



# RESEARCH STUDY ON IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE JOURNALISTS



A group of immigrant journalists at the NCM Ottawa workshop (Feb, 2020)

## A MISSED OPPORTUNITY:

Immigrant and refugee journalists and  
the Canadian media industry

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NEW CANADIAN MEDIA

THE PULSE OF IMMIGRANT CANADA

# RESEARCH STUDY ON IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE JOURNALISTS

## Executive Report

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## Acknowledgements

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## SUMMARY

Last fall, New Canadian Media launched a study – the first of its kind – on the perspectives and socioeconomic prospects of journalists who have come to Canada as migrants and refugees. Our small team spent months seeking out their stories. The results exceeded our expectations. We received 101 survey responses and conducted dozens of interviews. Our project ultimately explored whether first-generation immigrant and refugee journalists who have moved to Canada were able to successfully integrate their past work experiences from their country of origin into a career in Canadian journalism.

We originally set out to explore the socio-economic prospects for first-generation immigrant and refugee journalists in Canada. A focus on the economic dimension alone, of course, neglects the full extent of the challenges they have encountered, from immigration hassles and language barriers to family reunification and mental health. The refugee journalists we spoke to all share the feeling that Canadians don't quite understand what life is like back home, nor their reasons for fleeing. But there is also the hope of being, one day, allowed to do what they do best – bear witness and write stories.



### QUOTE



Having immigrant and refugee journalists from various communities in Canada is critical to shifting the narrative of the media in Canada to become truly representative of all those who live here.



Without concrete financial and language support from the Canadian government as well as the addition of more permanent positions for first-generation immigrant and refugee journalists, many highly qualified migrants will be unable to conduct crucial journalistic work in their new homes. Having immigrant and refugee journalists from various communities in Canada is critical to shifting the narrative of the media in Canada to become truly representative of all those who live here.

## METHODOLOGY

This was an exploratory study consisting of a convenience and snowball sampling of first-generation immigrants and refugees with a background in journalism who have migrated to Canada. As a part of this study, New Canadian Media reached out to various organisations<sup>1</sup> to encourage their members who qualify to participate. The survey was also promoted on our website and newsletter. Participants of the survey were encouraged to invite immigrant and refugee journalists they knew to participate as well.

The study was conducted in a two-pronged process:

**Survey:** We conducted an online survey using our website, [newcanadianmedia.ca](http://newcanadianmedia.ca). The online survey was carried out from October 2021 to February 2022. The survey sought out demographic information, journalistic experience, and opinions of journalists on working in the Canadian media industry. The survey was offered in both English and French.

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<sup>1</sup> Canadian Association of Journalists, Journalists for Human Rights, Association des journalistes indépendants du Québec, Canadian Journalists for Free Expression, Pen Canada, Writers in Exile, Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights, Maisonneuve, Comité d'aide aux réfugiés, Fédération professionnelle des journalistes du Québec, UDEM, Canadian Journalists of Colour.



**Follow-up interviews:** Survey respondents were given the option to participate in a follow-up interview. This semi-structured interview was conducted by a member of the New Canadian Media collective with the purpose of gathering further details from respondents, such as their reasons for immigrating, their perspective on the media industry in Canada, their long-term goals in journalism, and their experience as an immigrant or refugee journalist. Interviewees were encouraged to refer immigrant and refugee journalists with similar experiences to take part in the study, therefore some interviews were conducted with individuals who did not take part in the survey.



## PART 1: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF RESPONDENTS

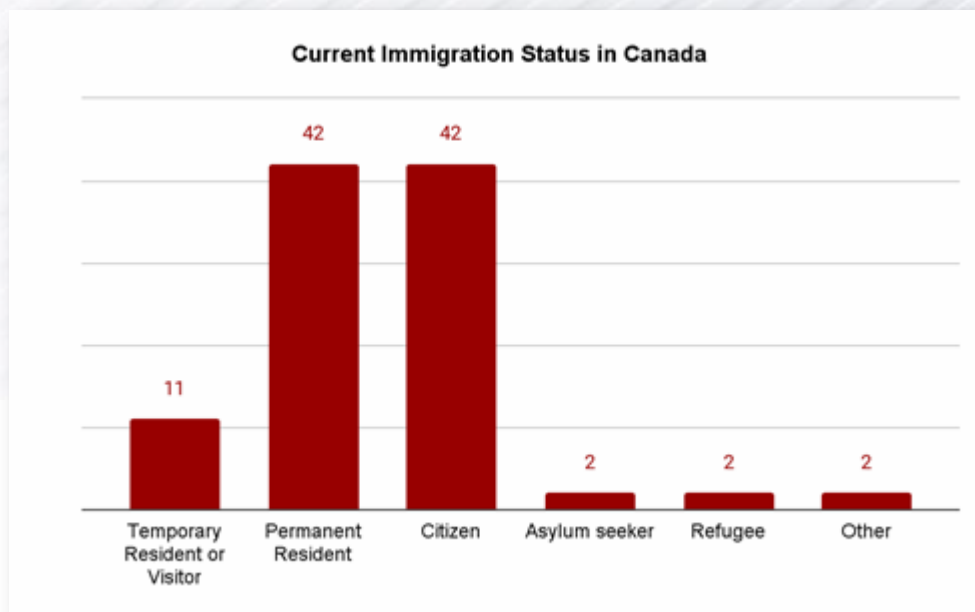
More than two-thirds of respondents have lived in Canada for at least 5 years.

According to IRCC data, Canada has welcomed over 800 permanent residents as “journalists” between 2010 and 2020 through Express Entry and other immigration programmes. This figure excludes those who have entered the country as asylum seekers or refugees. We were able to gather information from 101 journalists: 85 immigrants and 16 refugees who identify as journalists. Of these respondents, 68 have lived in Canada for at least 5 years, with 46 reporting that they have been in Canada for over a decade.<sup>2</sup>



In order to better understand the experiences of immigrants and refugee journalists in Canada, it is beneficial for the conversation to begin with their background: their immigration status, where they came from, and where in Canada they’re currently based. These responses provide a basis for which discussion on the barriers of entry for immigrant and refugee journalists can begin. Based on respondent answers, the vast majority of respondents (both immigrants and refugees) are currently permanent residents (42) or citizens (42).

<sup>2</sup> Canadian Association of Journalists, Journalists for Human Rights, Association des journalistes indépendants du Québec, Canadian Journalists for Free Expression, Pen Canada, Writers in Exile, Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights, Maisonneuve, Comité d'aide aux réfugiés, Fédération professionnelle des journalistes du Québec, UDEM, Canadian Journalists of Colour.

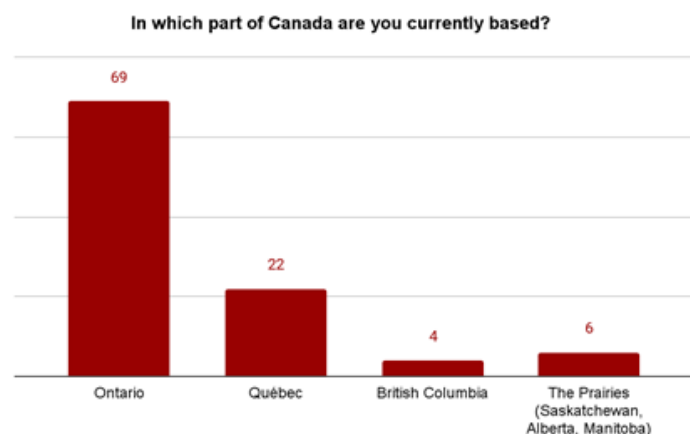
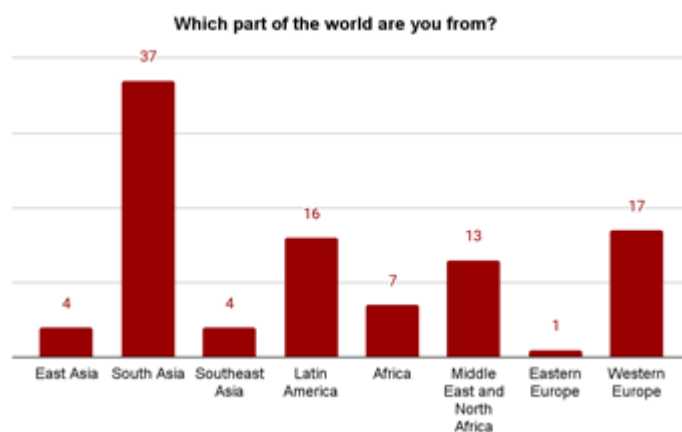


Of those who initially arrived in Canada as a refugee, one is currently a temporary resident, ten are permanent residents, and one is a citizen.

