



## **Inconsistencies in the Public Accounting of Killed Journalists in 2025: A Comparative Analysis of CPJ, UNESCO, and IFJ Materials.**

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(hereinafter – RUJ)

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*This report is based exclusively on publicly available materials from the Committee to Protect Journalists (hereinafter – CPJ), UNESCO, the International Federation of Journalists (hereinafter – IFJ), as well as reports from international news agencies. The report does not rely on confidential sources, internal communications, or information unavailable for external verification.*

### **1. Introduction**

This report is devoted to comparing CPJ's public reporting on killed journalists and media workers in 2025 with open materials of UNESCO, IFJ, and international agencies in a number of cases related to the coverage of the Special Military Operation (SMO). The basis for the analysis was the observed discrepancy between CPJ's overall framework on Ukraine for 2025 and several cases of deaths of Russian journalists and media workers that were recorded and commented on by other international structures.

On February 25, 2026, CPJ reported<sup>1</sup> that 129 journalists and media workers were killed worldwide in 2025, which became the highest figure in the entire period of the organization's observations. In the same report, CPJ stated that four journalists were killed in Ukraine in 2025. In CPJ's public materials, these cases include

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<sup>1</sup> Record number of journalists killed in 2025; Israel responsible for two-thirds of deaths // Committee to protect journalists URL: <https://cpj.org/2026/02/record-number-of-journalists-killed-in-2025-israel-responsible-for-two-thirds-of-deaths/>



Tetyana Kulyk<sup>2</sup>, Olena Hramova<sup>3</sup>, Yevhen Karmazin<sup>4</sup>, and French photojournalist Antoni Lallican<sup>5</sup>.

At the same time, several cases of deaths of Russian journalists and media workers in 2025 are not present in CPJ's open sources. For these cases, there are public statements by IFJ<sup>6</sup> and UNESCO<sup>7</sup>, and in a number of episodes also reports by Reuters<sup>8</sup>. These include Alexander Martemyanov, Alexander Fedorchak, Andrey Panov, Alexander Sirkeli, Anna Prokofieva, and Ivan Zuev.

**The purpose of this report is not to challenge the inclusion of already documented CPJ victims in international records. On the contrary, the task is different: to check how consistently CPJ's public reporting applies its own stated criteria to all comparable cases, regardless of the nationality of the deceased, media affiliation, place of death, and political context.**

This report does not claim the existence of intent or deliberate bias on the part of CPJ as an established fact. However, it records an observable discrepancy between CPJ's published methodology and the publicly visible practice of accounting for a few cases in 2025. Such a discrepancy itself requires public clarification, since CPJ materials are widely used as a reference by international media, human rights organizations, and the expert community.

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<sup>2</sup> Ukrainian journalist Tetyana Kulyk killed by Russian drone in Kyiv region // Committee to protect journalists URL: <https://cpj.org/2025/02/ukrainian-journalist-tetyana-kulyk-killed-by-russian-drone-in-kyiv-region/>

<sup>3</sup> Russian drone attack kills 2 Ukrainian journalists // Committee to protect journalists URL: <https://cpj.org/2025/10/russian-drone-attack-kills-2-ukrainian-journalists/>

<sup>4</sup> Russian drone attack kills 2 Ukrainian journalists // Committee to protect journalists URL: <https://cpj.org/2025/10/russian-drone-attack-kills-2-ukrainian-journalists/>

<sup>5</sup> Russian drone kills French journalist Antoni Lallican in Ukraine // Committee to protect journalists URL: <https://cpj.org/2025/10/russian-drone-kills-french-journalist-antoni-lallican-in-ukraines-donetsk-region/>

<sup>6</sup> IFJ releases final 2025 list of 128 journalists and media workers killed // International Federation of Journalists URL: <https://www.ifj.org/media-centre/news/detail/category/impunity-2025/article/ifj-releases-final-2025-list-of-128-journalists-and-media-workers-killed>

<sup>7</sup> UNESCO Director-General condemns the killing of media workers Alexander Fedorchak, Andrei Panov and Alexander Sirkeli in Ukraine // UNESCO URL: <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/unesco-director-general-condemns-killing-media-workers-alexander-fedorchak-andrei-panov-and>

