



October 2025 Branch

The challenges we face are many, but so is the resolve of this union to stand up for journalism and for our members. As we follow the precarious ceasefire in Gaza we have marked two years since October 7th. The union took this opportunity to reflect on the killings of all journalists in this most deadly of conflicts.

Across the summer our branches organised solidarity events to express horror at the death toll of Palestinian journalists following repeated IDF airstrikes in Gaza, holding vigils across the UK and Ireland. Members came together for a centrally organised online event to remember those killed, providing a space where all could do so. As parliament resumes we are continuing to use levers through our Parliamentary Group to call for increased pressure from the UK government on Israeli authorities to end the targeting of our colleagues and to grant foreign media access into Gaza. Read about the vigils on page 3. In early November we will mark International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists. Please join us by [signing up here](#).

Publisher Reach's shocking announcement of large-scale redundancies placed 600 journalists at risk and has led to significant work by both Officials and reps in engagement with the company. Our members at Reach need solidarity from across the union, and we launched a [new campaign](#) including a model letter allowing you to easily [write to your MP](#) about the devastating cuts.

Last month, I attended TUC Congress with the union's delegation where I was reminded of the immense solidarity from across the trade union movement on cross-cutting issues. Our motions on artificial intelligence and the situation for journalists worldwide both passed. These topics are of huge importance

across the membership and work is underway on planning for a November event to mark International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists. On page 4, you can read about the IFJ's proposal for a Convention on the safety of journalists.



Aid for Gaza

Journalists in Gaza need your help to do their job in desperate circumstances.

The IFJ is supplying vital equipment and aid. Please donate to its safety fund.

Branches can email jackiec@nuj.org to transfer from their management allowances.

DONATE NOW

My thanks to all who joined the fantastic summit where branch officers met to share their knowledge and ideas that will help directly shape the union's recruitment and organising strategy. More on this from Georgina Morris, NUJ vice president, on page 5.

Since our Delegate Meeting, significant work has taken place to compile the [motion resolutions](#) and the NEC and its



sub committees have begun the usual review of work allocation.

On artificial intelligence, our concerted campaigning led to an invitation to join a UK government Working Group on the subject, where member interests were represented. This includes for freelances and coincides with the [Stop The Freelance Rip-off](#) campaign recently launched by the union. It's an opportune time to have your say to a consultation on late payments and tackling poor practices, so do engage and encourage other freelances to do so too. For too long, news platforms have treated freelances unfairly with terms including payment on publication and kill fees. Now is your chance to be heard.

Our safety work continues through the UK government's National Safety Committee and in following up recommendations made in Amnesty's major report on journalist safety in Northern Ireland which featured significant involvement from Séamus Dooley, NUJ assistant general secretary, and our members.

Finally, I hope those of you attending the excellent [Freelance Forum](#) in Dublin this month enjoy the event and come away inspired.

Laura Davison



Threats to Irish regional media

Séamus Dooley, NUJ assistant general secretary, updates on action by joint unions

Once again, the inadequacy of Ireland's competition laws has come to the fore as the NUJ awaits the decision of the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (CCPC) on the application by Iconic Newspapers to acquire the Connacht Tribune, Galway.

The Connacht Tribune is one of Ireland's longest established and largest regional newspapers. First published in 1909, like so many Irish regional titles the Tribune's mission was not just commercial, its opening mission statement identified key priorities, including the economic independence of the county through the development of agriculture and industrial.

Recalling the spirit of its founding fathers, editor Dave O'Connell proudly declared in May 2019, in an article marking the 110th anniversary of the title, "Then [1909] – as now – the Tribune was independent of the rest; never amalgamated into a bigger media group but securely in the hands

of owners who nurtured and invested in its content and its staff for all of the last 110 years."

Since then, the paper's board has resiled from those principles. UK publisher Malcolm Denmark's bid for the Tribune and its sister paper the City Tribune has been accepted and is being considered by the CCPC.

In an unprecedented move the NUJ and colleague unions Siptu and Unite have jointly objected to the sale, on competition grounds. Denmark, through his Iconic Media Group already owns 20 weekly newspapers in Ireland and operates 23 local news websites.

Denmark's Media Concierge recently acquired the News Letter, Belfast as part of the acquisition of National World. As well as the News Letter, National World owns a raft of daily and weekly titles across the UK including The Yorkshire Post, The Scotsman and the former Morton Newspaper Group.

The three unions are gravely concerned at this latest threat to diversity within the Irish regional

media sector. Significantly in our submission to the CCPC we have highlighted the anti-union policies of the employer as a competition matter.

The Irish government's refusal to bring forward legislation on trade union recognition, consistent with EU requirements, is also brought into sharp focus by Denmark's refusal to engage with unions, even in the context of media mergers covered by transfer of undertakings legislation (TUPE).

