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#MeToo reaches Mexico: majority of women in media report harassment at work

Thursday 28 March 2019, by [LAKHANI Nina](#) (Date first published: 27 March 2019).

Mexican wave of the movement erupted in creative industries and media where 73% of female workers have faced sexual harassment

The [#MeToo movement](#) has reached Mexico's creative and media industries as hundreds of journalists, academics, writers and film-makers turned to social networks to share incidents of sexual harassment and abuse.

The Mexican wave of the movement erupted on Saturday when female writers took to the social network Twitter to share incidents of sexual harassment, physical attacks and psychological bullying in workplaces including newsrooms, publishing houses, literary fairs and debates. A few named names including well-known literary figures such as poets, writers and publishers.

The disclosure of harrowing cases motivated members of the literary guild including the writer Brenda Lozano to invite victims to privately submit personal testimonies using the hashtag [#MeTooEscritores](#) ([#MeTooWriters](#)).

Estamos en contra de los abusos de género y nos interesa escuchar tu historia [#MeTooEscritoresMexicanos](#) escríbenos desde tu correo o de forma anónima antes del martes 26 de marzo a: [yotecreomx gmail.com](mailto:yotecreomx@gmail.com)

— Brenda Lozano (@heraclesmigato) [March 23, 2019](#)

The outpouring soon spread to allied professions and by Tuesday hundreds of reporters, photographers, camerawomen and university researchers had shared incidents of sexual harassment and abuse perpetrated by colleagues and bosses using hashtags like [#MeTooCine](#) ([#MeTooCinema](#)), [#MeTooAcademicosMexicanos](#) ([#MeTooMexicanAcademics](#)) and [#YoTeCreo](#) ([#IBelieveYou](#).)

Gender violence is widespread and extreme in [Mexico](#) with nine women murdered each day and one in five subjected to sexual violence, according to the UN.

[Sexual harassment in public places is also widespread](#), which in the capital Mexico City has led to women-only buses and train carriages but no adequate public policies to tackle the dangerous machismo that permeates every sphere of daily life for women and girls.

This reality is reflected and perpetuated in the Mexican media, where 73% of female workers have suffered sexual harassment, according to a recent survey of almost 400 reporters, editors, designers, photographers, illustrators and administrators who currently or previously worked in the media.

Improper and suggestive comments about their clothes and looks, as well as inappropriate physical

contact were among the most common incidents noted in the online survey commissioned by the recently launched the United Mexican Journalists collective ([Periodistas Unidas Mexicanas](#), or PUM).

Half of the women surveyed said they were harassed by their direct boss, and 43% by sources who they were working with on a story. The harassment negatively impacted their professional performance, according to 60% of respondents.

The hallmarks of Mexico's justice system - under-reporting and impunity - are also reflected in the newsroom where only one on five media workers made official complaints about the harassment, and those who did were overwhelmingly let down by their employer's response.

"As women we suffer double dangers in the media. We're not safe on the streets, working with sources or even in the workplace. Violence is so normalized in Mexico and there is no protection, not even at work which negatively impacts what information the public receives," said a cofounder of PUM, who asked to remain anonymous for security reasons.

"The media companies must have zero tolerance to sexual harassment, but right now most have no policies at all."

More than 110 women have privately contacted PUM since Sunday with testimonies about newsroom harassment. Scores more have shared their experiences on Twitter, naming numerous well-known news editors, correspondents and photographers working across digital, television and print platforms in local, national, independent and international media outlets.

The #MeToo movement gained momentum around the world in late 2017 after multiple allegations of predatory sexual behaviour were levelled against former Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein. The movement quickly spread across countries and professions, and reached some parts of Latin America under the hashtag #Cuéntalo, which roughly translates to "tell your story".

But until now, the movement had been limited to a handful of public testimonies in Mexico. In February 2018, actress Karla Souza, best known for her role in the US courtroom drama *How to Get Away with Murder*, became the first high profile Mexican to speak out publicly when she disclosed being raped by a TV director at the age of 22.

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