<sup>8</sup> Russian journalist killed by Ukrainian drone, his media outlet says // Reuters URL: <https://www.reuters.com/business/media-telecom/russian-journalist-killed-by-ukrainian-drone-his-media-outlet-says-2025-10-16/>



## 2. Subject, purpose and scope of the study

**The subject** of this study is the public accounting of killed journalists and media workers in CPJ materials for 2025 in the part related to the SMO, compared with open data from UNESCO, IFJ/EFJ, and international agencies. The study is limited to those cases that have internationally accessible documentation and can be verified through open primary or near-primary sources.

**The purpose** of the study is to determine whether CPJ's public reporting corresponds to the organization's own criteria when considering comparable cases of deaths of journalists and media workers. In other words, the question is not about CPJ's right to its own methodology, but about the consistency and transparency of its application in the public domain.

**The timeframe** of the study covers the period from January 1, 2025, to December 31, 2025. Geographically, the study concerns Ukraine, Russian border regions, and other locations directly related to the coverage of the SMO in 2025.

## 3. Methodology of the study

The report is based exclusively on open sources. The analysis includes:

- CPJ's annual report for 2025;
- CPJ's published methodology and terminological explanations;
- individual CPJ materials on Ukrainian cases included in their database;
- public statements of UNESCO;
- public statements of IFJ;
- Reuters reports on the relevant episodes.

Cases were included in the comparative analysis if they met at least two of the following three criteria: presence of public documentation by IFJ, presence of a reaction or separate mention by UNESCO, presence of a report by an international agency or another open source allowing the basic circumstances of death to be established. This approach does not exclude the existence of other relevant cases but



allows the analysis to focus on episodes that have internationally accessible confirmation.

The authors of the report do not have access to CPJ's internal case review procedure, cannot verify whether individual cases were at a non-public stage of verification, and therefore do not claim intent in each specific discrepancy. The conclusions of this text relate only to observable inconsistencies in public reporting and public visibility of cases.

#### **4. CPJ stated criteria as the basic reference point**

CPJ explicitly states<sup>9</sup> that its database includes journalists and media workers. In the organization's methodological materials, it is also explained that relevant categories include crossfire and combat situations, dangerous assignments, and murders. The category "dangerous assignments" includes not only originally risky editorial tasks but also travel to the place of work and other situations in which violence against a journalist occurs during professional activity.

In practical terms, this means that CPJ's methodology formally allows the inclusion not only of correspondents, cameramen, or photojournalists, but also other media workers if their deaths are directly connected with journalistic activity. That is why this report pays special attention to cases where the status of a media worker was directly recognized by other international organizations.

**The authors deliberately use CPJ's methodology as a basis rather than proposing an external system of evaluation. This is essential: the task is not to impose external standards on CPJ, but to check how CPJ's public reporting corresponds to the criteria formulated by CPJ itself.**

#### **5. CPJ public data on Ukraine in 2025**

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<sup>9</sup> Data Methodology and FAQs // Committee to protect journalists URL: <https://cpj.org/data-methodology/>



In the annual report published on February 25, 2026, CPJ stated<sup>10</sup> that four journalists were killed in Ukraine in 2025. CPJ's public materials on these cases concern Tetiana Kulyk, killed in February 2025 in the Kyiv region<sup>11</sup>; Olena Hramova and Yevhen Karmazin, killed in October 2025 in Kramatorsk<sup>12</sup>; and Anthony Lallikene, killed in October 2025 in the DPR<sup>13</sup>.

This framework does not raise objections as a record of already included victims. However, it acquires interpretative significance, since it forms the picture circulated in the international community of which professional losses are considered obvious and representative during the SMO in 2025. Due to the high level of citation of CPJ reports, such a framework becomes not just a statistical snapshot but part of the international narrative about journalist casualties.

