



POLITIHØGSKOLEN

TORE BJØRGO, GUNNAR THOMASSEN AND JON STRYPE

HARASSMENT AND THREATS TOWARDS POLITICIANS:

A survey of Norwegian parliamentarians, cabinet ministers and executive committee members of political parties and their youth wings

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About the authors and the research assistant

Tore Bjørgo has led this project through his part-time professorship at the Norwegian Police University College. His main position is professor at the University of Oslo and leader of the Center for Research on Extremism (C-REX). In the course of a long career, he has carried out research into a wide range of topics, including political violence and terrorism, right-wing extremism, extremist careers, and prevention. He also led the two previous rounds of this survey in 2013 and 2017.

Gunnar Thomassen is a political scientist and Associate Professor at the Research Department of the Norwegian Police University College. His work in the field of police research includes ‘police accountability’, ‘police corruption’, ‘police recruitment’, ‘trust and legitimacy of the police’ and ‘arming of the police’. He has contributed to all the phases of this project and has been particularly responsible for analysis and reporting of the survey findings.

Jon Strype has a background in psychology, psychometrics and statistics and has been an Associate Professor at the Research Department of the Norwegian Police University College for many years. Jon Strype is currently attached to the Institute of Psychology at Oslo New University College. He has contributed to all parts of the project and has been in charge of for the design of the web-based questionnaire and the implementation of the data collection.

Halvor Hegna Ingvaldsen has been the project’s research assistant. He has contributed to several phases of the work, in particular the facilitation of the data collection. In parallel with his work on the project he also completed his MA in criminology at the University of Oslo.

Cover photo: Jon Strype

1. Introduction

It is increasingly recognised that threats and harassment directed at politicians and political commentators not only create fear and insecurity for those exposed to them, but that they also constitute a threat to democratic processes and participation in political life. We are learning more about how politicians at all levels experience undue approaches in the form of intimidation and harassment, but also in some cases serious threats of themselves or their families being killed or harmed. For a considerable proportion of those at the receiving end of such threats and hate speech this has consequences for both their private and political lives. It can for example result in a reluctance to comment on or engage with controversial issues, or that they consider quitting politics altogether.

Part of this backdrop is that threats against politicians are not always empty words. The most extreme example of this was the terrorist attacks on the government quarter and the young Labour Party activists at Utøya ten years ago. That was an attack against Norwegian democracy, but it was also particularly directed towards the Labour Party (Arbeiderpartiet) and its youth wing. During the 2021 parliamentary election campaign several politicians representing Arbeiderpartiet and its youth wing were physically attacked. We also know, however, that threats and harassment affect politicians from all political parties and at all levels, from cabinet ministers to elected local councillors.

In Norway the Police Security Service (PST) is responsible for ensuring the safety of cabinet ministers and parliamentarians (as well as the Royal Family and Supreme Court judges), often referred to as “government officials”. In order to achieve a broader knowledge base for threat analysis and safety guidance for top politicians, the PST has towards the end of the past three parliamentary terms given the Norwegian Police University College the task of carrying out surveys in order to map the politicians’ own experiences of threats and

harassment, the impact of these for their political activity and private life, and how they have experienced the follow-up.

The surveys were previously carried out in 2013 and 2017 among parliamentarians and cabinet ministers. In this, third, study, the scope was widened to also include members of the executive committees of the youth wings of political parties. To cover the whole field in a more holistic way, the research group chose to include the members of the executive committees of both the youth wings and the mother parties that were represented in the Norwegian parliament in the survey. In some context we will use “national politicians” as a collective term for executive committee members of both mother parties and their youth wings, as well as for parliamentarians and cabinet ministers. Some national politicians have several roles in that they are both members of their parties’ executive committee, elected parliamentarians, and cabinet ministers. If they received several questionnaires based on their various roles, they were asked to only complete one of them.

