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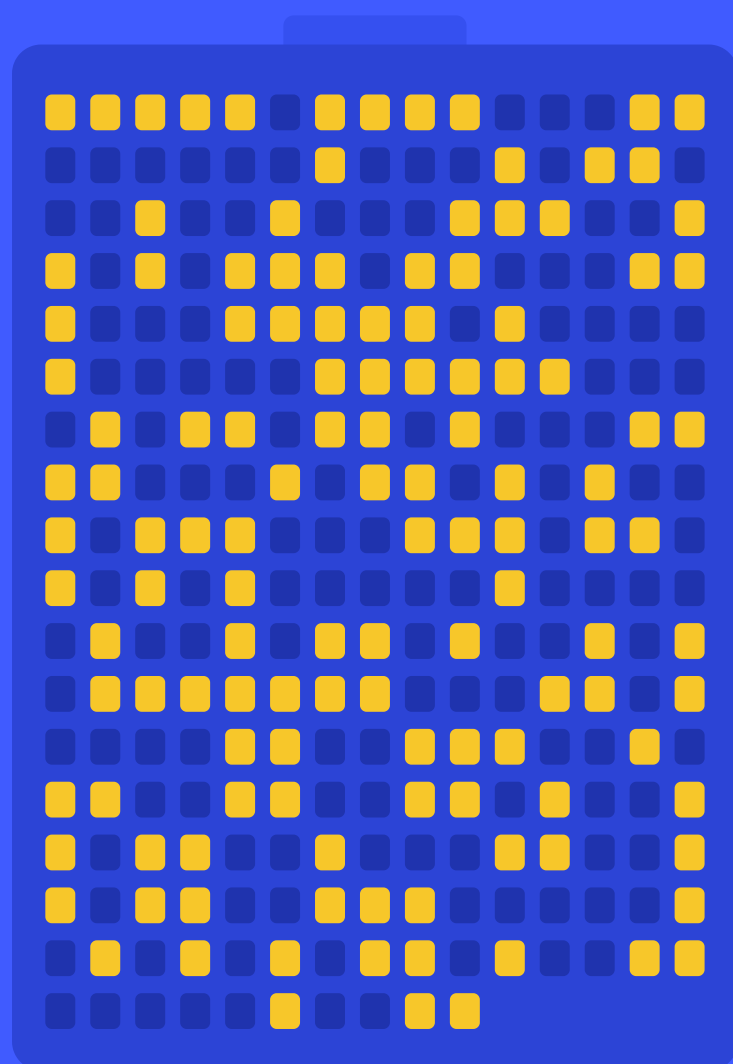


REPORTERS
WITHOUT BORDERS
SWEDEN

Journalists' Resilience Ahead of Winter 2026–2027

A study by the Institute of Mass Information

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Power, safety, people

■ 128 windows are lit – the number of respondents
who have a power station, generator or inverter

■ 137 are dark

265 windows – 265 media professionals surveyed

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Resilience rests on people, not on systems

The main challenge for Ukrainian media is the shift from journalists' personal endurance to the systemic resilience of newsrooms.

Long-term support for Ukrainian media should go beyond one-off grants for equipment or content production. It should include building newsrooms' institutional capacity: stable funding, crisis preparedness, staff backup, practical safety and support for employees.

Media resilience should not be measured by how much more pressure journalists can bear. Its true measure is a newsroom's ability to keep doing quality work without constantly relying on the personal heroism of its staff.

10 key findings of the study

01 Resilience still rests on personal endurance

03 Energy vulnerability doesn't depend on the front line

05 Physical risks are underestimated

07 Mutual help exists, crisis protocols don't

09 Cost and trust limit psychological support

02 Half enter winter without backup power

04 Overall emergency preparedness is critically low

06 Many keep working during attacks

08 Burnout is a systemic risk to media work

10 Relocation threatens to scatter teams

10.2%

of substantive advice to
colleagues concerns
organisational solutions

01 The resilience of Ukrainian media is still seen mainly as personal endurance rather than the result of systematic newsroom preparation.

Specific organisational solutions were mentioned in only 10.2% of substantive pieces of advice to colleagues. Likewise, only 23% of respondents would direct at least part of additional funding to the needs of their newsroom or team. This points to a predominantly individual model of resilience, in which responsibility for coping with crises rests largely on journalists themselves rather than on organisational support mechanisms.

48.3%

have a power station,
generator or inverter

02 More than half of the journalists surveyed are entering winter without basic equipment for energy autonomy.

Only 48.3% of respondents have a portable power station, generator or inverter. Although 77% have power banks, these do not allow full-fledged work during long blackouts. Energy, connectivity and heating were the most frequently named needs: they were mentioned by 63.9% of those who gave a substantive answer about how they would use additional funds. The problem is not only a lack of equipment but also its insufficient capacity. Energy resilience should therefore be measured by the actual duration of autonomous work, not by the number of devices.

48.7 / 47.9

% have backup power:
frontline / other regions

03 Journalists' energy vulnerability hardly depends on proximity to the front line.

Basic equipment for backup power is available to 48.7% of respondents in frontline and border regions and 47.9% in other regions. There is no statistically significant difference between these groups. This means that allocating aid by geography does not always match actual needs. Support for frontline media remains critical, but energy resilience programmes should also take into account how well individual journalists and newsrooms in the rear are equipped.

