WORKSHEET
Mapping your newsroom's response to online abuse and harassment – as it is now

How to complete this worksheet:

Under each heading, add actions that have already been taken, or processes that are already in place. It might help you to think about an actual case or cases you are aware of. Be as specific as you can.

Once you have completed the worksheet, look at it as a whole: this is your newsrooms ecology as it is now. What are its strengths and weaknesses?

Prompts:

1. Internal communications
Is the newsroom aware of online harassment and abuse, and the harms it can cause? Is online harassment discussed in the newsroom, and if so, where, when, and who is present at these discussions? Has any awareness training taken place; if so, when, who was present? Do journalists know what to do in the event of an attack; if so, how do they know?

2. Reporting systems
What are the reporting lines? In the event of an attack, who does the targeted person tell? How do they know who to tell? And under what circumstances does the person who is told involve others – and who do they involve? Once abuse has been reported, is it tracked (and if so how, and by whom)?

3. Informal support mechanisms
Some of the most effective responses to online harassment and abuse are those that happen organically. Are there any informal mechanisms in your newsroom – for example, do people targeted get support from their peers, such as informal mentoring, or counter speech online? Is there a WhatsApp group for female members of staff, or anything similar?

4. Formal support mechanisms
Does your organisation offer free legal and / or psychological support to journalists who are targeted? Do you offer regular digital security training and/or advice and support? Are your employment practices abuse-aware – for e.g., do you have policies that allow temporary leave or redeployment for journalists who are being targeted? Does your editor or anyone else make public statements of support when journalists are targeted? Do you have a system where the social media accounts of a targeted journalists can be managed by someone else to minimise their exposure?

5. Risk assessment
Is online abuse and harassment considered in your risk assessment processes – both when assigning a story to a journalist, and pre-publication? In the event of an attack, what, if anything, does the organisation do to assess the nature and level of the risk to the individual and to the organisation?

6. Training
Have staff been offered any training that might help them either prevent or recover from an online attack – for e.g., digital security training, peer support or trauma risk management?

7. Effective moderation

If you allow comments, on your own site or on Facebook for example, have you published community standards? Do moderators have all the tools they need? Do you use AI to help moderate? Do you use pre-moderation?

Internal communications	Reporting systems
Informal support mechanisms	Formal support mechanisms
Risk assessment	Training
Effective moderation	