That issue has dominated the trade union agenda and featured prominently at the Congress biennial conference in Belfast this summer. Unsurprisingly the dark cloud of what is happening in Gaza loomed large over the conference.

In Dublin we took time to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the marriage equality referendum with a seminar on the role of trade union members in furthering all aspects of the trade union equality agenda.

Gaye Cunningham recalled the pioneering work of Irish feminists in the 70s. Many NUJ members including Mary Maher, Nell McCaffrey and Nuala Fennell were engaged in the women's liberation movement.

A common theme of the seminar was the importance of building strategic alliances, unity of purpose and persistence, a message which resonates across all our activities.

CAMPAIGN

03



Vigils for Gaza's journalists

Sam Taylor, NUJ campaigns and communications Officer reports on solidarity efforts

NUJ members across the UK and Ireland have held vigils in protest at the killing of journalists in Gaza by Israeli forces, following the deaths of Palestinian journalists including five Al Jazeera staff and a freelance photojournalist.

Observances were organised in cities including Dublin, Derry, Glasgow, Edinburgh, London and Bristol by branches, to show solidarity and support for colleagues reporting from the frontline.

"Such solidarity means a lot - it may not seem much for someone in Dublin to spend an hour in town at a demo, but showing international support and solidarity is so important," said an Al Jazeera journalist in a message read out by Séamus Dooley, NUJ assistant general secretary, at the Dublin vigil on 11 August.

On the same day, around 40 people - including NUJ members, local media, and the Derry Council of Trade Unions - supported a vigil at The Guildhall in Derry organised by the Derry & North West branch.

Eamonn McCann, NUJ member of honour, said of the recent killings of media workers in Gaza: "This is a deliberate assassination of prominent journalists who are doing their job of reporting the news."

Also that day, Belfast & District branch held an observance at Writer's Square in Belfast during which chair Anne Hailes said: "We will think especially of the five men

who were murdered at the weekend in Gaza" and Kevin Cooper, member of honour, reminded attendees how, "NUJ members in Northern Ireland

received support and solidarity over the years."

In August, the Edinburgh & District branch and the South Wales branch and Welsh Executive Council held and attended emergency protests to demand an end to Israeli attacks on journalists and an immediate ceasefire in Gaza. The events took place opposite Waverley Station in Edinburgh and the Nye Bevan statue in Cardiff and were led by the Edinburgh & District branch and the Welsh Executive Council.

London Freelance branch held

a vigil outside Downing Street in London, during which Laura Davison, NUJ general secretary, said: "We owe a collective debt to those reporting from Gaza in the most horrendous of circumstances. They are representing our profession - that commitment to reporting what is happening on the ground whatever the cost. And they have paid the price. They are the eyes and ears of the world on the ground."

The South West England branch also held a vigil in Bristol, highlighting that the safety of journalists is a cornerstone of press freedom and the ability to tell the truth.

Several other vigils have been held in a mark of clear solidarity by NUJ branches and chapels, including in Brussels, Glasgow, Leeds, Newcastle, Nottinghamshire, Oxford, and Riace, Italy.



Action

• Donate to the International Federation of Journalists' **Safety Fund**.

• Promote the Fund in your branch newsletters to help our colleagues in Gaza.

CAMPAIGN



04

UN Convention for the Safety of Journalists

Jim Boumelha, former president and current honorary treasurer of the IFJ, explains why we need an international convention to protect journalists.

The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) was the first organisation to publish an annual report of killed journalists in 1990, charting their fate every year, as they were targeted with impunity in every corner of the globe. Some believed that this was merely a blip and very few anticipated that it would still be going 35 years later.

When you aggregate all these numbers, the total comes to a staggering 3,000 killed in the last 35 years, on average about two journalists or media workers dying every week.

For all these years it has almost become a fact of life that the killings continue year in year out. And all the reports make grim readings when we are confronted by the scandal of impunity and the failures of governments to bring the killers to justice. In no less than 90 percent of journalists' murders worldwide, there has been little or no prosecution whatsoever. In two-thirds of the cases the killers were not identified at all and probably never will be.

As well as publishing authoritative

figures the IFJ has been running multiple campaigns over the years to advocate for the safety of journalists. Over the years, apart from the Geneva Convention and its protocols, the international legal system has included a myriad of international instruments such as universal human rights laws, dozens of covenants, declarations and resolutions – the seminal UN Security Council resolution 1738 which the IFJ mobilised all its affiliates worldwide to lobby for; and ten years ago now, the UN Plan of Action on safety of journalists.

These instruments have been adopted to reinforce and explain the scope of treaty obligations, but their central weakness has been that most are non-binding. And while the problem of impunity is well recognised, the major hindrance for the protection of journalists derives not from the scope of the rights, but from implementation deficits. We participated and welcomed the UN Plan of Action, but since it was adopted some 1,400 journalists have been killed.