## **6. Comparative analysis of cases not visible in CPJ's public framework**

### **6.1. Alexander Martemyanov**

*On January 6, 2025, IFJ reported<sup>14</sup> that Izvestia freelance correspondent Alexander Martemyanov was killed after a drone strike on a civilian vehicle on the Donetsk–Horlivka highway. Reuters, on January 4, 2025, also reported<sup>15</sup> that Izvestia stated that its correspondent was killed as a result of a Ukrainian drone*

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<sup>10</sup> Record number of journalists killed in 2025; Israel responsible for two-thirds of deaths // Committee to protect journalists URL: <https://cpj.org/2026/02/record-number-of-journalists-killed-in-2025-israel-responsible-for-two-thirds-of-deaths/>

<sup>11</sup> Ukrainian journalist Tetyana Kulyk killed by Russian drone in Kyiv region // Committee to protect journalists URL: <https://cpj.org/2025/02/ukrainian-journalist-tetyana-kulyk-killed-by-russian-drone-in-kyiv-region>

<sup>12</sup> Russian journalist killed by Ukrainian drone, his media outlet says // Reuters URL: <https://www.reuters.com/business/media-telecom/russian-journalist-killed-by-ukrainian-drone-his-media-outlet-says-2025-10-16/>

<sup>13</sup> Russian drone kills French journalist Antoni Lallican in Ukraine // Committee to protect journalists URL: <https://cpj.org/2025/10/russian-drone-kills-french-journalist-antoni-lallican-in-ukraines-donetsk-region/>

<sup>14</sup> Ukraine: Izvestia's correspondent killed by drone attack // International Federation of Journalists URL: <https://www.ifj.org/media-centre/news/detail/category/press-releases/article/ukraine-izvestias-correspondent-killed-by-drone-attack#:~:text=Russian%20state%2Dcontrolled%20newspaper%20Izvestia,occupied%20territory%20in%20eastern%20Ukraine.>

<sup>15</sup> Russia's Izvestia says reporter killed in drone strike in eastern Ukraine // Reuters URL: <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/russias-izvestia-says-reporter-killed-drone-strike-eastern-ukraine-2025-01-04/>



*strike. Thus, the case received at least professional international recognition from IFJ.*

In CPJ's publicly available materials identified in this study, no separate case of Martemyanov was found. The absence of such a case in the open framework does not in itself prove that CPJ did not consider it, but it creates a gap between the publicly visible picture formed by CPJ and the internationally available documentation of the case by other structures.

## **6.2. Alexander Fedorchak**

*On March 27, 2025, UNESCO condemned<sup>16</sup> the killing of journalist Alexander Fedorchak, cameraman Andrey Panov, and media worker Alexander Sirkeli, stating that all three were killed on March 24, 2025, in the Luhansk People's Republic. IFJ also published<sup>17</sup> a separate statement on the deaths of these three members of a media group. In both cases, their deaths were recognized as professionally related to work in a conflict zone.*

The Fedorchak case is of particular importance because it clearly corresponds to the basic category of a killing related to work functions in a conflict zone, and its international documentation is not limited to Russian sources. At the same time, this case is not visible in CPJ's public framework in Ukraine for 2025.

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<sup>16</sup> UNESCO Director-General condemns the killing of media workers Alexander Fedorchak, Andrei Panov and Alexander Sirkeli in Ukraine // UNESCO URL: <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/unesco-director-general-condemns-killing-media-workers-alexander-fedorchak-andrei-panov-and#:~:text=I%20condemn%20the%20killing%20of,the%20protection%20of%20journalists%2C%20media>

<sup>17</sup> Ukraine: Three Russian media workers killed in rocket attack // International Federation of Journalists URL: <https://www.ifj.org/media-centre/news/detail/category/press-releases/article/ukraine-three-russian-media-workers-killed-in-rocket-attack>



### 6.3. Andrey Panov

*Panov, who worked as a cameraman for the Zvezda TV channel, was also killed on March 24, 2025. UNESCO<sup>18</sup> and IFJ<sup>19</sup> considered his death as part of a single strike on a media group. This is important because a cameraman is a classic example of a professional media worker involved in media production and falling under general principles of protection of journalists as civilians.*

The publicly visible absence of this case in CPJ strengthens the question of consistency in applying criteria, especially when compared with cases included by CPJ for the same year. The issue is not identical circumstances, but the need for a clear explanation of why one type of professional death is reflected and another is not.

