

Killing and rape of Bulgarian investigative reporter is an 'outrage' – UNESCO chief

The head of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ([UNESCO](#)), has condemned the “brutal” killing of investigative reporter Victoria Marinova, whose body was found on Saturday in the Bulgarian city of Ruse, bearing signs of suffocation and sexual assault.

“Attacks on journalists erode the fundamental human right to freedom of expression and its corollaries, press freedom and free access to information,” said Audrey Azoulay, UNESCO’s Director-General. “Moreover, the use of sexual and physical abuse to silence a woman journalist, is an outrage against the dignity and basic human rights of every woman”.

Ms. Marinova, who was 30, presented a current affairs programme called “Detector”, broadcast by the local, privately-owned television network, *TVN*. According to news reports, it is not yet clear whether her death was directly related to her journalistic work, but national authorities are reportedly carrying out a murder investigation.

Ms. Marinova is the third investigative journalist to be killed in the European Union in the past 12 months. Daphne Caruana Galizia was killed in a car bombing last October in Malta and Jan Kuciak was murdered in Slovakia in February.

Ms. Azoulay urged the authorities to “conduct a thorough investigation into this crime and bring its perpetrators to justice”, noting that “this is essential to defend freedom of expression and freedom of information in Bulgaria and, not least important, to ensure women’s safety, dignity and freedom”.

UNESCO is mandated with monitoring and advocating for the protection of a free press worldwide, including through a [UN Plan of Action](#) to protect journalists and end impunity. In 2017, the agency recorded a total of seven journalists killed in Europe, four of whom were women. This represents the highest number of female reporters killed in single year, since 2006.

The percentage of women media professionals killed worldwide, rose from 4 per cent in 2012 to 14 per cent in 2017.