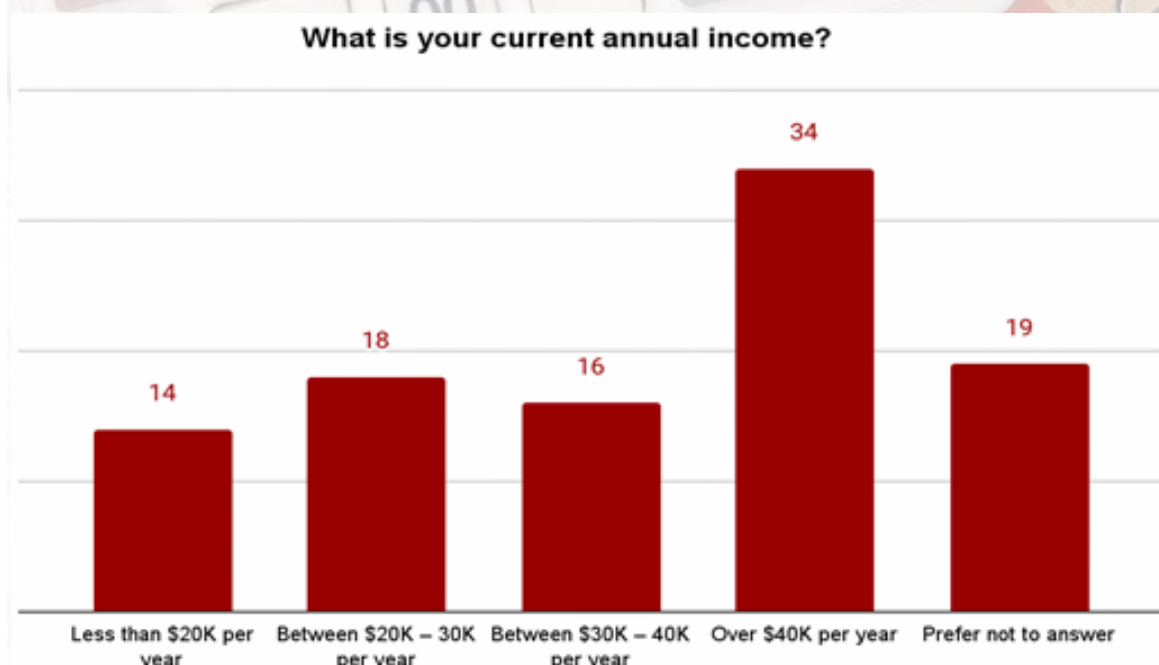
### Majority of immigrant and refugee journalists concentrated in Ontario and Quebec.

The immigrant and refugee journalists who responded to our study were a diverse group that hailed from all over the world. South Asia in particular was strongly represented in our study. In terms of refugee respondents, half of all respondents came from the Middle East and North Africa.

Respondents were primarily based in Ontario, with 69 respondents currently living in the province. This was followed by Quebec (22), The Prairies (6), and British Columbia (4). The survey did not receive respondents from other provinces in Canada.

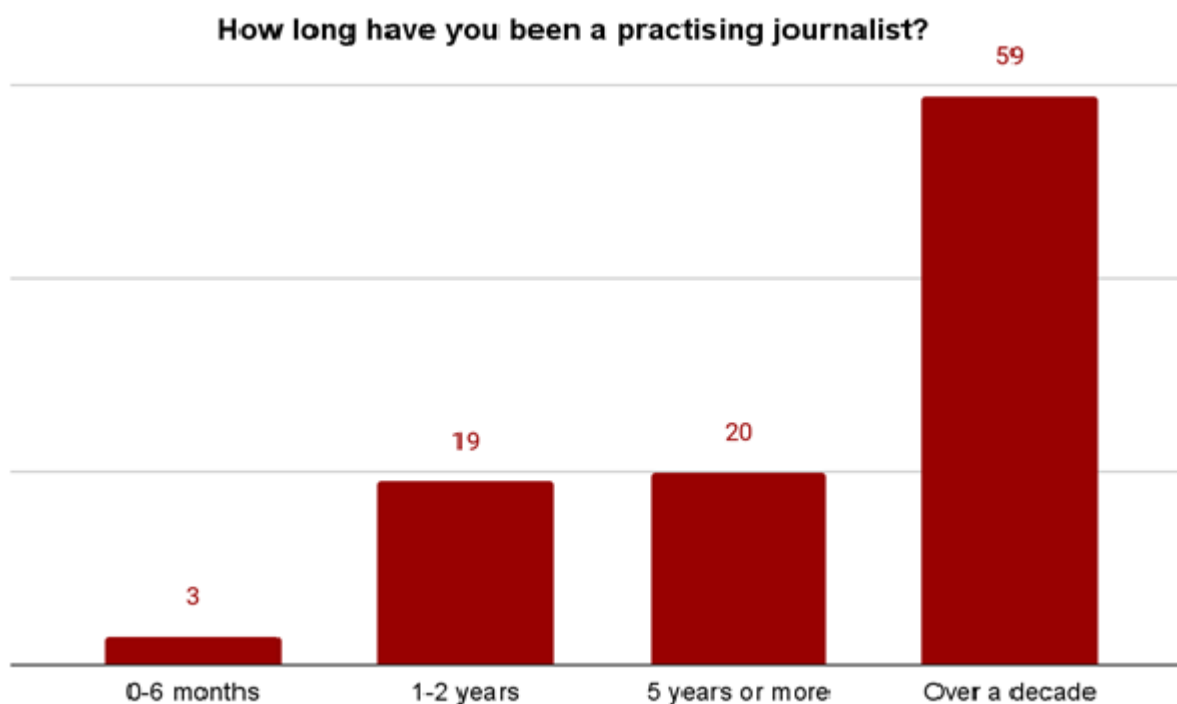


Over one-half of immigrant and refugee journalists make less than \$40,000 a year.



The median total income of Canadian families and unattached individuals was [\\$71,200](#) in 2019, according to data from Statistics Canada. According to [Glassdoor](#), the average annual base pay for Canadian journalists is \$54,061. [Payscale](#) estimates that the average annual salary for journalists in Canada is \$45,436. Respondents of our survey indicated that they, for the most part, live below these benchmarks, with 48 reporting (59% of respondents who chose to answer this question) that they make less than \$40,000 annually.

## PART 2: RESPONDENTS' EXPERIENCE AS JOURNALISTS





## QUOTE

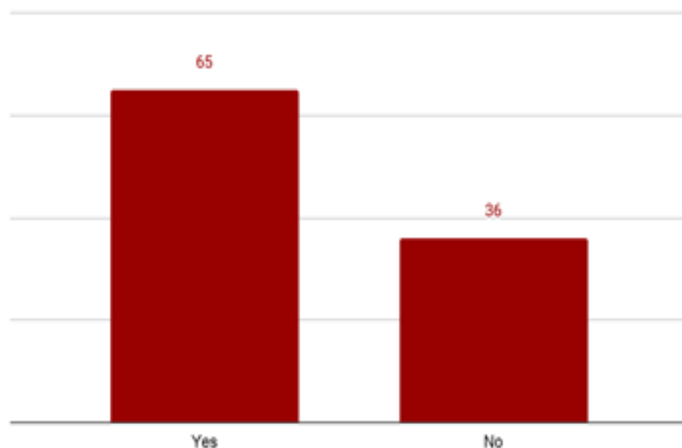
Close to four out of five immigrant or refugee journalists have more than five years of journalism experience.

