

## Block 1 | Introduction: law as a tool for combatting online harassment

Setting the scene for the series this video discussed why it's important to enforce your rights, how journalists have traditionally leveraged the law to set precedent that protects their privileges, sources, etc. This option also exists for online harassment, though there are also unintended consequences and risks to take into account. This series is intended to help journalists become better aware of their options, but also of potential pitfalls in rushing to litigation or choosing the wrong cause of action.

Run through of the series: This series is intended to help journalists become better aware of their options, but also of potential pitfalls in rushing to litigation or choosing the wrong cause of action.

The series will begin with a brief overview of the different systems of law and will then zoom in to look at specific types of legal claim that can be relevant to journalists who are the victim of online abuse or harassment.

The series will then go on to consider the risks and unintended consequences of taking legal action of this nature, and the institutional and other support that may be available to journalists to pursue such legal claims.

Why is it important to enforce rights? It is important for journalists to be aware of their rights when it comes to online abuse and harassment, and to understand what legal options are available to them.

We have seen relatively little consideration by the courts of the impact that online abuse and harassment can have on a journalist's ability to exercise their right to collect and disseminate information, and the public's right to receive such information. This makes it particularly important for journalists to raise this issue before the courts so that they have an opportunity to uphold and guarantee the rights of journalists in this context.

Journalists using the law to protect and promote their rights: The courts can play an important role in upholding the rights of journalists. We have seen over the years how legal claims can generate case law that can strengthen the rights of journalists against undue interference. For example, in the case of *Goodwin v. UK*, the European Court of Human Rights held that the punishment of a journalist for failing to disclose their source was a violation of the right to freedom of expression. Similar landmark cases have gone on to strengthen the press' ability to report on matters of public interest and have protected the media against prior restraint on their reporting.

In recent years, particularly in cases concerning surveillance, we have seen the right to freedom of expression combined with other rights, such as the right to privacy, to protect press freedom. In these cases, threats to other rights are the measures by which such journalists are silenced or inhibited. The online harassment and abuse of journalists is just one example of this, and journalists should be aware of the legal options available to them to enforce their rights and protect press freedom in this context.

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