5 of 265

respondents (1.9%) have all
four components of
emergency preparedness

04 Journalists' overall preparedness for emergencies remains critically low.

Only five of the 265 respondents (1.9%) have all four components of basic preparedness defined by the study: backup power, medical preparedness, a fire extinguisher and the skills to use it, and knowing what to do if trapped under rubble. Meanwhile, 60.4% have no more than one of these components. Gaps in medical preparedness are especially visible among respondents from western regions: 53.1% have none of the four indicators of medical preparedness studied, compared with 28.2% in other regions. Safety training is needed throughout Ukraine, not only near the front line.

57%

have no fire extinguisher

05 Journalists underestimate physical risks, even when they lack basic protective equipment and the necessary skills.

57% of respondents have no fire extinguisher, 90.2% do not know the full procedure if trapped under rubble, and 15.1% have a tourniquet but do not know how to apply it. At the same time, only 16.5% of substantive answers about using additional funds mentioned physical safety – almost four times less often than energy. This points to a gap between existing risks and perceived needs. Support for media should combine equipment with practical training and building a culture of safety.

26%

keep working as usual during attacks

06 Working during shelling has become common practice, and protective action is not always a priority.

26% of journalists surveyed said they keep working as usual during shelling, and only 7.9% named going to a shelter as their typical action. This behaviour occurs in both frontline and rear regions. The study does not establish its causes, but the results raise an important question: do journalists have a real opportunity to stop working when in danger and reach a safe place? Safety must be built into how newsroom work is organised rather than remain solely a personal decision of the employee.

16.6%

have a set procedure if an employee goes missing

07 Newsrooms have some mutual-help practices but lack systematic crisis protocols and staff reserves.

69.8% of respondents said their newsroom does a roll call after heavy attacks. Yet only 16.6% said their newsroom has a set procedure for when an employee goes missing or cannot be reached. Only 34% reported having someone able to cover for an employee in a critical function, and 27.5% know who has access to work passwords and systems. Such dependence on individuals creates a risk that newsroom processes will stop in case of illness, mobilisation, evacuation or other crises.

56.6%

see signs of exhaustion or burnout in their team

08 Burnout and staff overload are becoming a systemic risk to the continuity of media work.

56.6% of respondents see signs of exhaustion or burnout in their teams, and 49.1% report that their workload has grown over the past year. Meanwhile, 35.1% cannot actually take time to recover after a heavy attack or find it extremely difficult. Burnout is widespread in both frontline and rear regions. Staff resilience therefore requires not only support for individual journalists but also investment in backup for critical functions, workload management and real opportunities for rest.

14.7%

have access to psychological support

09 Psychological support remains hard to access, mainly because of financial barriers and a lack of trust in specialists.

Only 14.7% of respondents reported having access to psychological support. Of the 244 respondents who answered the question on barriers to seeking help, 44.3% named high cost, 27.5% difficulty finding a specialist they can trust, and 19.7% lack of time. Simply offering psychological counselling is therefore not enough. What is needed are accessible and varied forms of support, including work with specialists who understand the specifics of journalism in wartime.

51.3%

do not rule out relocating, depending on the situation

10 Possible relocation of journalists creates a new challenge for newsrooms' organisational resilience.

51.3% of respondents do not rule out relocating, depending on how the situation develops. Demand for a temporary move in winter is especially visible among journalists in Kyiv city and region – 29.4% compared with 7.8% in other regions. Among those who consider relocating, 41.2% are thinking of another region of Ukraine, while 30.1% have not yet decided where. One of the key risks is therefore not only possible emigration of staff but also the dispersal of newsroom teams. Media need advance continuity plans, backup communication channels, remote access to systems and the ability to work regardless of where staff are physically located.

WHAT FOLLOWS

Four directions for systemic support to media

01 Energy

Energy support should ensure genuinely autonomous work, taking into account the needs of specific teams, connectivity and heating.

02 Safety

Material aid should be complemented by practical safety training, and newsrooms should introduce clear procedures for shelling, loss of contact with staff and other crises.

03 Organisation

Investment is needed in organisational development: staff reserves, management procedures, secure access to work systems, financial planning and the ability to work as distributed teams.

04 People

Supporting people means not only psychological help but also real conditions for rest, recovery and reducing excessive workload.

Predictable funding matters too: short-term project support solves specific tasks, but staff and organisational resilience require a longer planning horizon.

About the study

How Ukrainian media professionals are entering their fifth wartime winter: do they have power, safety skills, people to step in – and the right to recover?

265

media professionals took part in the survey

23 + Kyiv

regions the responses came from

21.09–07.10

2026 – survey period

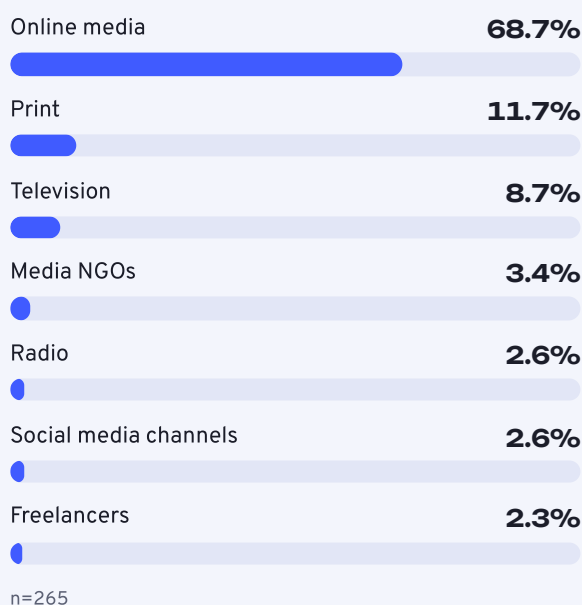
The Institute of Mass Information conducted an anonymous, targeted online survey of journalists and editors of regional media. The questionnaire covered six topics: energy autonomy, physical safety, newsroom protocols, staffing, psychological support and relocation plans.