In order to better recognize the issues that immigrant and refugee journalists face as journalists in Canada, New Canadian Media looked at respondents' past experiences as journalists. An overwhelming majority of respondents (78 out of 101) reported that they have been practicing journalists for at least 5 years. The bulk of immigrant and refugee journalists are well-established in their field.

### More than two-thirds of respondents have lived in Canada for at least 5 years.

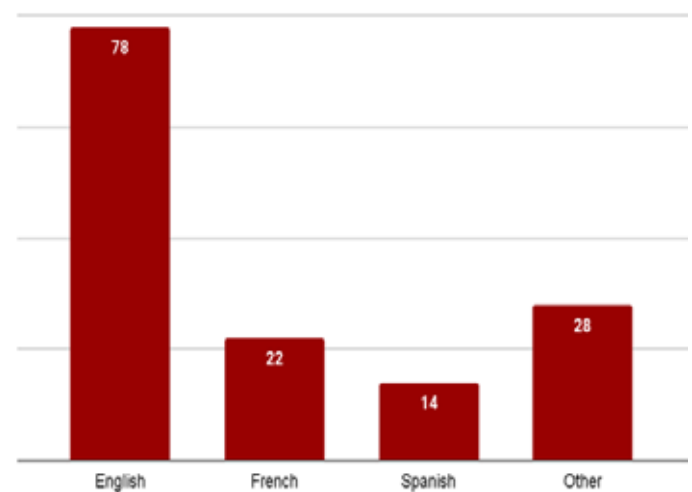
Immigrant and refugee journalists are likely to bring with them experience practicing journalism from their country of origin, New Canadian Media's study found. 65 out of 101 respondents are or were practicing journalists in their country of origin.

Are or were you a practicing journalist in your country of origin?

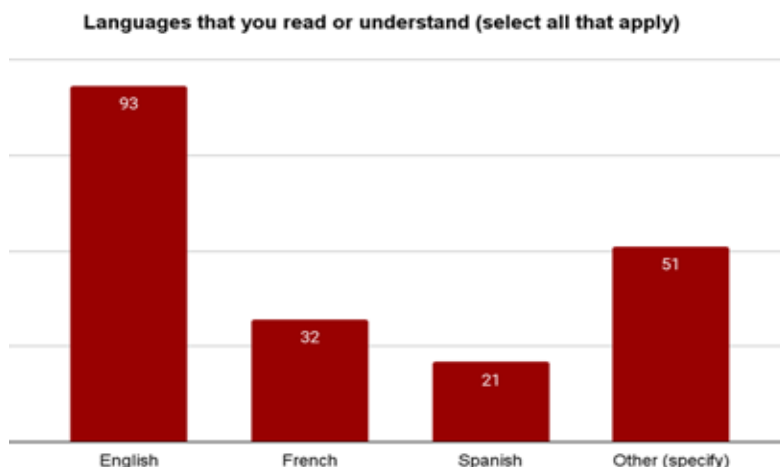


Respondents also reported that their journalistic work was predominantly published in English, with 78 outlining that English was the main language they used for their occupation. Immigrant and refugee journalists also bring with them experience publishing in other languages, with French, Spanish, Hindi, Turkish, and Arabic also prevalent among respondents. A significant number of journalists also reported that they were able to read or understand Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, and Bengali alongside their fluency in English, French, or Spanish.

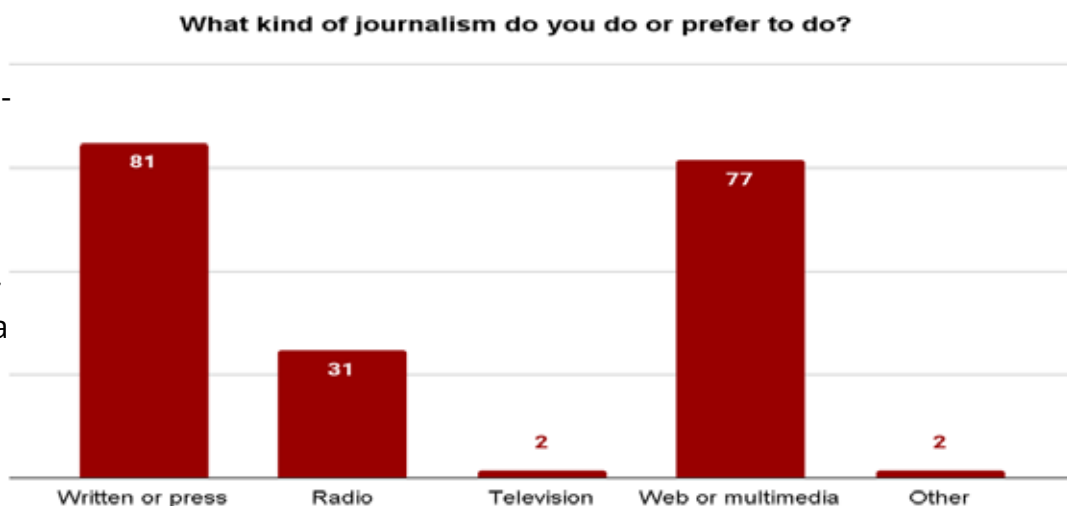
Languages that you write or publish in as a journalist



In 2008, a study by the University of Toronto found that “mainstream Canadian English-language TV news does not necessarily offer racialized immigrant audiences a space through which to see themselves reflected accurately as part of Canada’s rich social life”. Immigrant and refugee journalists are uniquely equipped to bridge this gap between immigrant audiences and the mainstream media.