The reason for including the executive committees of the youth wings in the survey was that both the security services and the general public had learnt that a large number of the members of the Labour Party youth wing (AUF), among them several survivors of the Utøya massacre, have been subjected to serious harassment and threats¹ – often with references like “pity Breivik missed” and such like. This resulted for example in that the police, the National Criminal Investigation Service (Kripos) and the PST carried out their own mapping (see below), and that the Director of Public Prosecution ordered a centralised investigation of crime against members of the youth wing executive committees.² Ahead of the 2021 election campaign the police and the PST made a considerable effort to help ensure a safe and secure election and an open social debate, with

1 This was for example put on the agenda through a major feature article in A-magasinet on 19 July 2019 about how Utøya survivors were subjected to serious harassment and death threats. <https://www.aftenposten.no/amagasinet/i/Eon852/de-overlevde-utoeya-naa-lever-de-med-drapstrusler>

2 Letter from the DPP to the PST, all chief constables, all public prosecutor offices, PØD and Kripos, dated 29 May 2019.

particular emphasis on the prevention and follow-up of threats to politicians in general and the young political activists in particular.³ We will come back to this in our report's conclusion.

In parallel with this study aimed at national politicians, the Center for Research on Extremism (C-REX) in collaboration with the Telemark Research Institute, recently carried out a survey of elected local councillors at the request of the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development. One part of the survey deals with "Norwegian local councillors' experiences of threats, hate speech and unpleasant approaches" (Jupskås 2021),⁴ and contains many of the same questions which we used in the survey of national politicians. This provides us with some comparable data between the experiences of politicians both at a national and local level.

In addition, we have been given permission to use data from mapping carried out by the police of hate speech and threats against politicians.⁵ This was mainly based on reported incidents (or those otherwise logged in police registers) – a total of 51 cases linked to speech or action directed at politicians and youth activists during the period 20.10.2017 to 20.10.2018. This is a different type of data from what we get from our own survey. Each of the two data collection methods captures incidents which the other does not, and they therefore complement each other without being directly comparable. There is reason to believe that the police study in particular captures the more serious threat incidents, but not the range of hate campaigns and harassment found in our survey.

The different mappings provide interesting opportunities for comparative analysis along several dimensions, both in terms of development over

3 <https://www.nrk.no/tromsogfinnmark/pst-bistar-ungdomspolitikere-gjennom-valgkampen---ungdom-ned-til-13-ar-far-store-mengder-hets-1.15619199>

4 The data and analysis of Anders Ravik Jupskås (2021) have been reworked in chapter 8 on hate speech and threats in the report of Bradtzæg, Magnussen, Vike, Heian, Kvernenes, Jupskås and Ruud (published 2022).

5 The report "Kartlegging av hatefulle ytringer og trusler mot politikere: Et samarbeid mellom Politiet, Kripos og PST" (dated 4 February 2019) is not available to the public, but we have been given permission to use some data from the report.

time (using data from 2013, 2017 and 2021 with parliamentarians and cabinet ministers), and across different political parties and different categories of national and local politicians. This report will mainly analyse the data from the surveys of national politicians; however, in the discussion of our findings we will also include some comparable data and findings from the survey of local politicians and the mapping by the police where this is interesting and relevant.

Our survey has several aims. The first is to gain an updated insight into: the categories of politicians that are most frequently subjected to various types of incidents; how serious, wide-ranging and frequent such threatening incidents are; and the impact of these incidents for the politicians themselves. We now have a broader database than before in that we have now data covering several categories of politicians.

The second aim is to investigate whether there have been significant changes between the three data collections in 2013, 2017 and 2021. Is the development negative or positive, and how? This time we have more measurement points than previously, which gives us a better base for saying something about trends. The survey is based on the politicians' own experiences of these various incidents, but it also attempts to gain insight into the motivation and inducement believed by politicians to underlie the incidents.

The third aim is more practical: to give PST a broader knowledge base which can be used for risk analysis and security guidance for government officials and other politicians.

A fourth aim is to be able to use these various data sources for research into threats against democracy and extremism directed towards authorities and politicians. One of us (Bjørge) leads an international research collaboration on "Anti-Government Extremism" which will lead to a special edition in the journal *Perspectives in Terrorism* on this thematic towards the end of 2022, and where results from our study will be one of the contributions.

2. Method

As previously mentioned, this study is the third mapping survey of threats and threatening approaches to politicians. The first survey was carried out in 2013 (Bjelland and Bjørgo, 2014), and a subsequent equivalent study was carried out in 2017 (Bjørgo and Silkoset, 2017). This year's study is a direct follow-up of the two previous ones. All the surveys have been carried out by the Norwegian Police University College at the request of the Norwegian Police Security Service (PST). As before, the aim of this year's survey is to map threats and threatening approaches to Norwegian politicians, and to describe the development of such approaches over time. As with the earlier surveys, this one is directed at cabinet ministers and parliamentarians. This year we have, as already mentioned, also included executive committee members of political parties and their youth wings.

