EU FACT SHEET 2023

PHYSICAL ASSULTS
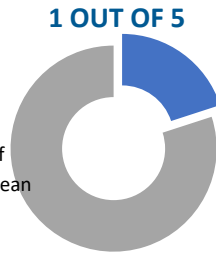

124 ALERTS

178 ATTACKED PERSONS RELATED TO MEDIA

1 OUT OF 5

OVERVIEW

In 2023, MapMF documented a total of 602 media freedom violations in European Union Member States.

1 out of 5 of those incidents (20.6%) involved physical attacks, comprising 124 alerts with 178 persons related to media being attacked. Physical attacks included being pushed, kicked, hit, or even attacked with a knife. Physical assaults were not only carried out against journalists and media workers, but also against media security (3 alerts) and a family member.

TYPES OF ATTACKS

In 48 cases (38.7%) physical attacks led to injuries. In 1 out of 5 incidents (20.2%), physical attacks were accompanied by verbal assaults like intimidation, threats, insults, and abuse. Journalists even faced death threats in several cases while being physically attacked.

Physical attacks were also accompanied by attacks against property in 20.2% of the cases. This mainly included equipment, but also a car being dangerously sabotaged or office facilities destroyed.

CONTEXTS

Most of the physical attacks happened during protests or in public places and on the streets, such as journalists being pushed and grabbed by individuals attending far-right and anti-immigration demonstrations, attacked by police officers while reporting on protests and riots, or sexually harassed while live on air. Beside this, several cases (18) happened during events, such as football or basketball games or political conferences.

PERPETRATORS

Most of the physical assaults were performed by private individuals (70.2%, 87 alerts). A worrying amount of physical assaults were also perpetrated by police and state security (24%, 30 alerts). Private security was responsible for 6 physical attacks.