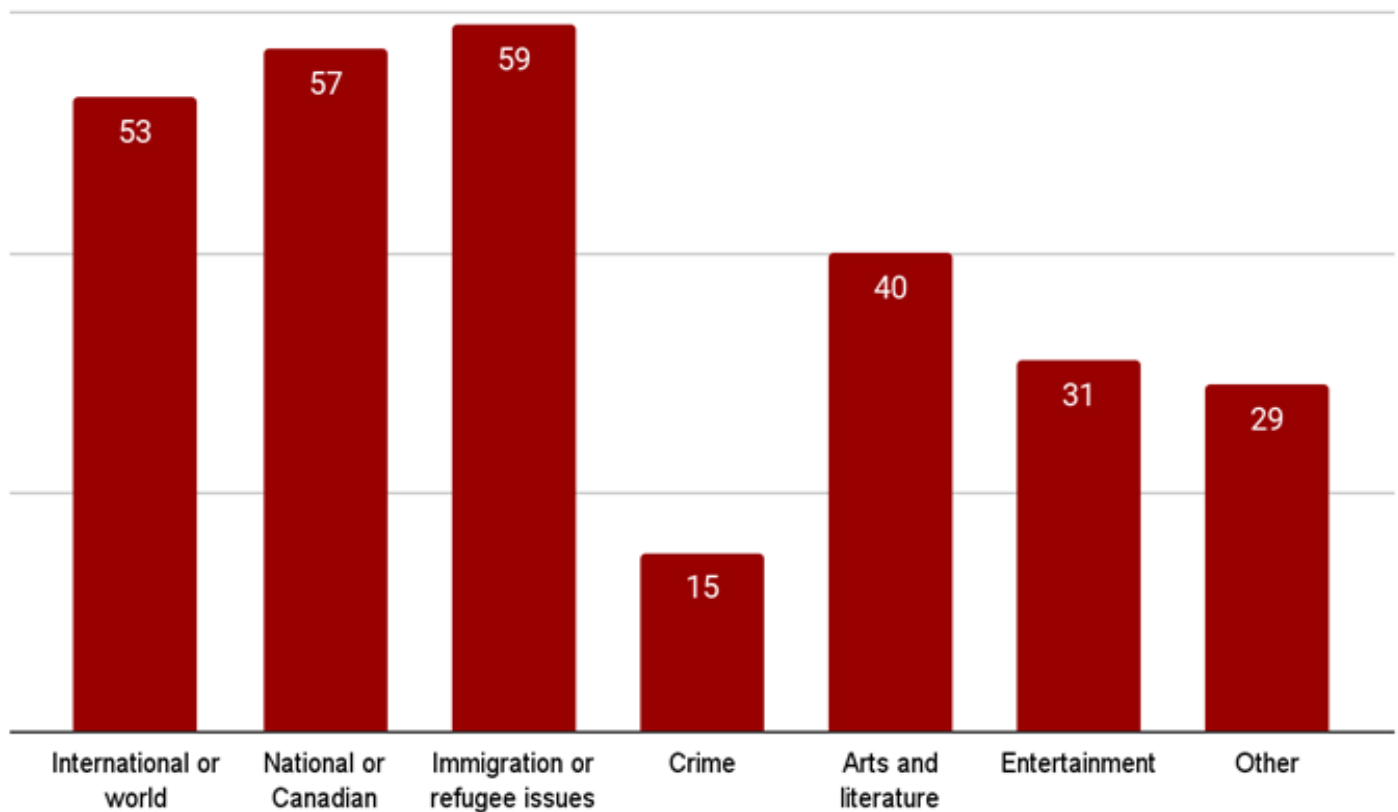
Our survey also found that respondents predominantly prefer to take on journalism in the form of ‘written or press’ and ‘web or multimedia’. This is in line with general media trends in Canada: eight out of ten Canadians consume either print or digital news content in a given week.





Immigrant and refugee journalists cover issues that immigrant audiences care about, such as international or world news

### Which beats or issues do you tend to cover?



Immigrant audiences in Canada are generally **unconvinced** that mainstream media outlets are geared towards their interests, with audiences emphasizing that “they would like to see more international news coverage and more balanced representations of racialized groups in the media”. Our study found that immigrant and refugee journalists generally cover ‘immigration or refugee issues’ and ‘international or world’ news; these journalists are arguably prepared to take on topics that are of interest to immigrant audiences.

## PART 3: RESPONDENTS' EXPERIENCES IN CANADA AND PERSPECTIVE ON CANADIAN MEDIA INDUSTRY

Less than one-third of immigrant and refugee journalists are employed in the Canadian media industry, despite the fact that the overwhelming majority of immigrant and refugee journalists want to work in journalism

In our survey, New Canadian Media found that only 29 respondents were currently employed in the Canadian media industry. 39 respondents reported working as freelancers.

According to Statistics Canada's Labour Force survey, freelance work has become more prevalent in the journalism industry. Freelancers account for roughly 17% of Canadian journalists. Among immigrant and refugee journalists, our study found that this figure is significantly higher. Whether this figure is further evidence of a growing trend in the media industry or a reflection of the difficulty of immigrant and refugee journalists in breaking into Canadian news-rooms is beyond the scope of this study. It is, however, widely understood that visible minorities are **disproportionately underrepresented** in Canadian newsrooms due to a lack of official recognition of qualifications gained outside of Canada, networking barriers, and reluctance on the part of visible minorities to apply for news-room jobs due to fears of harassment by co-workers or affiliates.

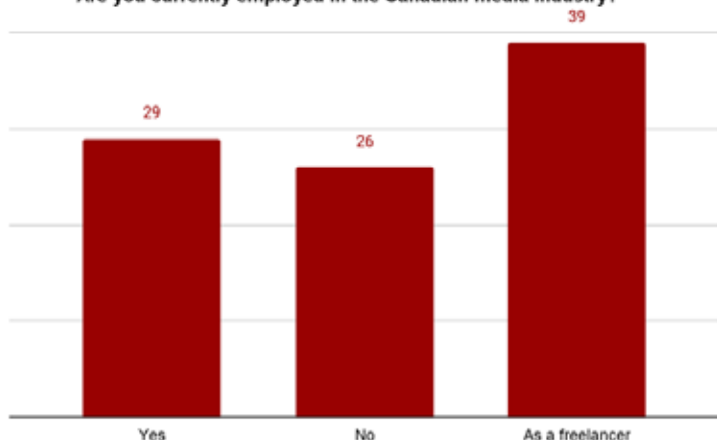


It is clear, however, that immigrant and refugee journalists are interested in continuing their work in Canada, as our survey found that 88 respondents hoped to practice their profession.

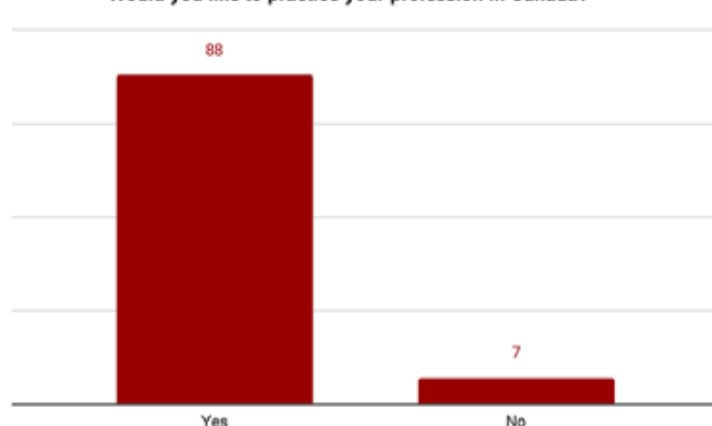
### Language has not been a barrier to employment for immigrant journalists

Most immigrant journalists surveyed did not believe that language was a barrier to finding employment in Canada. Of the 85 immigrant journalists who took part in our survey, only 16 saw language as an issue. However, of the 16 refugee journalists surveyed, 13 responded that language was a barrier to finding employment.

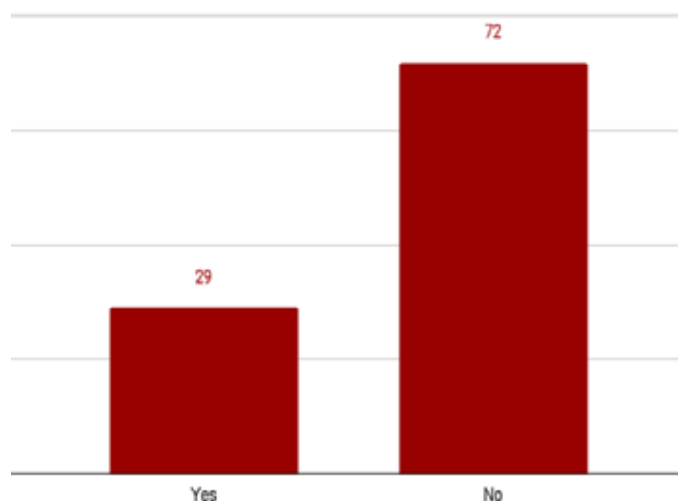
Are you currently employed in the Canadian media industry?



Would you like to practice your profession in Canada?