Two open questions – what respondents would spend an additional €3,000–5,000 on, and what they would advise their colleagues – let us hear how journalists themselves describe their needs.

The sample is not representative of the profession as a whole: the figures describe the answers of 265 respondents. For the analysis, regions were grouped into four clusters: frontline and border regions; the centre and Odesa region; the west; Kyiv city and Kyiv region. Differences between groups are reported only when they are statistically robust, or are marked as preliminary.

73.6% of respondents are women. Answers to questions about the newsroom reflect an individual respondent's assessment, not a characterisation of the newsroom as a whole.

1.1 Type of media, % of respondents



Use of AI. During the study, IMI used its own AI assistant based on a large language model (LLM) to structure and analyse the data set and to identify recurring wording, overlaps in timing and other patterns. All outputs of the AI assistant were checked and approved by IMI analysts. The methodology, interpretation of data, conclusions and final text are determined and approved by IMI's editorial team.

This study was conducted by the Institute of Mass Information (IMI) with the financial support of the European Union and Reporters Without Borders Sweden. Its contents are the sole responsibility of IMI and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union or Reporters Without Borders Sweden.

Energy autonomy

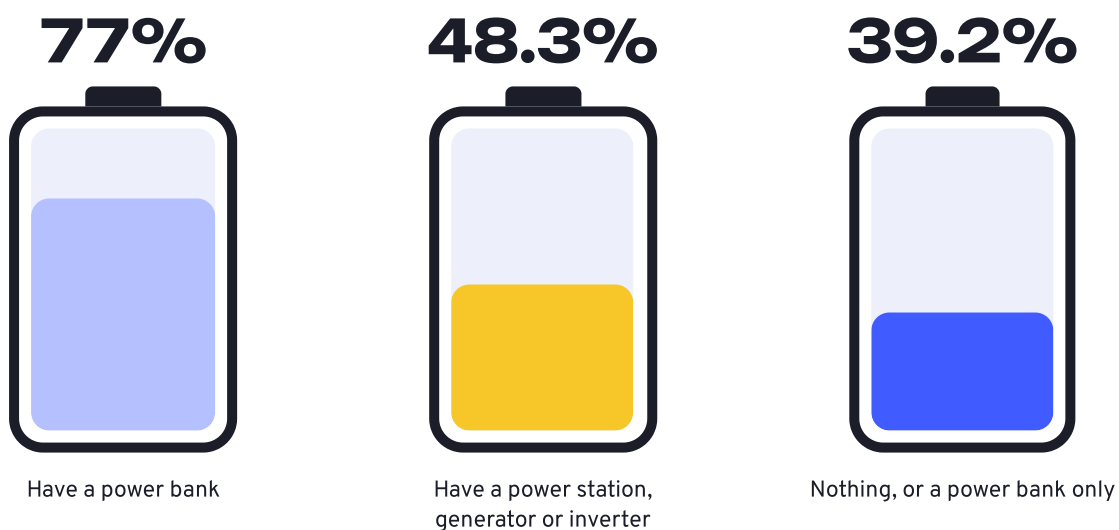
Almost everyone has a power bank, but only half of respondents have equipment for full-fledged work during a long blackout.

IN FOCUS

Only 48.3% of the journalists surveyed have equipment for energy autonomy

More than half – 51.7% – have neither a power station, nor a generator, nor an inverter.

3.1 Power bank ≠ autonomy, % of respondents



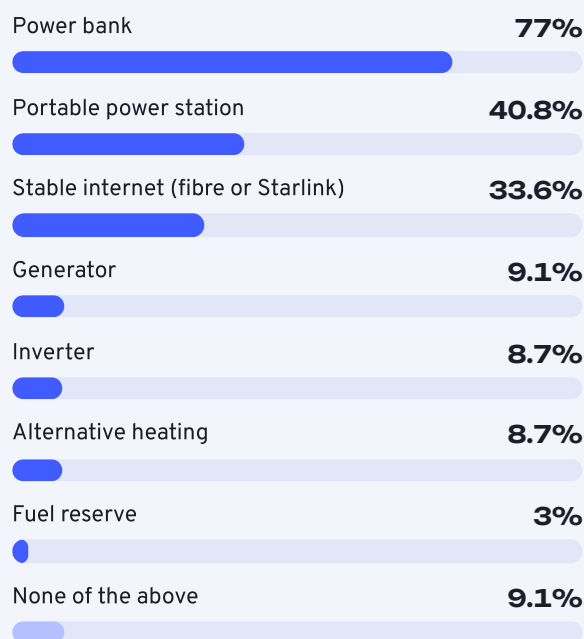
Base: all respondents, n=265.

A power bank, but no real autonomy

77% of respondents have power banks. A power bank keeps a phone charged and connected, but does not guarantee a working day with a laptop, internet and other equipment. 39.2% of respondents have none of the listed equipment or only a power bank.

Even a power station does not always solve the problem: its power and capacity may be insufficient for long hours of work or for heating. The 48.3% figure is therefore the share of those who have at least one basic source of backup power, not a guarantee of a full working day without electricity.

3.2 What equipment journalists have for working during outages, %



Base: all respondents, n=265. Multiple answers allowed.

The energy gap is the same at the front and in the rear

Access to backup power hardly depends on proximity to the fighting. The difference between frontline and other regions is not statistically significant.

A somewhat worse situation was recorded in the central regions and Odesa region: here 52.4% have nothing or only a power bank (35.1% in other regions; the difference is preliminary).