### 6.4. Alexander Sirkeli

*The case of Alexander Sirkeli, a driver of a film crew, is perhaps the most important for methodological comparison. UNESCO explicitly identified<sup>20</sup> him as a media worker, and IFJ included<sup>21</sup> him in the same block of professional solidarity together with other killed journalists. This case directly tests whether the category “media worker” is applied consistently and equally in all comparable situations.*

Since CPJ’s methodology explicitly states the inclusion of journalists and media workers, the absence of such a case in CPJ’s public framework appears not

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<sup>18</sup> UNESCO Director-General condemns the killing of media workers Alexander Fedorchak, Andrei Panov and Alexander Sirkeli in Ukraine // UNESCO URL: <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/unesco-director-general-condemns-killing-media-workers-alexander-fedorchak-andrei-panov-and-alexander-sirkeli-in-ukraine>

<sup>19</sup> Ukraine: Three Russian media workers killed in rocket attack // International Federation of Journalists URL: <https://www.ifj.org/media-centre/news/detail/category/press-releases/article/ukraine-three-russian-media-workers-killed-in-rocket-attack>

<sup>20</sup> UNESCO Director-General condemns the killing of media workers Alexander Fedorchak, Andrei Panov and Alexander Sirkeli in Ukraine // UNESCO URL: <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/unesco-director-general-condemns-killing-media-workers-alexander-fedorchak-andrei-panov-and-alexander-sirkeli-in-ukraine>

<sup>21</sup> Ukraine: Three Russian media workers killed in rocket attack // International Federation of Journalists URL: <https://www.ifj.org/media-centre/news/detail/category/press-releases/article/ukraine-three-russian-media-workers-killed-in-rocket-attack>



as a minor detail but as an important indication of a discrepancy between the declared standard and public practice. This conclusion does not prove intent but makes it necessary to directly ask CPJ whether the Sirkeli case was considered and on what grounds it did not receive public visibility.

### **6.5. Anna Prokofieva**

*On March 31, 2025, UNESCO published<sup>22</sup> a separate statement on the death of journalist Anna Prokofieva in the Belgorod region on March 26, 2025. IFJ also condemned<sup>23</sup> her death, stating that a Channel One correspondent was killed by a mine explosion near the Ukrainian border, while Reuters reported<sup>24</sup> on the same day the death of a Russian television journalist in the Belgorod region citing Russian state television.*

This case is important because it raises not only the issue of professional status, which was recognized by international organizations, but also possible hidden filters of public visibility: whether the place of death, the border nature of the assignment, or affiliation with a state media outlet affects inclusion. Since CPJ does not explicitly declare such exclusion criteria, the absence of this case in its public framework requires explanation.

### **6.6. Ivan Zuev**

*On October 24, 2025, UNESCO condemned<sup>25</sup> the killing of RIA Novosti correspondent Ivan Zuev, stating that he was killed in a drone attack while working*

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<sup>22</sup> UNESCO Director-General deplores the death of journalist Anna Prokofieva in Russia // UNESCO URL: <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/unesco-director-general-deplores-death-journalist-anna-prokofieva-russia#:~:text=Audrey%20Azoulay%2C%20Director%2DGeneral%20of,western%20Russia%2C%20on%2026%20March.&text=I%20deplore%20the%20death%20of,transparent%20investigation%20into%20the%20circumstances.>

<sup>23</sup> Russia: TV journalist killed by a landmine near Ukrainian border // International Federation of Journalists URL: <https://www.ifj.org/media-centre/news/detail/category/press-releases/article/russia-tv-journalist-killed-by-a-landmine-near-ukrainian-border>

<sup>24</sup> Russian TV journalist killed by landmine near Ukraine border // Reuters URL: <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/russian-tv-journalist-killed-by-landmine-near-ukraine-border-2025-03-26/>

<sup>25</sup> UNESCO Director-General condemns the killing of journalist Ivan Zuev in Ukraine // UNESCO URL: <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/unesco-director-general-condemns-killing-journalist-ivan-zuev-ukraine#:~:text=Press%20release->



*in the Zaporizhzhia region. On October 20, 2025, IFJ also called<sup>26</sup> for an independent investigation, noting that Zuev was killed by a drone and reminding parties to the conflict of their obligation to protect media workers as civilians. This case is also included<sup>27</sup> in IFJ's 2025 list of killed journalists.*

From a professional perspective, this is one of the strongest cases for comparison: it belongs to the second half of 2025, has international recognition, and meets the same basic criteria that CPJ applies to other cases. Nevertheless, it is not visible in CPJ's open reports for 2025, which strengthens the overall question of incompleteness or asymmetry in public accounting.