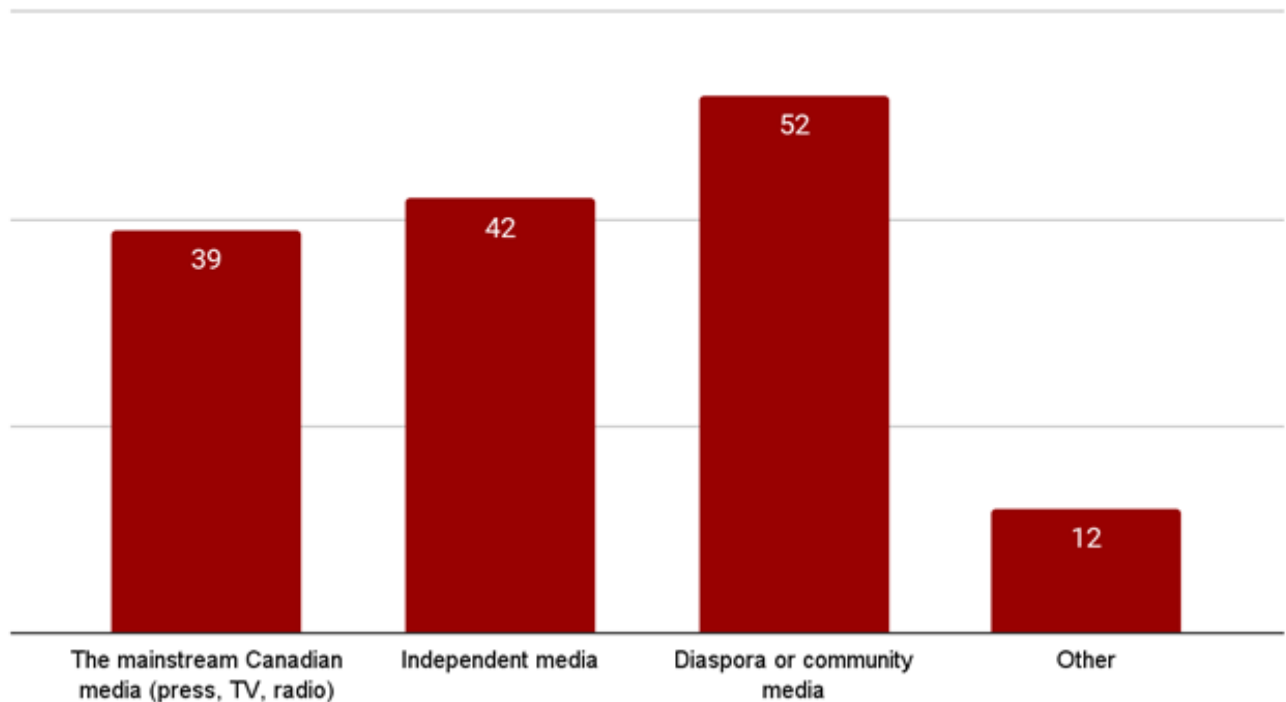
Has language been a barrier to finding employment in Canada?



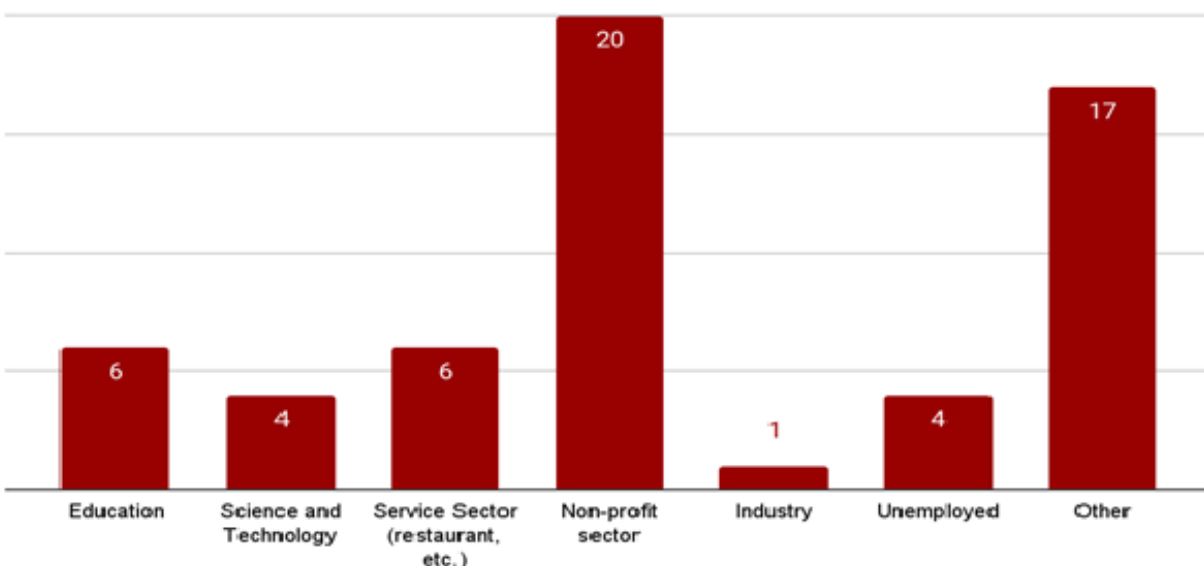
## Immigrant and refugee journalists have published in or contributed to a variety of Canadian media, but diaspora or community media is the most prevalent.

According to our survey results, Immigrant and refugee journalists are more likely to be published or contribute to diaspora or community media than any other form of media in Canada. However, the number of respondents who have also been published or contributed to mainstream Canadian media was also a considerable figure, with 39 out of 101 respondents stating that they have been published in traditional media.

### **What types of media outlets have you published in, or contributed to in Canada?**



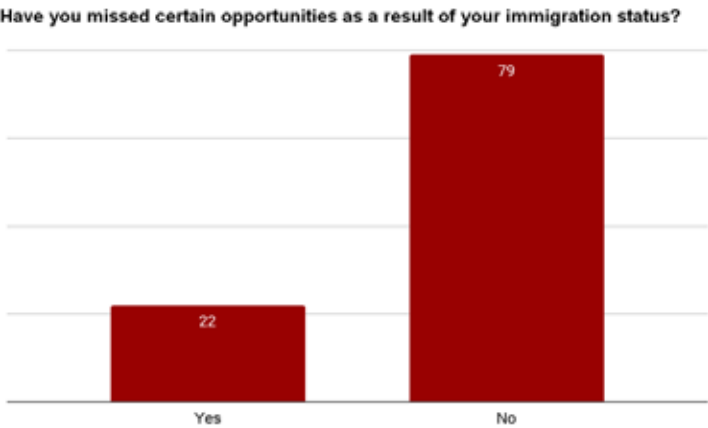
### **If not, in which sector or sectors are you currently working?**





44 out of 90 respondents also reported that they had been published or contributed to esteemed international media outlets outside of Canada. This outlines that a significant number of immigrant and refugee journalists have experience working with well-established media outlets.

As our survey indicated, 65 immigrant or refugee journalists out of 101 either were not employed in the media industry or worked as freelancers. Of these journalists, it is clear that they are employed in a variety of different industries. The non-profit sector was the most popular sector for unemployed and underemployed journalists, with many also indicating that they work in a variety of other industries.