Allocating aid by geography does not always reflect actual access to equipment. Support for frontline media remains critical, but the needs of newsrooms in the rear must also be taken into account.

3.3 Access to backup power by region, %

Have a power station, generator or inverter



Nothing, or a power bank only (preliminary)



n=265. Frontline vs other: not statistically significant; centre vs other: preliminary.

Energy autonomy is the most frequently named need

Asked what they would spend an additional €3,000–5,000 on to strengthen their own resilience, 63.9% of substantive answers mentioned energy equipment, connectivity or heating. This is the most common category.

Tellingly, it is not only those without equipment who need more: among those with only a power bank or nothing, 66.7% named energy; among the rest, 62.1%. The difference is not statistically significant.

“A more powerful power station, because mine only runs a laptop”

“An inverter to power the whole flat, not just individual devices”

“For the gas boiler”

3.4 How they would spend €3,000–5,000: energy, %

Mentioned energy, connectivity or heating **63.9%**

Energy is the only spending priority **22.2%**

Mentioned heating separately **14.3%**

Base: 230 substantive answers.

3.5 The need does not depend on existing equipment, %

Mentioned energy, among those who have...

Nothing or a power bank only **66.7%**

More equipment **62.1%**

Base: 230 substantive answers. Difference not significant.

WHAT THIS MEANS

Support for media should be measured in hours of autonomous work, not in the number of devices

The key problem is no longer just a lack of equipment, but its insufficient power and capacity and the inability to provide heating. Assistance should take into account capacity, the duration of autonomous work, and needs for connectivity and heating.

Physical safety

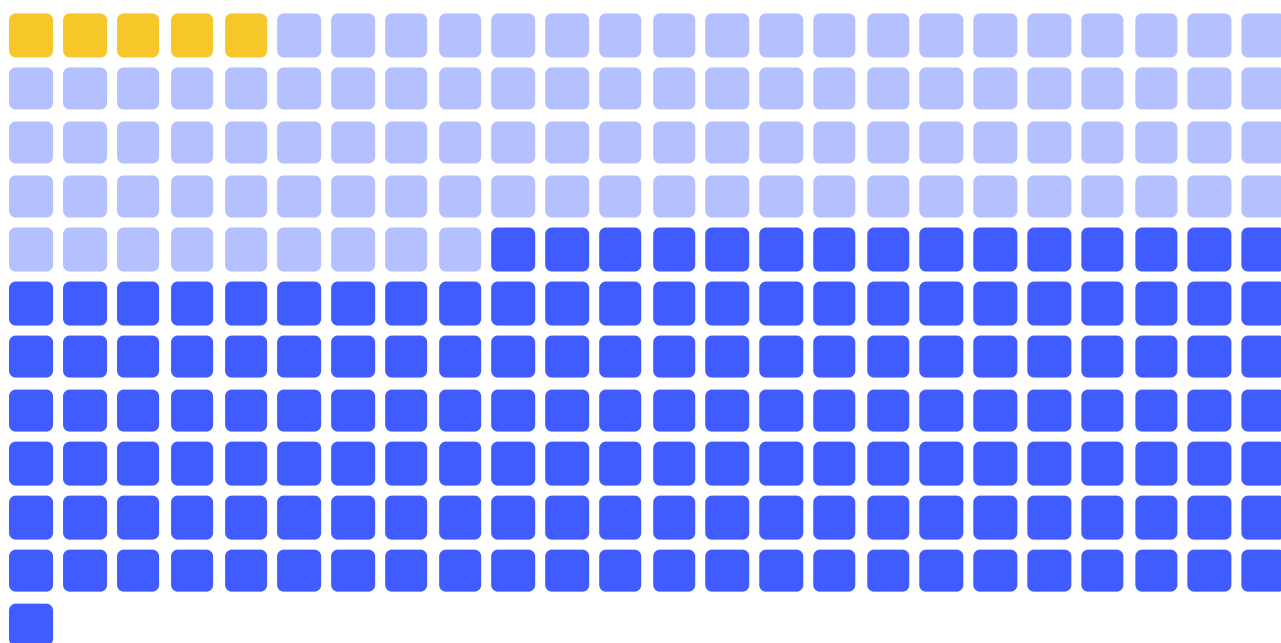
Major risks that journalists do not treat as a priority: fire extinguishers, tourniquets, what to do during shelling and under rubble.

IN FOCUS

Only five of 265 respondents (1.9%) have all the basic components of overall emergency preparedness

Four components were considered: backup power, at least two indicators of medical preparedness, a fire extinguisher and the ability to use it, and knowing what to do if trapped under rubble.

4.1 Personal preparedness index: 265 respondents, one square = one person



5 people · 1.9%
all 4 components

100 people · 37.7%
2-3 components

160 people · 60.4%
0-1 component

Tourniquets, but not everyone can use them

The problem is not only a lack of medical equipment but also practical training: 15.1% of respondents have a tourniquet but cannot apply it. 34.7% have neither a first-aid kit nor a tourniquet.

32.8% of respondents have none of the four indicators of medical preparedness: a first-aid kit and the skills to use it, a tourniquet on them, the ability to apply it, training in the past year. Only 12.8% have all four.

4.2 Medical preparedness, %



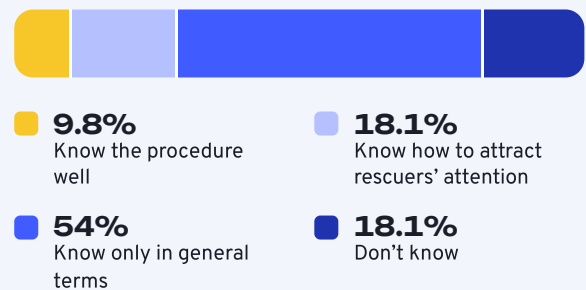
Base: all respondents, n=265.