The growing frustration at the

lack of will to stop impunity has led the IFJ and all its affiliates globally to propose a new UN Convention on the Safety of Journalists, a new binding international category-specific instrument which plugs all the loopholes in humanitarian laws and introduces an enforcement mechanism.

We have for many years now joined the massive lobbying effort initiated worldwide by the IFJ for the convention to be adopted. Unfortunately, although many of the 180 IFJ affiliates started winning the support of their governments, including the NUJ in Ireland, the UK is still unwilling to give its support. Despite a recent meeting with FCDO officials, the Starmer government is still unwilling to give us support. But we will not give up.

For us, a new international instrument dedicated to the safety of journalists acknowledges our distinctiveness and deals with the risks to which we are routinely exposed and would intensify international scrutiny over attacks against us as well as assist national authorities in understanding their international obligations, currently fragmented in several treaty provisions and case law. Such a momentous initiative would make the safety of journalists and everyone's right to information a clear priority for the international community.

CAMPAIGN

05



Boosting recruitment and organising

Georgina Morris is vice president and chair of the NUJ Development Committee

My first introduction to the NUJ may be similar to yours. I'd been working as a trainee reporter for a little while when one of the sub-editors came over with a leaflet in his hand. It was an application form for joining the union.

There was no hard sell. Just a brief chat about how the union supported colleagues in our office and the benefits of working collectively to improve everyone's pay and conditions. An offer to talk any time if I wanted to find out more.

It was my first lesson in being a trade unionist and perhaps the most important - every member can help to build the strength of our union, even with a single conversation.

How we give everyone the confidence to do that is just one of the questions our new recruitment and organising strategy will focus on.

It will look at how we can best promote the many benefits of NUJ membership, develop the next generation of activists and more effectively organise inside and outside of workplaces, growing our collective voice for the benefit of all.

Every chapel rep, branch, council and committee has now been invited to share their ideas before the strategy consultation closes on 31 October. We're also seeking the views of those starting out in journalism via the new Student and Early Careers Network that's beginning to take shape.

All the feedback will help guide the new strategy that we're aiming to launch in spring 2026 - but that doesn't mean our recruitment and organising activities are on hold until then. Far from it.

Our Freelance Council is looking at how to organise freelance workers so they can collectively negotiate with employers, while the Magazines, Journals and Books Council is talking to reps about a tailored strategy for their sector.

The Irish Executive Council has formed a sub-committee to drive targeted recruitment at key employers and promote membership in the PR and communications sector.

Elsewhere, the Photographers' Council is looking at how to tackle barriers to recruiting in that field and the Digital Media Council is digging

Bullivantmedia
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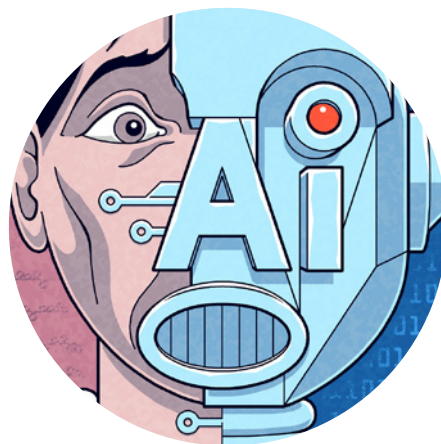
Recognition at Bullivant

Members have won recognition at Bullivant Media Group with an agreement now signed. The deal was finalised after months of negotiations and despite the company's initial hostility. All staff journalists employed by the Redditch-based newspapers group - which has 15 Observer & Standard newspaper titles and associated news websites serving towns and cities in Warwickshire, Worcestershire and the West Midlands - are covered by the agreement. Ash Osborne, Bullivant Media Group NUJ Chapel rep, said: "I'm pleased that we stuck together throughout this entire process."

into how we engage with newly-recruited student members.

Your ideas - big or small - could be an important piece of the puzzle. Whether you talk to your local rep, join your next branch meeting or contact an NUJ council member, don't miss the chance to be part of the conversation.

UPDATE



06

@ Matt Keyon

AI organising webinar

Sam Taylor, NUJ campaigns and communications officer, reflects on essential guidance for journalists.

Although the threat of artificial intelligence can seem overwhelming, it presents a huge organising opportunity.

During an NUJ webinar, reps heard practical ways to address various workplace issues surrounding AI.

AI takes different forms: from workplace surveillance to generative AI that creates photos or text from prompts, or agentic AI that performs tasks without human involvement.

Adam Cantwell-Corn, Trades Union Congress (TUC) tech project policy lead, advised reps to situate issues within workers' daily concerns and

core trade union principles. These include protecting workloads, promoting equalities, safeguarding jobs, and workers getting a fair share of any gains from the adoption of new technology.