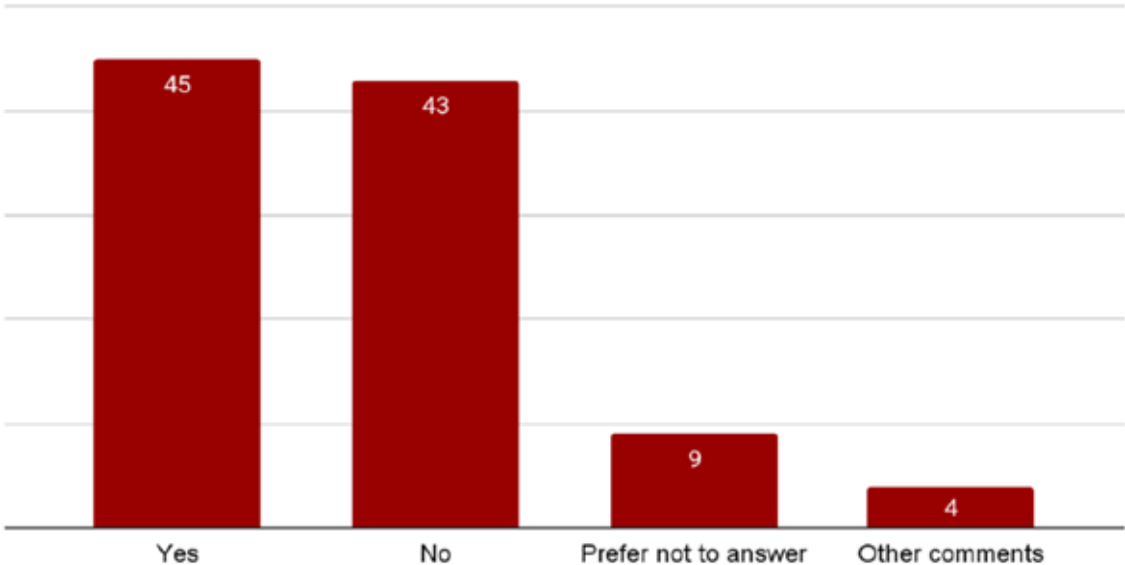


A majority of immigrant and refugee journalists reported having not experienced missing certain opportunities due to their immigrant status, with only 22 out of 101 journalists stating that they did. This is consistent between both immigrants and refugees.

**49 percent of immigrant and refugee journalists have experienced emotional or psychological difficulties as a result of not being able to practice their profession.**

One striking finding from our survey was that a considerable number of immigrant or refugee journalists (49 percent) reported experiencing emotional or psychological difficulties as a result of not being able to practice their profession.

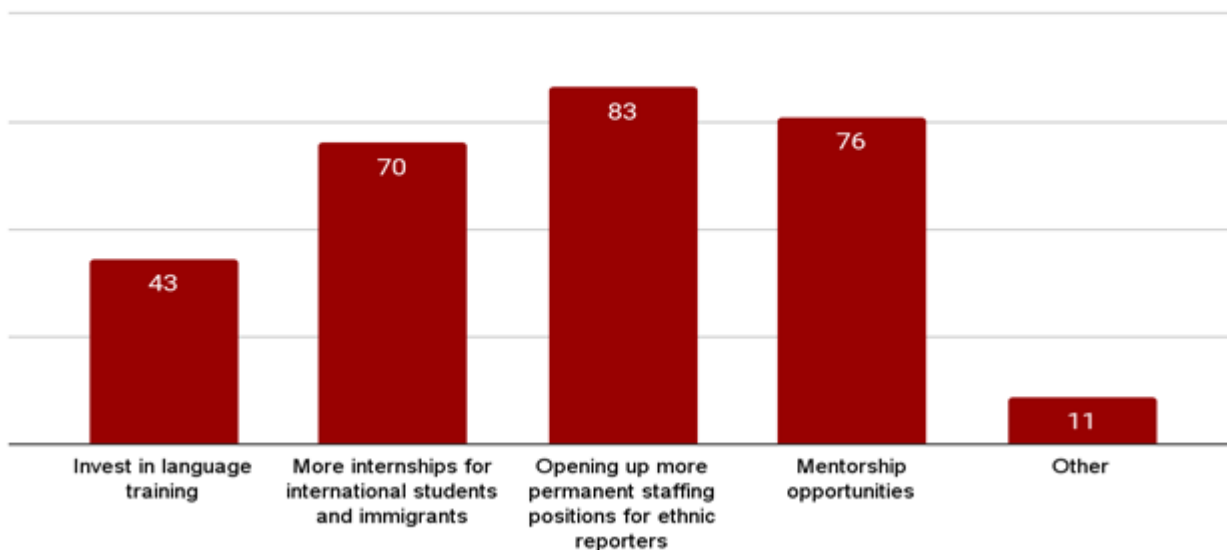
Have you experienced any emotional or psychological difficulties as a result of not being able to practice your profession?



## Immigrant and refugee journalists believe more could be done to better integrate them into the Canadian media landscape.

into the media landscape: Opening up more permanent staffing positions for ethnic reporters (83), mentorship opportunities (76) and more internships for international students and immigrants (70) were the three most popular options amongst respondents.

**What do you think media organisations should be doing to better integrate immigrant journalists into the Canadian media landscape?**

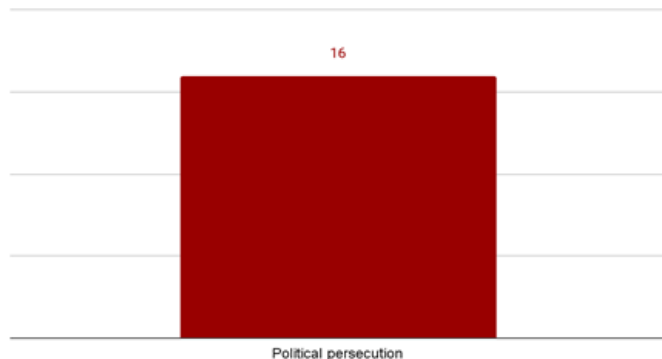


## **PART 4: REFUGEE RESPONSES**

All of the refugee journalists surveyed came to Canada due to political persecution in their country of origin, and most do not receive support from an external organization.

We asked some questions that were specific to refugees to discover their unique circumstances and how that impacts their ability to work in the Canadian media industry.

**As a refugee or asylum seeker, what made you decide to come to Canada?**



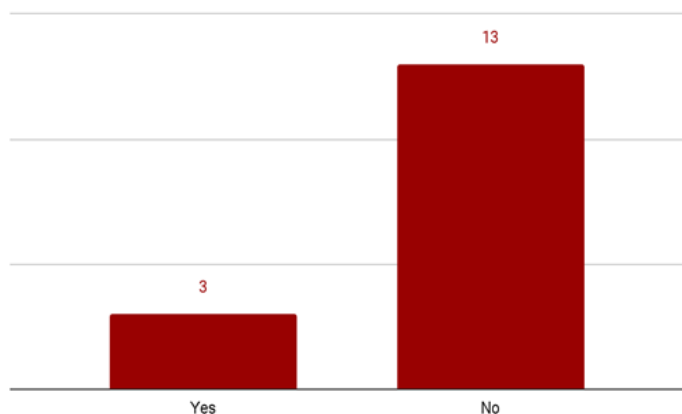
First, all 16 of the refugees who completed our survey came to Canada due to political persecution, and only 3 received support from external organizations or politicians.

Of the 3 who did receive support, all reported that this support came from PEN International. [PEN International](#) is a worldwide association of writers that champions cooperation between writers across the globe and is known for protecting writers at risk in their country of origin.

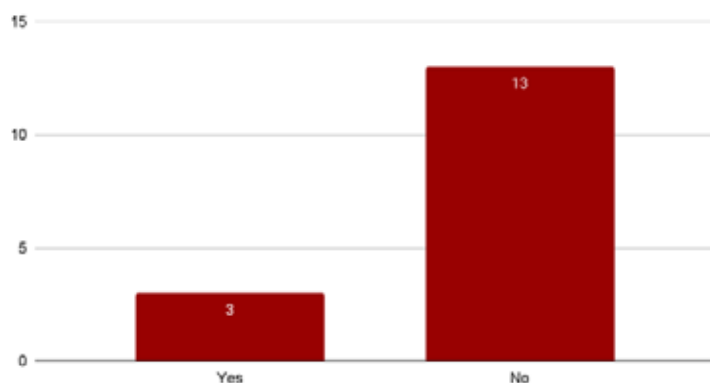
3 out of 16 refugee journalists have security concerns or have been threatened in Canada due to their work. More research will need to be done to assess what causes some refugee journalists to feel threatened within Canada.