About the survey

As in previous years, the mapping study was carried out as a survey. The questionnaire was sent out to all cabinet ministers, parliamentarians and executive committee members of political parties and their youth wings. Cabinet ministers were given paper copies of the questionnaire. For the other survey groups we used web-based questionnaires which were created and distributed with the aid of the survey tool, Surveyxact. The invitations to participate in the web-based survey were sent out by email¹.

The project was presented to the officer responsible for GDPR at the Norwegian Police University College and the treatment of personal data was assessed by the Data Protection Official (NSD: the Norwegian Centre for Research Data). NSD's assessment was that the treatment of personal data, as described in a notification form to the NSD, was in line with Norwegian privacy and data protection legislation and GDPR.

In order to secure the best possible response to the survey, information about the survey was sent out from the Director of the Norwegian parliament and the Office of the Prime Minister. We also asked the party secretaries of the political parties and their youth wings to send out prior information to their respective executive committee members.

The electronic questionnaires were sent out in February and March 2021 and followed up by three reminders. The paper questionnaire to cabinet ministers were distributed in the same period. They were followed up by one reminder.

Table 1. Number of sent questionnaires and response in actual numbers and percentages

Respondent groups	Invitations sent out	Questionnaires with data received	Response percentage
Parliament	169	80	47
The cabinet	20	9	45
Party executive committees	96	55	57
Youth wing executive committees	102	61	60
All groups	387	205	53

As seen in Table 1, the total response rate was 53%; however, there was some variation in the response rate between the groups in the survey.

Representativeness

The number of executive committee members varies from party to party, but all the parties are represented by both mother party and youth wing. In terms of representativeness we are focussing on parliament, because the parliamentarians constitute a big enough group to enable us to assess representativeness. A comparison between gross and net sample for party membership and gender shows a somewhat skewed distribution in the data from 2021. As far as gender distribution in the Norwegian parliament is concerned,

just over 50% of the sample are women. That means a certain over-representation compared to the actual distribution in parliament during the same period (40.8 per cent women). We need to take into consideration that this distortion may have a slight impact on some estimates. In terms of party membership, the sample is approximately proportional to the actual distribution.

Topics, question formulation and response format

One important aim of the study was to compare findings with previous studies. In order to achieve this it was necessary to carry on with the same question formulation and response formats in the survey. We have done this as far as possible and appropriate. There is an obvious advantage in being able to compare figures from one study to the next. However, there are also some disadvantages. It is difficult to change any weaknesses uncovered in questions and/or response alternatives in a previous survey without losing the opportunity to compare. In our study this year a few questions were removed because they had proved to yield a poorer return than expected in previous surveys. We also changed the positioning of some follow-up questions because previous paper formats could not be transferred to the web-based survey. We felt that this change would not create a different understanding of the questionnaire, and therefore there was no reason to believe that it would undermine the opportunity to provide a comparison with previous surveys.

The questionnaire consisted of the following main sections:

1. Mapping of unwanted incidents (type of incident, frequency, duration, incident location, etc.);
2. Presumed motives and objectives;
3. Reactions and consequences;
4. Reporting and other measures;
5. Unwanted attention on social media; and
6. Background information (gender, party membership, political role, etc.).

In the main the questionnaire asked the same questions to parliamentarians, cabinet ministers and executive committee members. The whole questionnaire is shown in Appendix 1.

Analysis

The data have been analysed on the basis of the analyses from previous surveys. Where possible we have made comparisons with previous findings. The inclusion of data mapping unwanted and threatening incidents among executive committee members in the political parties and their youth wings are new this year.

3. Results

In this chapter we will analyse the results of the 2021 survey and compare the responses with data from the equivalent surveys in 2013 and 2017 where it is relevant to look at changes over time. In some areas we will also compare our data on national politicians with data from the survey of local politicians (Jupskås 2021) and the police mapping survey of hate speech and threats to politicians (the Police, the PST and the National Criminal Investigation Service (Kripas) 2018).