Cantwell-Corn encouraged reps to proactively shape workplace AI policies, practices and processes – from governance to technology procurement, job design to recruitment. This can be daunting work, particularly with the rapid development and implementation of AI amid the UK government's gung-ho 'growth' agenda. "But there is also opportunity in the flux," said Cantwell-Corn. "We can shape that to be more pro-worker. We have to break it down step-by-step."

The Financial Times chapel has done exactly that, raising concerns over the security of data transcription software, the reputational risk of using ChatGPT, and the ethics of voice cloning for podcasts. Steve Bird, FT chapel chair, argued that only humans can preserve journalistic standards as even advanced iterations of AI produce error-prone images and copy: "Putting people at the centre of journalism is absolutely key," said Bird. "Our argument is that unless we get quality journalism, you don't

have a business model that works."

In the US, NewsGuild-CWA has won transparency provisions requiring clear labelling on AI-generated content as well as prohibitions on AI replacing jobs. The guild successfully bargained for a joint labour-management committee and enhanced severance for AI-linked redundancies.

Despite protections won, rep Benjamin Harnett said that with hindsight the guild would have pushed harder: "It's important not to sleepwalk into this. Companies are aggressively pushing this technology, and it does manifestly deskill people, and make your work more precarious."

Harnett encouraged reps to challenge the assumption that AI improves the quality or efficiency of our work. As NewsGuild-CWA and NUJ members have noted, increased use of AI has often resulted in more drudgery and more clickbait.

Employers are attracted to the novelty of AI without fully comprehending its capabilities or limitations. "We need to remind people that recognising patterns and churning out a derivative product is not what we do", said NewsGuild-CWA's Danielle Newsome. As journalists and trade unionists, we must recognise our skills and realise our collective power.

Action

• Login to MyNUJ and [watch the webinar](#)

• Stay updated on the NUJ's [Journalism before Algorithms](#) campaign

Get Active

The NUJ's website has a wealth of information, advice, guidance and useful materials

AI

Artificial Intelligence is a fast-moving technology which will affect all of us at work. Go to the **Journalism before Algorithms** website page for more information.

Campaigns

The **NUJ's Pay Campaign** calls for fair pay and flexible working and provides practical support to chapels when dealing with employers and on the rights of freelancers.

Save Quality Journalism

Education: write to your MP to oppose harmful cuts proposed by the UK government to journalism courses.

Recruiting students: there's lots of info, FAQs and materials for branches and chapels to encourage local journalism, publishing and photography students to join the union **on the NUJ website**.

Useful stuff

Freelance members can access help and useful information in the union's **freelance resources**, including **Protect your sources** and your rights as a journalist.

Legal assistance: one of the many benefits of NUJ membership is its legal advice.

Health and safety: advice, guidance and news.

The **safety toolkit** is a mobile-friendly resource to help media workers protect themselves and their journalism from harm.

Photographers: the toolkit

has tips and a number for legal assistance when covering protests, and guidelines on taking photographs in public places.

Storysmart: is a set of online training modules to help journalists prepare to work in hostile environments and keep their data safe.

TUC Organising at Work: guide on building and maintaining strong workplace unions.

NUJ recruitment materials

Mental health: find help for **post-traumatic stress disorder**.

The NUJ's guidance **Menopause is a workplace issue** provides advice to reps and members on how to influence workplace policies

and support women during the menopause.

Reporting on refugees: inaccurate terminology and commentary can cause confusion and breed prejudice.

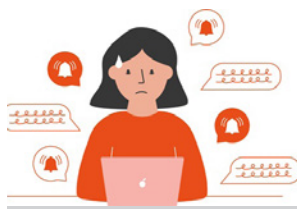
The **NUJ code of conduct** has set out the main principles of UK and Irish journalism since 1936.

Donate

The **IFJ's safety fund** helps journalists across the globe, including in Ukraine, Afghanistan and those covering the Israel-Gaza war.

The NUJ's **George Viner Memorial Award** provides bursaries for Black and minority ethnic students.

NUJ extra helps members and their dependents who have fallen on hard times.



NUJ extra

NUJ training

The union provides a free programme of **training for reps**. **NUJ Scotland Training** and **NUJ Training Wales** provide a huge range of professional skills courses.

Social media: Keep up with the latest breaking news, offers, campaigns, solidarity events and more on **X**, **Instagram**, **Bluesky** and **Facebook**.

REASONS TO JOIN



Should You Be Getting Paid Holiday?

Many UK freelancers and casuals are entitled to holiday pay in law, but an NUJ survey found that almost nine out of ten did not receive it. Are you losing out? The NUJ has been successful in winning holiday pay and backpay for many of its members.

Could that be you? If so, the NUJ can help. Contact freelanceoffice@nuj.org.uk

Are you keeping good company?

Join the NUJ today at

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