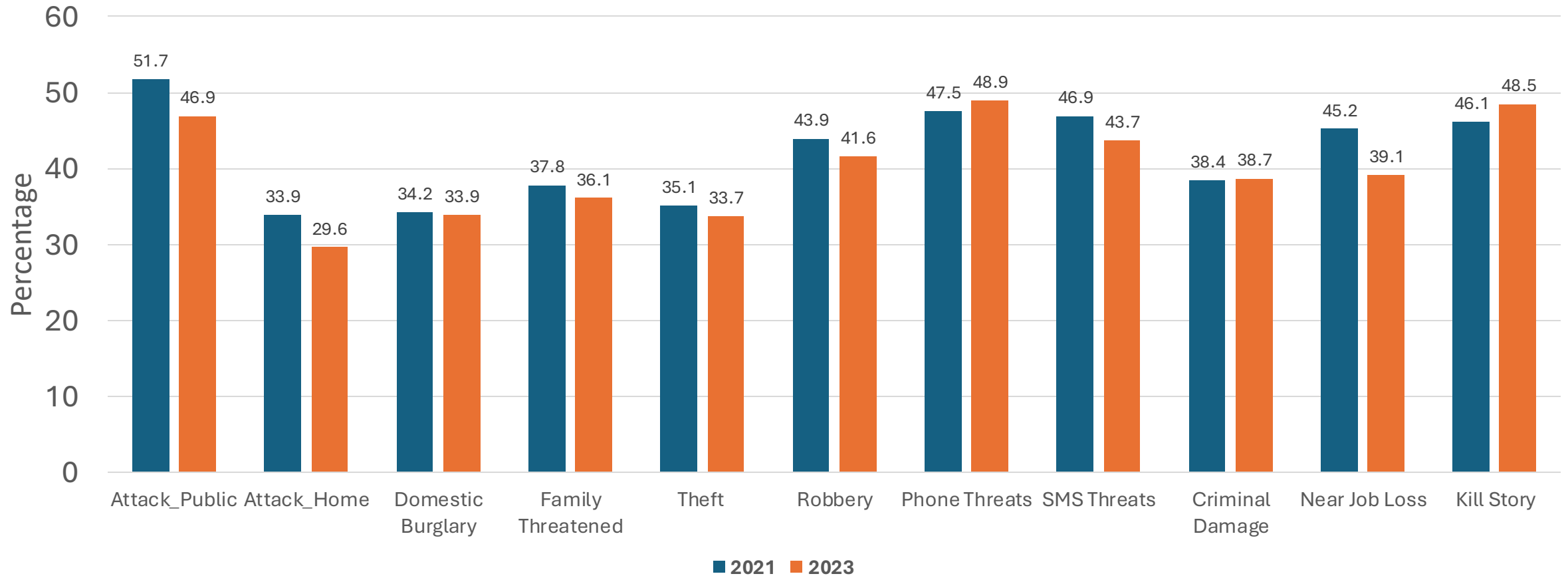
# 1. EXPERIENCES AND FEAR OF CRIMINAL VICTIMISATION

# Proportion of Media Personnel Who Experienced Criminal Victimization Due to their Work





# The proportion of media personnel who perceive 'great or very great risk' of criminal victimization



## 2. FEAR OF COVERING CERTAIN INSTITUTIONS OR ISSUES

# Feelings of Safety Covering Internal Political Party Elections

	2021		2023	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Not safe at all	25	21.9	22	23.9
Not safe	53	46.5	46	50.0
Safe	32	28.1	23	25.0
Very Safe	4	3.5	1	1.1

# Feelings of Safety Covering National Election Campaigns

	2021		2023	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Not safe at all	35	30.4	29	31.2
Not safe	53	46.1	46	49.5
Safe	23	20.0	17	18.3
Very Safe	4	3.5	1	1.1

# Feelings of Safety Covering Stories about Political Corruption

	2021		2023	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Not safe at all	63	54.8	59	63.4
Not safe	44	38.3	33	35.5
Safe	7	6.1	1	1.1
Very Safe	1	0.9	0	0.0

# Feelings of Safety Covering Stories about Police Violence

	2021		2023	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Not safe at all	43	37.7	47	50.5
Not safe	55	48.2	40	43.0
Safe	14	12.3	5	5.4
Very Safe	2	1.8	1	1.1

# Feelings of Safety Covering Stories about National Security

	2021		2023	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Not safe at all	40	34.8	43	46.7
Not safe	56	48.7	37	40.2
Safe	17	14.8	11	12.0
Very Safe	2	1.7	1	1.1

# Feelings of Safety Covering Stories about Abuses by Military Officers

	2021		2023	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Not safe at all	51	44.3	49	53.3
Not safe	53	46.1	34	37.0
Safe	10	8.7	7	7.6
Very Safe	1	0.9	2	2.2