Over 90% do not know the full procedure if trapped under rubble

Only 9.8% of respondents know well what to do if trapped under rubble. 18.1% know how to attract rescuers' attention, 54% have only a general idea, and another 18.1% do not know what to do. In total, 90.2% do not know the full procedure.

This is a particularly dangerous gap given regular missile and drone attacks, which also threaten media workers in cities far from the front.

4.3 Do you know what to do if you are trapped under rubble? %



Base: all respondents, n=265. Do not know the full procedure (everyone except those who know it well): 90.2%.

One in four keeps working during attacks

The share of those who keep working during attacks does not differ significantly between frontline and other regions (22.7% vs 28.8%). In other words, this is not just a frontline practice.

In Kyiv city and region, 61.8% chose the two-wall rule, and not a single respondent from this region named going to a shelter as their typical action. The data do not explain why: getting used to danger, work pressure or a lack of shelters.

“The nearest shelter is at least 500 metres away”

“I go to the basement, but it can’t be considered a proper shelter”

4.4 What do you usually do during shelling? %

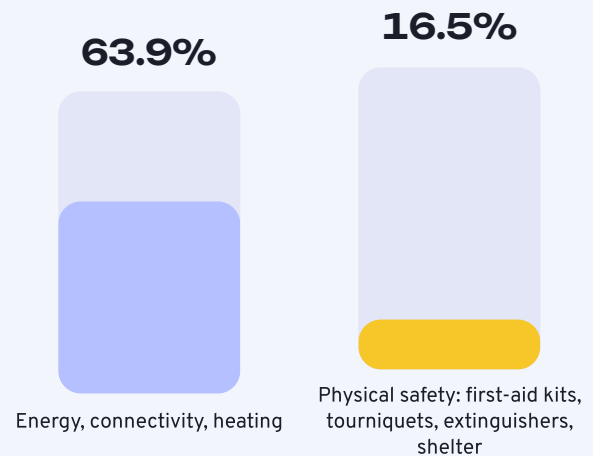


Base: all respondents, n=265.

Physical safety is an underestimated priority

Energy appears in spending plans almost four times as often as physical safety. Even among those with no indicator of medical preparedness, only 21.3% named safety needs.

4.5 How they would spend €3,000–5,000, %



Base: 230 substantive answers.

The west is the least prepared on medical indicators

An unexpected finding: western regions lag behind on several indicators of medical preparedness. Differences in training and medical indicators are statistically robust; the difference in working during attacks is preliminary.

Safety training programmes should cover all regions of Ukraine, including those traditionally considered relatively safe.

4.6 The west vs other regions, %

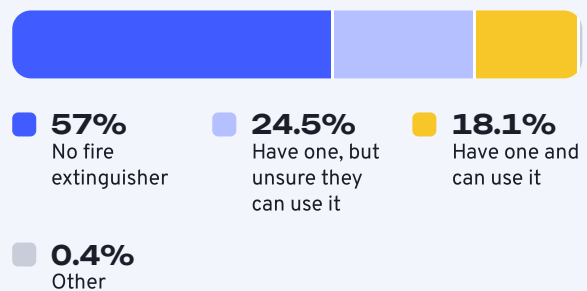


West n=49, other n=216.

Fire safety

57% of the media professionals surveyed have no fire extinguisher, and another 24.5% have one but are not sure they could use it correctly.

4.7 Do you have a fire extinguisher and can you use it? %



Base: all respondents, n=265.

WHAT THIS MEANS

Objective safety gaps do not translate into requests for help

A blackout is felt every day; the risks of fire, injury or being trapped under rubble are not. Material support should be combined with practical training: first aid, tourniquets, fire extinguishers, what to do during shelling and under rubble.

People

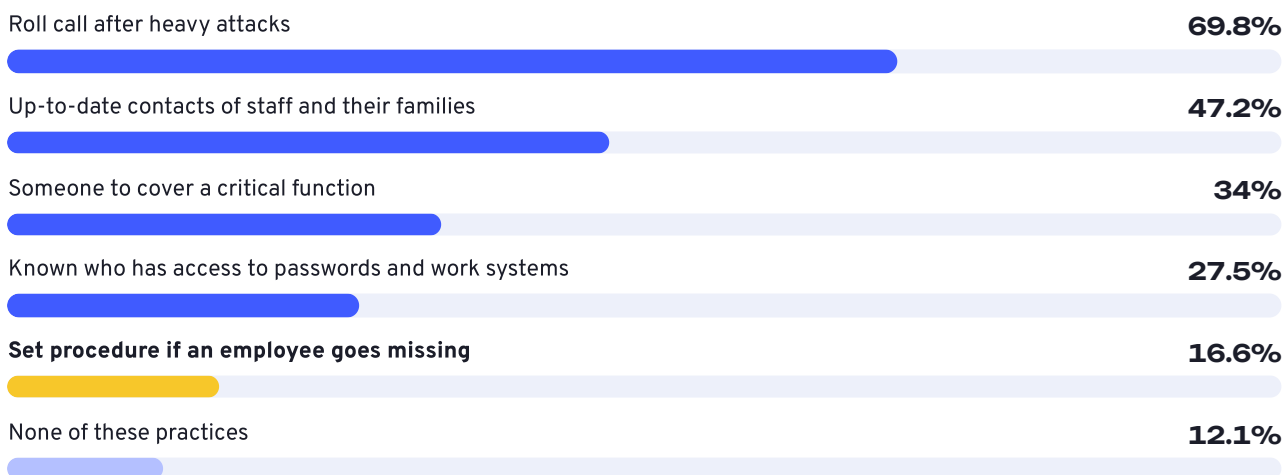
Newsrooms rely on mutual help and personal endurance, but lack safety systems, staff reserves and time to recover.