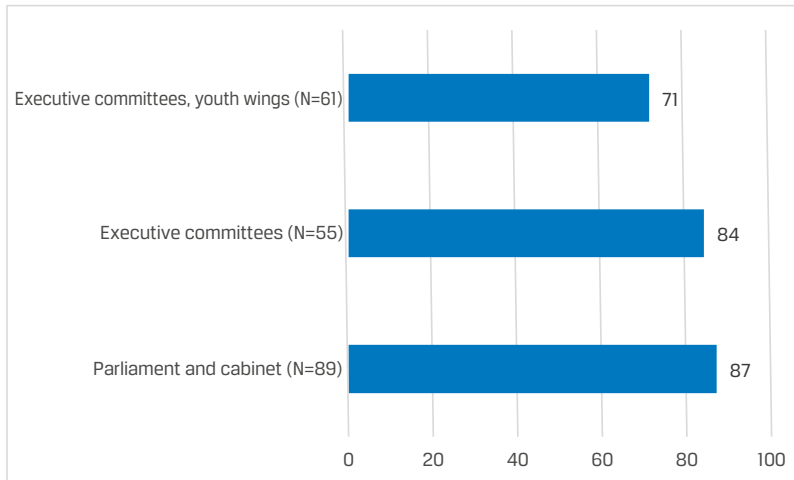
Unwanted incidents

Frequency and types of unwanted incidents

As in the previous surveys the respondents were initially asked whether they had been exposed to particular incidents which could be presumed to be linked to their political activity during their time as parliamentarians, cabinet ministers or executive committee members. Eleven pre-defined incidents of varying degrees of severity were listed. However, before we look in more detail at the individual incidents and the distribution of respondents across them, it is appropriate to look at the proportion that report one or more incidents, regardless of type, within the three respondent groups, i.e. parliamentarians and cabinet ministers, executive committee members (mother parties) and executive committee members (youth wings).

Figure 1 shows that a clear majority within each of the three respondent groups reports one or more unwanted incidents linked to political activity. Parliamentarians and cabinet ministers appear to be most affected. Around 87% of the respondents in this group report one or more incident. The proportion of those affected is somewhat higher for cabinet ministers; however given the low number of respondents in this group it is statistically more meaningful to include

Figure 1. Proportion who report one or more unwanted incidents



them in a group with the parliamentarians. Members of the political party executive committees are next; here 84% report one or more incidents. Executive committee members of the parties' youth wings are slightly less exposed, but even here ca. 71% report one or more unwanted incident linked to political activity. Equivalent data from elected local politicians showed that a somewhat lower proportion (52%) of local politicians had experienced such unwanted incidents, and that politicians in more prominent positions were more exposed (Jupskås 2021). This shows that politicians at all levels are affected, but that the more prominent the position they have in the political hierarchy the more exposed they are to threats, hate speech and troublesome incidents. Politicians who take up controversial cases are also more exposed to intimidation. Although executive committee members of the youth parties appear to be somewhat less exposed (71%), this should be seen on the background of the relatively short political careers of these youth politicians.

The type of incident respondents have been exposed to varies considerably both within and between the different groups. Figure 2 below shows the proportion of national politicians who report a specific incident within each of the three respondent groups. The category which