# Feelings of Safety Covering Stories about the Presidency

	2021		2023	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Not safe at all	40	35.7	48	52.7
Not safe	33	29.5	25	27.5
Safe	35	31.3	16	17.6
Very Safe	4	3.6	2	2.2

# Feelings of Safety Covering Stories about Traditional Leaders

	2021		2023	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Not safe at all	30	26.3	33	35.5
Not safe	47	41.2	38	40.9
Safe	32	28.1	21	22.6
Very Safe	5	4.4	1	1.0

# Feelings of Safety Covering Stories about Misconduct by Fellow Media Personnel

	2021		2023	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Not safe at all	13	11.5	12	12.9
Not safe	48	42.5	49	52.7
Safe	42	37.2	28	30.1
Very Safe	10	8.8	4	4.3

*It is getting risky working with colleagues who are affiliated with political parties. These colleagues always sabotage you to the various parties in return for favour. Most corrupt reports are difficult to cover because the politician will threaten you when they see you reporting on their corrupt doing.*

# Feelings of Safety Asking for a Pay Rise

	2021		2023	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Not safe at all	20	17.5	28	29.8
Not safe	43	37.7	31	33.0
Safe	40	35.1	22	23.4
Very Safe	11	9.6	13	13.8

### 3. WHO DO MEDIA PERSONNEL TRUST TO PROTECT THEM?

# Confidence in employer to offer protection

	2021		2023	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly disagree	10	8.7	15	16.0
Disagree	32	27.8	22	23.4
Agree	52	45.2	40	42.6
Strongly Agree	21	18.3	17	18.1

# Confidence in the Police to Investigation Crimes Against Media Personnel

	2021		2023	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly disagree	23	20.2	25	26.3
Disagree	44	38.6	34	35.8
Agree	37	32.5	31	32.6
Strongly Agree	10	8.8	5	5.3



# Confidence in the Police to Protect Media Personnel

	2021		2023	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly disagree	29	25.7	28	29.5
Disagree	47	41.6	34	35.8
Agree	29	25.7	31	32.6
Strongly Agree	8	7.1	2	2.1

# Confidence in the Ghana Journalist Association to Protect Media Personnel

	2021		2023	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly disagree	22	19.1	27	28.4
Disagree	43	37.4	32	33.7
Agree	35	30.4	30	31.6
Strongly Agree	15	13.0	6	6.3

## 4. THE ROLE OF THE GHANA JOURNALIST ASSOCIATION

# Safety Training Workshops

- “GJA should regularly organise seminars and workshops for journalists and other media practitioners, where security experts will educate us on what to do and not do when life-threatening situations arrive.”
- “GJA must provide safety kits like bulletproof vests to protect and ensure the safety of journalists in the line of duty..it should also organise more safety workshops, seminars, and conferences with experts.”
- “GJA has to organise workshops for media personnel to train them how to do their stories or do presentations on their shows and also speak to managers of the Media houses to provide their workers staff ID cards and security.”

# Avoidance of Partisanship

- “The leadership of GJA should engage more with its members and try and be neutral, not towing political lines so that they hold politicians who abuse journalists accountable. They should focus and desist from internal tangling.”
- “GJA must distance itself from politics and operate as an independent body ready to face authorities without fear or favour, and must be ready to defend journalists who are being persecuted for being truthful in their reportage to expose societal wrongs.”
- “Be independent of political affiliations and more proactive in following up on cases of abuse/assault on journalists.”

# Legal Advocacy & Support

- “By better liaising with the government for the establishment of a stringent law to protect media practitioners in the country.”
- “They should be more vocal about journalist safety. I feel in cases like mine they should take up legal suits on behalf of journalists. They should make it unattractive to attack a journalist.”

# Decentralisation

“There should be strong Chapters of the GJA in every region to monitor the safety of journalists.

The GJA, as it is now, is an Accra-based organisation. Journalists in the region feel the existence of GJA only during an election period.”

## 5. CONCLUSION



# Key Conclusions

- Media personnel face multidimensional threats to their safety, ranging from physical attacks, threats to their families, and pressures to ‘kill stories’.
- Half of the media personnel experienced threats via telephone calls and messages.
- Media personnel operate in fear of criminal victimization, ranging from physical attacks, unfair dismissals, robberies and threats.
- The majority of media personnel feel unsafe covering election campaigns, state violence, political corruption, and traditional authorities.
- Confidence in key institutions to protect media personnel is low.

# Policy Recommendations

- Ghana Police Service should consider confidence-building measures – for example, a *media safety unit* focused solely on tackling threats to media personnel.
- Government should consider new legislation on crimes against media personnel.
- Demonstrably commitment by the judiciary and Attorney General's Department to offences against the media
- Media owners should create environments in which personnel feel safe to demand improved working conditions.
- GJA should consider safety training and legal assistance for media personnel.

Thank you

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