IN FOCUS

More than half of respondents (56.6%) see signs of burnout in their teams, while only 14.7% have access to psychological support

Another 49.1% report that their workload has grown over the past year.

5.1 Ladder of newsroom safety practices: the more formal the practice, the rarer it is, %



Base: all respondents, n=265.

Newsrooms stay in touch after attacks but have no plan if a colleague goes missing

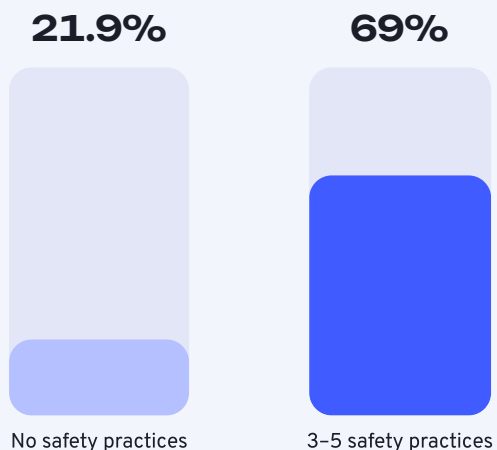
69.8% of respondents have a roll call after heavy attacks. More complex mechanisms are much rarer, and 12.1% did not name any newsroom safety practice. After a heavy attack, 35.1% cannot actually take time to recover or find it extremely difficult.

5.2 Can you take time to recover after a heavy attack? %



Base: all respondents, n=265.

5.3 Able to recover after an attack, by number of safety practices, %



No practices n=32, 3-5 practices n=84.

Protocols and care for people go hand in hand

Among respondents who named no newsroom safety practice, only 21.9% are able to recover after heavy attacks. Among those who reported three to five such practices, the figure is 69%.

These data do not prove that protocols themselves allow staff to rest. But they suggest that more developed safety procedures and a culture of care for staff often go together.

Institutional resilience is the ability to organise work so that the system does not stop when one person drops out.

Television and print: two opposite vulnerability profiles

Television: the best prepared — and the most exhausted

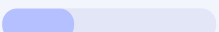
TV journalists are the best prepared for danger of all respondents: they are twice as likely to have taken first-aid training, three times as likely to have a fire extinguisher and know how to use it, and three times as likely to go to a shelter.

Yet they are the most exhausted: 69.6% cannot actually take time to recover after a heavy attack, and only 4.3% call recovery normal practice. The gap persists among frontline media as well.

Safety training does not make up for exhaustion: 13 of 23 TV respondents took training in the past year but are unable to recover after an attack.

5.4 Television vs other media, %

Practical first-aid training in the past year

Television		73.9%
Other media		34.3%

Have a fire extinguisher and can use it

Television		47.8%
Other media		15.3%

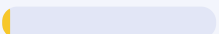
Go to a shelter during shelling

Television		21.7%
Other media		6.6%

Cannot actually take time to recover

Television		69.6%
Other media		31.8%

Recovery after an attack is normal practice

Television		4.3%
Other media		30.2%

TV n=23, other media n=242.

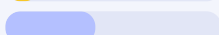
Print: the weakest organisational and medical preparedness

Print journalists are the least likely to have basic safety skills: they are 2.6 times less likely to carry a tourniquet, half as likely to have taken training, and almost half have no indicator of medical preparedness.

Print newsrooms depend most on individual people: only 3.2% have a set procedure if an employee goes missing, they are half as likely to have someone to cover a critical function, and twice as likely to be unable to take full leave as other media.

5.5 Print media vs other media, %

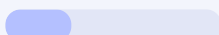
Carry a tourniquet

Print media		16.1%
Other media		41.9%

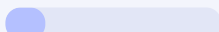
Practical first-aid training in the past year

Print media		19.4%
Other media		40.2%

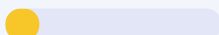
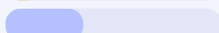
No indicator of medical preparedness

Print media		48.4%
Other media		30.8%

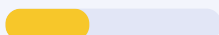
Set procedure if an employee goes missing

Print media		3.2%
Other media		18.4%

Someone to cover a critical function

Print media		16.1%
Other media		36.3%

Unable to take full annual leave

Print media		38.7%
Other media		18.8%

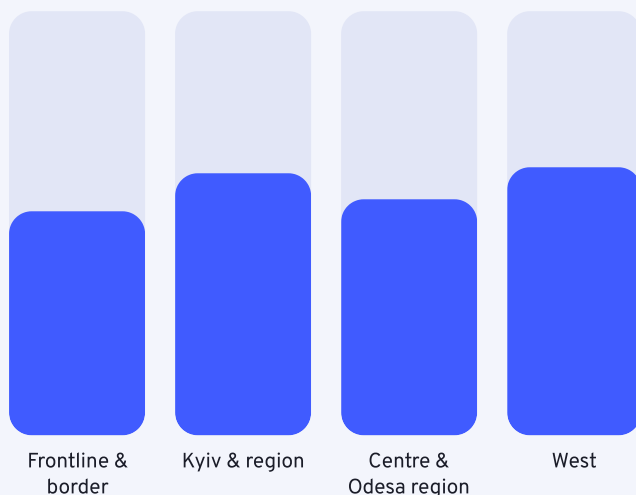
Print media n=31, other media n=234.