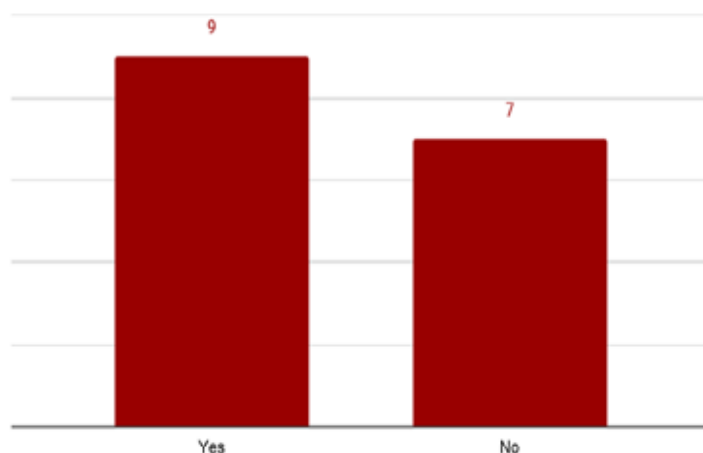
Have you received support from journalist associations, human rights organizations (ex. Amnesty or PEN International) or politicians?



Do you have any security concerns in Canada or have you been threatened in Canada for the work that you do?



In general, do you feel free to express yourself freely on issues to do with your country of origin?



9 out of 16 refugee journalists stated that they felt free to express themselves freely on issues to do with their country of origin.

## PART 5: INTERVIEWS

The interviews conducted by NCM Collective members comprised of 47 journalists (18 refugees; 29 immigrants) complete the picture and echo some of the survey responses. A small selection of interviews are described in this section serve to illustrate some of the key themes mentioned above.

### Jobs and finances

Over half of the interviewees reported experiencing economic and financial difficulties in Canada. Having struggled to break into the Canadian media industry, many have opted for low-wage jobs in other sectors. A number of interviewees mentioned the stress that comes with being a freelancer in the gig economy.

"I lost my original job as a writer and journalist," says AM, a refugee journalist, poet, and novelist from Syria. <sup>3</sup> Working eight-hour days at a factory in Ontario, AM rarely finds time to write or work on other projects. He expects that he will have to continue working at the factory until retirement. While AM has managed to find work reporting for various media industries during his time in Turkey, finances have always been precarious.



Turkish-Canadian Journalist Arzu Yildiz

<sup>3</sup> AM, Interviewer: Arzu Yildiz



“As a writer and journalist, I was imprisoned as a result of opinion and freedom of expression, and I could not get a suitable or permanent job because of ... political persecution,” says AM. “I never had the money. I was receiving support from my family, with some financial returns from writing.” He stressed that he has not requested nor received welfare from the Canadian government as a refugee.

DO, from Nigeria, says<sup>4</sup> she applied for journalism jobs for two months after arriving in Canada before seeking alternative employment opportunities in other industries. Alongside a part-time job, DO decided to pursue another degree in Canada. She states that her decision to pursue a second degree was partially out of necessity and partially because she felt like what she was currently doing was not “work.” Initially, DO predominantly received rejections for work in journalism. Discouraged, she reworked her resume to remove her previous work experience and started getting interviews for minimum wage jobs in restaurants, call centres, door-to-door marketing, and temp agencies. “This is me taking these jobs out of desperation, having to fund my education ... I had gone through all my savings. This was me being on the verge of being homeless. I have no family here.”

AB, a French photojournalist based in Quebec, counts a number of mainstream media outlets among his clients.<sup>5</sup> He mostly works freelance, which he finds unsustainable over the long run. He says his profession is underpaid and undervalued by the Quebec media, even as he notes that images, as opposed to text and other journalistic content, “take up more and more space in the media.”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> DO, 16 November 2021, Interviewer: Marcus Medford

<sup>5</sup> AB, Interviewer: Marine Caleb

<sup>6</sup> « Ce qui est absolument hallucinant et dont les gens ne se rendent pas compte, c'est que les photos prennent de plus en plus de place dans les médias. »



NCM Reporter Marcus Medford

## Immigration Issues

Immigration issues are a constant source of anxiety mentioned across the interviews. A number of journalists report being demoralised and frustrated by the paperwork involved in applying for work permits or permanent residency status - a process that can often take years, in the best case scenario - so as to be able to land a stable, long-term job.

NA, from Senegal, says her immigration status, as an international student on a temporary permit, has been the main barrier to finding employment and acquiring professional experience in Canada.<sup>7</sup> NA grew up in West Africa and pursued her studies in France before deciding to move to Canada to do another program, a certificate in journalism. Most scholarships and internships were restricted to Canadian citizens or permanent residents.

After graduation, she had some trouble applying for a post-graduate work permit. Her partner was finally able to support her application, but she is still waiting to have her work permit approved. In the meantime, she is unable to plan ahead or find a job she actually wants to do.

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<sup>7</sup> NA, 1 novembre 2021. Interlocutrice : Adèle Surprenant

“After a while it can be demoralising,” says NA. “The smallest change in my personal circumstances would have consequences for my status.”<sup>8</sup>

Along similar lines, DO has struggled with international fees as a student from Nigeria. For her, the financial difficulties and the uncertain job prospects after graduation are the “cost of immigration ... the cost of not being born here.”

AR, a refugee from Nicaragua with over a decade of experience in radio and television journalism, is still waiting for a decision on her asylum application five years after she submitted it to the Canadian government.<sup>9</sup> She feels “trapped in limbo” because her refugee process has taken so much time. She says that she cannot pursue a university education nor plan ahead. A full-time mother and part-time journalist, she has faced enormous difficulties balancing her work and family life.

### Family Separation

Nearly all of the refugee journalists reported being separated from their loved ones at one point or another as a result of Canada’s immigration policies. The highly individualised process of applying for asylum can make it difficult to reunite families -- even when a refugee manages to gain permanent status, sponsoring one’s relatives costs money.

Syrian journalist AM, for example, hasn’t seen his children since 2014, as he could not afford the fees to sponsor them. His relatives live scattered across Scandinavia, the United States, and other countries where they sought asylum. “I did not have enough money to pay the [permanent residence] fees,” he says, “and the government did not accept any appeals regarding this.”

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<sup>8</sup> « Je vais attendre que ma situation (migratoire) se règle. Le moindre changement de ma situation entraîne un changement dans mes papiers. »

<sup>9</sup> AR, 9 November 2021. Interviewer: Isabel Inclan



Iranian human rights activist and journalist HK likewise hasn’t seen her son, arrested by the Iranian government, for years. She complains about the insensitivity of the Canadian government on this issue. “The arrest and detention of my son,” she continues, “make me a helpless and desperate woman who was once a strong and capable woman, but I still know that I must continue, although it is difficult.”

While Venezuelan journalist DA was able to come to Canada with his wife, his mother had to stay behind in Venezuela. She passed away before he could have a chance to say goodbye.<sup>10</sup>

Others, like South Asian refugee journalists LB and KM, share a sense of profound isolation in Canada. “Everything we experience is real, full of pain and cost,” says LB, who lost a good friend who had spent years trying to have her asylum application approved, before finally being able to join him in Canada.

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<sup>10</sup> DA, Interviewer : Arzu Yildiz

## Language Barriers

Language came up frequently as a problem in nearly all of the interviews, especially for refugee journalists.

For AR, a refugee from Nicaragua, language has been the principal barrier to developing her journalism skills in Canada: “I speak English, but I do not reach the level of pronunciation that I require to be able to do the journalism that I did in my country. It is one thing to speak English to work at Walmart and another (...) to work as a journalist.” <sup>11</sup>

“To find the way, you need to know the language of the place you come from,” says MC, a Kurdish journalist who struggles with the official languages of the country he has moved to. “The compass is the language, and for me that compass is still missing.” <sup>12</sup> MC struggles with English, and as a result feels left out of opportunities that might otherwise help him with his career. “I am not aware of any scholarships, funds or projects offered for refugee journalists living in Canada,” he says. “These are circulating as news in certain email groups or websites. But since I don't know the language, I don't know about them.”