## 7. Main conclusions

- **Conclusion 1.** CPJ's public information for 2025 does not reflect all cases of deaths of journalists and media workers that have international recognition by other professional organizations.
- **Conclusion 2.** A number of Russian cases recognized by UNESCO and IFJ do not formally contradict CPJ's published methodology, yet they do not receive comparable public visibility in CPJ reporting.
- **Conclusion 3.** The case of Alexander Sirkeli is of particular methodological importance, as it directly tests the consistency of applying the category "media worker."
- **Conclusion 4.** The observed discrepancy may be explained by differences in verification thresholds, non-public review stages, the place of death,

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,UNESCO%20Director%20General%20condemns%20the%20killing%20of%20journalist%20Ivan%20Zuev,region%20C%20Ukraine%20on%202016%20October.&text=I%20condemn%20the%20killing%20of,an%20investigation%20into%20the%20circumstances.

<sup>26</sup> Ukraine: Russian war correspondent killed in Zaporizhzhia region // International Federation of Journalists URL: <https://www.ifj.org/media-centre/news/detail/category/press-releases/article/ukraine-russian-war-correspondent-killed-in-zaporizhzhia-region#:~:text=The%20IFJ%20and%20the%20EFJ,journalists%20must%20never%20go%20unpunished.>

<sup>27</sup> IFJ releases final 2025 list of 128 journalists and media workers killed // International Federation of Journalists URL: <https://www.ifj.org/media-centre/news/detail/category/impunity-2025/article/ifj-releases-final-2025-list-of-128-journalists-and-media-workers-killed>



editorial status, or other factors. However, since these grounds are not clearly explained in CPJ's public reporting, they reduce transparency and reproducibility.

- **Conclusion 5.** The problem identified in this report is not that some victims were included and others were not. The problem is that comparable cases are not reflected in a comparable way. For organizations claiming universal protection of journalists, such consistency is a key criterion of trust.

## **8. Limitations of the analysis**

This report does not replace an international investigation. Its specific task is to compare public reporting and assess its internal consistency and transparency.

## **9. Recommendations**

- Send an official request to CPJ asking whether the cases of Alexander Martemyanov, Alexander Fedorchak, Andrey Panov, Alexander Sirkeli, Anna Prokofyeva, and Ivan Zuev were considered in the preparation of the 2025 annual report.

- Request clarification from CPJ on the grounds on which cases recognized by UNESCO and IFJ did not receive comparable public coverage in its reporting.

- Raise the question with CPJ as to whether factors such as employment by a state or partially state-owned media outlet, the location of death, and the functional role of the deceased within a media organization affect the inclusion of cases involving the deaths and killings of journalists. If such factors do have an impact, they should be clearly and publicly specified. If they do not, then an explanation is even more necessary for the observed asymmetry and apparent double standards.

- Submit this report not only to CPJ, but also to other partner international, journalistic, public, and human rights organizations, as well as media



outlets, as a basis for professional discussion on the minimum necessary common standards for recording the deaths of journalists and media workers in armed conflict zones. Since UNESCO and IFJ have already documented a number of the cases described here, they are natural addressees for discussions on establishing compatible standards of transparency.

## **10. Conclusion**

The key issue of this report is not a dispute over numbers and does not require removing already included victims. The issue is whether all comparable cases are documented consistently, publicly, and according to the same criteria. When such consistency is lacking or not clearly explained, it raises questions not only about one report, but about trust in the international system of documenting threats to journalists as a whole.

For this reason, the focus of professional discussion should be not a general claim of double standards, but the specific gap between CPJ's published methodology and what is observed in public reporting on several cases in 2025.