Burnout does not depend on proximity to the front

Signs of burnout are widespread in both frontline and rear regions. There are no statistically significant differences between regions – this is a systemic feature of the sector.

5.6 See signs of exhaustion or burnout in their team, %

52.9% 61.8% 55.6% 63.3%



n=265. Differences between regions not significant.

Staffing problems

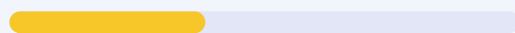
43.8% of respondents named three or more staffing problems at once. If a key person drops out because of illness, mobilisation or evacuation, some processes may come to a halt.

5.7 Staffing problems in the newsroom, %

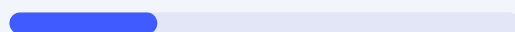
Workload grew over the past year 49.1%



Critical functions rest on one or a few people 38.5%



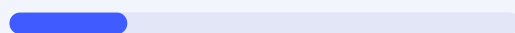
Hard to find replacements for staff 28.7%



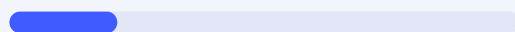
Vacancies hard to fill 25.7%



Regular overtime 23%



Unable to take full annual leave 21.1%



Base: all respondents, n=265.

WHAT THIS MEANS

Media resilience cannot be measured only by the ability to keep publishing

Equally important are backup staff, clear crisis procedures, the possibility to rest and access to psychological support. Support programmes should invest in management practices, staff resilience and burnout prevention.

Psychological support

There is demand for psychological support. It is held back by cost, trust in specialists and lack of time.

IN FOCUS

44.3% of those who named barriers to seeing a psychologist point to the cost

62.7% of those who answered the question named at least one barrier related to access: cost, lack of time or of a suitable specialist.

6.1 What prevents you from seeing a psychologist? %



Base: 244 respondents who named at least one reason. Multiple answers allowed. Blue: access barriers.

12.3% of those who answered the question on barriers named ChatGPT or other AI tools among alternatives to seeing a psychologist. The study did not assess the effectiveness of such tools, and they are not an equivalent substitute for professional help.

Money and trust are the main barriers

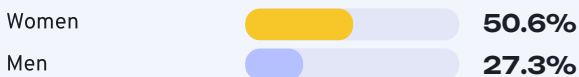
The financial barrier is real, not a socially acceptable excuse. Among those who called psychological help too expensive, 44.7% would spend a hypothetical €3,000–5,000 on therapy. Among the rest, only 10.3% would – four times fewer.

For women it is cost; for men, “no need”

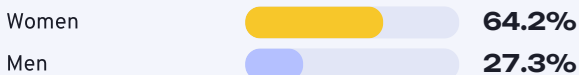
Cost was named by 50.6% of women and 27.3% of men; in online media the gap is even wider – 64.2% vs 27.3%. Controlling for media type and region, women’s odds of naming cost are 2.9 times higher. Men, by contrast, are 2.4 times more likely to say they do not feel the need for such help: 30.3% vs 12.4%.

6.3 Barriers by gender, %

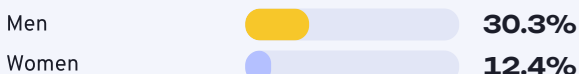
“Too expensive”



“Too expensive”: online media only



“I don’t feel the need”



Base: 244 respondents who named at least one barrier. Women n=178, men n=66.

6.2 Cost is a real barrier, %

Would spend an additional €3,000–5,000 on therapy



Base: 230 substantive answers.

Print media: the exception on cost

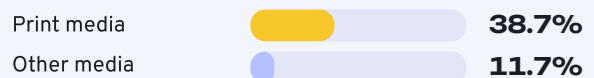
Cost hardly holds back print journalists: only 6.5% named it, compared with 49.8% in other media. Instead, 38.7% said support from friends and family is enough – three times as often as in other media.

6.4 Print media vs other media, %

“Too expensive”



“Support from friends and family is enough”



Base: 244 respondents who named at least one barrier. Print media n=31, other n=213.

WHAT THIS MEANS

There is no one-size-fits-all solution

Some journalists need counselling to be paid for. Others need specialists who understand the specifics of working in wartime, group formats, peer support within the team and self-help training. One respondent who received a grant for ten therapy sessions described a negative experience with a psychologist who was unable to work with journalists from frontline areas.