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<sup>11</sup> AR, 9 November 2021. Interviewer: Isabel Inclan

<sup>12</sup> MC, Interviewer: Arzu Yildiz

## Cultural Differences

For some journalists, the barriers are also cultural. One journalist, born in South Korea but raised in Canada, characterized the “closed-mindedness” and “cold passive-aggressiveness” of anglophone Canadian culture as deeply problematic, especially when doing interviews or working with editors and publishers. <sup>13</sup>

On the other hand, a number of journalists, especially from Western Europe, mentioned that there is much more openness to diversity and cultural inclusion in Canada than in their home countries. They welcome the fact that the Canadian media has taken important steps in the direction of better representing ethnic and religious minorities.

At least two journalists, however, who have managed to work for the mainstream media, feel they are pigeon-holed into covering certain “ethnic” or “diversity” topics, while not being taken seriously when they attempt to cover issues not related to their own communities.

Senegalese journalist NA, who managed to land a temporary post in Radio-Canada, says that it is simply assumed that she would have a better grasp of racial issues in North America because of her skin colour. Commenting on the paternalism of positive discrimination on the part of employers, she says that “a surplus of good intentions can sometimes create the opposite effect.”

Along similar lines, AB, who is of North African descent, says that he has received more comments about his ethnic origins in Canada than in Europe. “The worst thing is that even when I identify simply as French, it's other people who

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<sup>13</sup> JP. Interviewer : Marine Caleb



constantly remind me that I am brown,” AB says. “It’s a little frustrating.” The tendency to view everything through the prism of ethnic or racial identity can be problematic and cause people to overlook one’s professional background or other dimensions of one’s lived experience.

## Professional Prospects

MH, from Algeria, believes that the problem faced by first-generation immigrant journalists in Canada is less one of racial discrimination or prejudice, but skills mismatch. Having worked for many years as an editor for one of Algeria’s top national dailies, he feels both under- and overqualified for most job offers in Canada.

“I don’t feel like I’ve experienced racism or been discriminated against in my search for employment,” says MH, <sup>14</sup> “but the job offers that are available are either entry-level posts or managerial ones which require an intimate understanding of the Canadian or Quebecois media landscape (which most immigrant journalists cannot have).”

MH arrived in Canada in the hopes of being able to pursue his career as a journalist, but today accepts that doing journalism in this country is, at best, a precarious enterprise.

At least two journalists mentioned the lack of depth and interest in international issues in Canadian mainstream media as discouraging, and contrary to the kind of journalism they would rather do. More than a few, especially European journalists (from France, Spain and Serbia), have returned to their home countries, or are considering doing so to try their luck there.

AB, an established professional photographer says he no longer sees himself staying on in Canada. “I’m in my thirties, and I’ve reached saturation point...”

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<sup>14</sup> MH, 4 novembre 2021. Interlocutrice : Adèle Surprenant

when you are in a country where your career is systematically undervalued, it doesn’t work.” <sup>15</sup>

Locked out of the mainstream media industry, some share the sentiment of being trapped or limited to publishing in diaspora or community newspapers – where jobs are often low-paid and precarious. Many Hispanic and Latin American journalists, in particular, have opted to create their own media outlets. But they have reached a saturation point, says JG, a publisher from Spain. “Because of the journalism crisis, in the Hispanic community there is almost one media per journalist,” he says. <sup>16</sup>



MP, a radio broadcaster from Colombia, feels “dismissed” by the mainstream media in Canada and “segregated in a ghetto”. There is a lack of support for the quality of work that immigrant journalists are capable of doing, she says. <sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> « Je ne me vois pas faire ma vie ici, clairement. J’ai 32 ans et là je suis arrivé à saturation. (...) Quand tu es dans un pays où ton métier est complètement dévalorisé, ça ne va pas. »

<sup>16</sup> JG, 27 October 2021, Interviewee: Isabel Inclan

<sup>17</sup> MP, 4 November 2021. Interviewer: Isabel Inclan

"Mainstream media do not realize that a journalist immigrant has the sense, the memory, the culture and knows what kind of semiotics and codes to refer to what he or she has lived," says MP. "A Canadian journalist who has not lived overseas does not reach that level. That would be a great added value to the newsrooms."

## Emotions

For others, the problems that come with not being able to work in a person's profession of practice are existential. For refugee journalists, in particular, the feeling of being twice reduced to silence, in a country that offers them safety but not purpose, can be all the more painful. In this halfway house, emotions gravitate between gratitude and disappointment, hope and resignation.

Between what they have lived through and the everyday reality of most Canadians who seem rarely interested in what they have to say, the gulf can appear unbridgeable. "I didn't come here to be a millionaire, I came here to feel safe and have my voice heard.



However, I could not find such an opportunity," shares MA, a journalist from Pakistan. While MA has come to accept opportunities for him to pursue journalism are sparse, he is still passionate about the field and would want to remain close by. "Even if we are not given opportunities for journalism, they can provide employment opportunities in various (other non-journalistic) positions." Stressing his love for newspapers, MA says he wouldn't mind working as a cleaner at a printer. "It'll feel good just to be there and smell it." he adds.

Other journalists explain that while they were previously enthusiastic about journalism in their country of origin, the move to Canada and the realities of the job market is perhaps an opportunity to start anew, to move on from their old careers. "When you do this job as a journalist, you idealize a lot of things, you campaign through your profession, you fight for ideals," <sup>18</sup> says MH, the editor from Algeria. "There comes a time to decide whether to remain glued to one's old life or to turn the page. You can't be too attached to your past if you want to build the future ... but you cannot erase the past."

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<sup>18</sup> « Quand on fait ce métier de journaliste, on rentre dans une sorte de vie, on idéalise beaucoup de choses, on milite à travers notre métier, on se bat pour des idéaux, (...) Il y arrive un moment où on se demande si on reste scotché à son ancienne vie ou si on se projette dans cette nouvelle vie qu'on est en train de construire. On ne peut pas être trop attaché à son passé si on veut construire l'avenir ... on n'efface pas le passé. »



## PART 6: RECOMMENDATIONS

Immigrant and refugee journalists believe more could be done to better integrate them into the Canadian media landscape. In our survey, journalists selected a variety of options that would help integrate immigrants and refugees into the media landscape. The three most popular options mentioned by the respondents:

- Opening up more permanent staffing positions for ethnic reporters (83%)
- Mentorship opportunities (76 %)
- More internships geared toward international students and immigrants (70 %)

Some of the journalists mentioned that the Canadian government should invest in concrete financial and language support so as to facilitate their entry into the media industry. Media companies could also open up more permanent positions for first-generation immigrant and refugee journalists.

Finding ways to bridge them into the industry would allow the Canadian media to benefit from their unique perspectives. Immigrant audiences in Canada are generally **unconvinced** that main-stream media outlets are geared towards their interests, with audiences seeking greater representation of racialised groups as well as more international news coverage. Our study found that these are precisely the two main themes that immigrant and refugee journalists tend to cover the most in their reporting.

In other words, they are prepared to take on topics that are of most interest to immigrants who make up an increasingly large share of the Canadian media's target audience.

A couple of journalists also highlighted the importance of investing in Canada's public broadcasting service to devote more space to international coverage. In this way, the CBC/Radio-Canada could, for example, tap into the knowledge and native language skills of refugee and immigrant journalists.

### STORIES

Ethnic media: trusted by community, hobbled by lack of resources

Au Québec, les journalistes immigrants naviguent en eaux troubles

Mainstream media's 'not the only option' for newcomer journalists

From Pakistan to Canada, refugee blogger continues fight for human rights

Twice silenced: refugee journalists in Canada struggle to be heard

Journalistes immigrés au Canada : une double précarité silencieuse

Writer envisions an "oasis of peace" in Sudan

Canada's media industry: 'A heartbreaking feeling'

For immigrant journalists, it's often chasing their passion OR seeking financial security