Relocation and evacuation

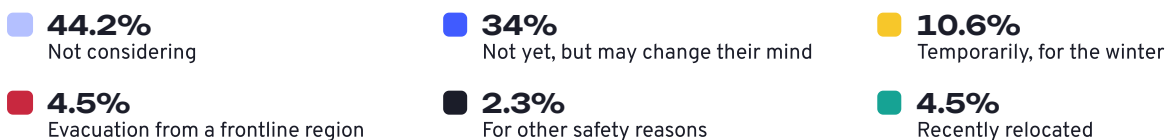
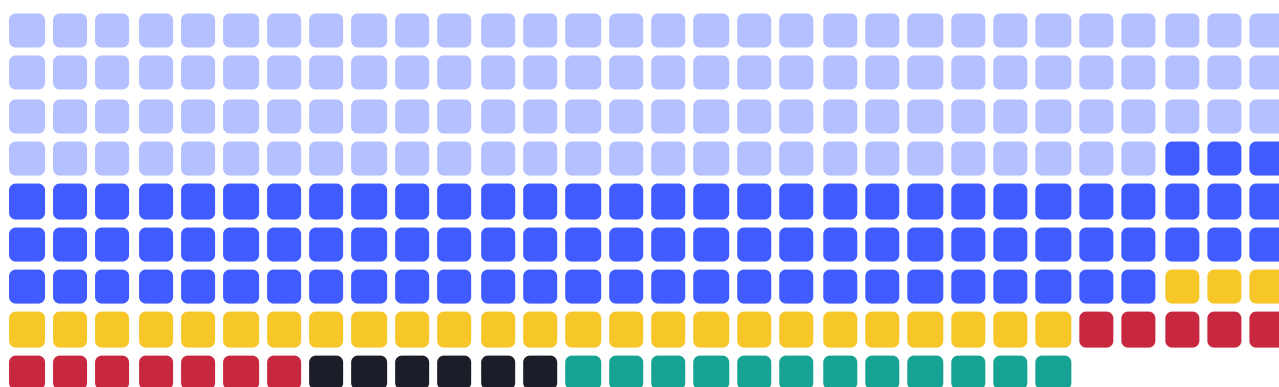
Half of respondents do not rule out relocating. Scenarios differ: in Kyiv, a winter move because of risks to basic living conditions; near the front, evacuation.

IN FOCUS

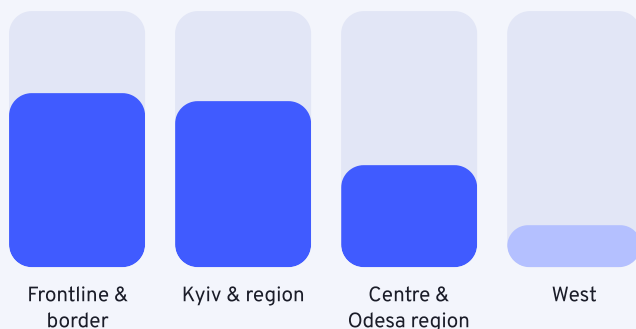
Almost a third of media professionals surveyed in Kyiv city and region are considering moving for the winter

29.4% – almost four times more than in other regions (7.8%). The reasons are shelling and prolonged power or heating outages.

7.1 Are you considering relocating this winter? 265 respondents, one square = one person



Base: all respondents, n=265. Overall, 51.3% do not rule out relocating; 17.4% are already considering it.

7.2 Do not rule out relocating, by region, %**68.1% 64.7% 39.7% 16.3%**

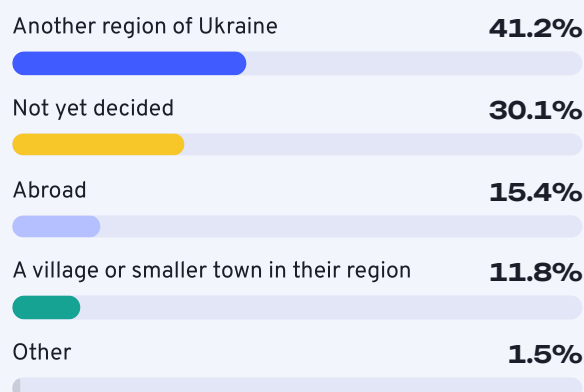
The difference is statistically robust.

7.3 Considering a temporary move for the winter, %**29.4% 7.8%**

Kyiv n=34, other n=231.

Most plan to stay in Ukraine

The main risk for newsrooms is not emigration but **teams being scattered across different towns and cities in Ukraine**. Almost a third of those who consider moving do not know where they would go – a risk of forced decisions if the situation escalates.

7.4 Where they are considering moving, %

Base: 136 respondents who do not rule out relocating. "Other": a different district of the same city, or no answer.

WHAT THIS MEANS**Newsroom resilience will depend on the ability to work regardless of where the team is**

Newsrooms should prepare in advance for working as distributed teams: remote access to work systems, backup power, backup communication channels, plans for staff relocation. Currently only 27.5% know who in the newsroom has access to passwords and systems.

Resilience

Media professionals see resilience mainly as personal endurance rather than systematic newsroom preparation.

IN FOCUS

44.3% advise colleagues to “hold on”, while only 10.2% suggest specific organisational solutions

Mutual support within the team is mentioned by 19.3%, physical safety and energy preparedness by 6.8% each.

8.1 What would you advise colleagues to stay resilient? %



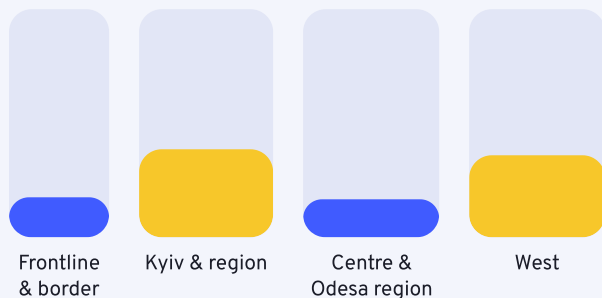
Base: 88 substantive pieces of advice. Teal: advice on systemic preparation.

Energy, psychological help and rest are the main needs

Answers about an additional €3,000–5,000 show the same trend: the money would go primarily to personal living and working conditions. Only 23% of respondents would spend at least part of it on the needs of their newsroom or team.

8.2 At least part of the funds for the newsroom, by region, %

17% 38.7% 16.7% 35.9%



Base: 230 substantive answers.

8.3 How they would spend an additional €3,000–5,000, %



Base: 230 substantive answers. Several areas could be named.

“

True resilience is the ability of newsrooms to keep working without constantly depending on the personal heroism of their staff.