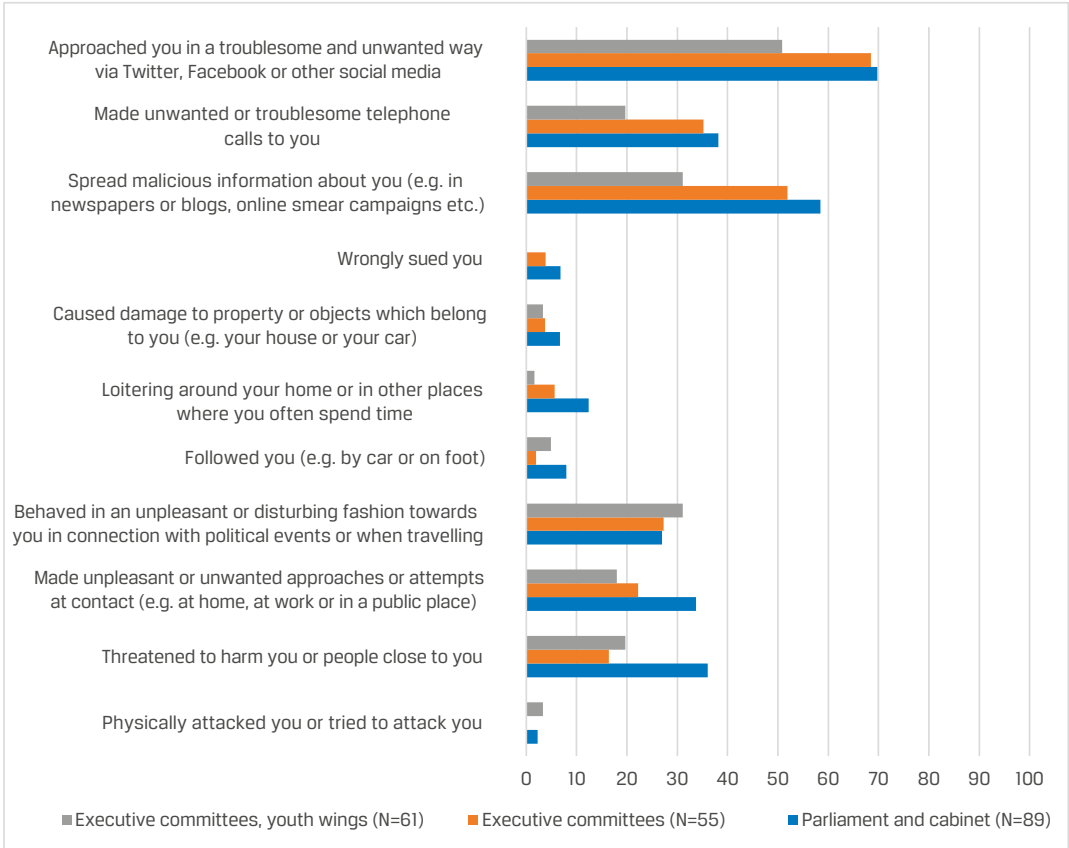
clearly stands out in this connection is troublesome and unwanted incidents via social media such as Facebook and Twitter. A majority within all three groups say that have experienced such approaches. Quite a few have also experienced communication of “malicious information” and “troublesome telephone calls”. Fortunately, not so many have been exposed to the most serious incidents, but even if they are a minority there is still a considerable number who have reported receiving threats of harm to themselves or someone close to them. Among the parliamentarians and cabinet ministers as many as 36% have experienced this. There are very few reports of direct physical attacks in the 2021 survey. However, at the same time it should be emphasised that direct physical attacks must be regarded as very serious incidents.

The various incidents are not equally distributed between the different groups. Parliamentarians and cabinet ministers are most exposed in 9 of the 11 incident categories. They are particularly exposed to threats against themselves and close family members, as well as “troublesome or unwanted approaches or attempts at making contact”.

In terms of physical attacks or attempted physical attacks there is no difference between parliamentarians/cabinet ministers and youth wing executive committee members, but these numbers are very low even if the incidents may be experienced as serious. In one, single area, the youth wing executive committee members report a greater number of incidents than the others, namely experiencing that someone has “acted in a troublesome or disturbing way in connection with political events or travel”. A considerable proportion of cabinet ministers and parliamentarians have also experienced unwanted persons loitering in the vicinity of their homes or equivalent locations.

In addition to making comparisons across different groups it is also relevant and interesting to make comparisons over time. As far as parliamentarians and cabinet ministers are concerned, available data from previous surveys can give us insights into developments over time for this group (Bjelland og Bjørge, 2013; Bjørge og Silkoset, 2017). Figure 3 shows that the proportion reporting a specific

Figure 2. Reported incidents



incident in 2013, 2017 and 2021 respectively. For most types of incidents the trend appears to be stable over time. One important exception is a considerable increase from 24% to 36% in the latest period between 2017 and 2021 in the proportion reporting having been threatened with harm against themselves or someone close to them. On the other hand, there has been a marked decline in the proportion reporting “physical attacks or attempted physical attacks” from 2013 and 2017 to 2021, from ca. 14% to ca. 2% in this period. This is positive; however the relatively small numbers mean that we cannot exclude the possibility of random fluctuation. It is also possible that the respondents in 2013 and 2017 were thinking of

the 22 July attacks, which at the time were more recent. In terms of “troublesome and unwanted incidents through social media”, there is a marked increase over the whole period. The proportion who reported such incidents has increased from just under 40% in 2013 to over 50% in 2017, and to ca. 70% in 2021. A big part of this trend can be put down to an increased presence on social media such as Facebook and Twitter both among politicians and the population as a whole. See Appendix 3 for details in table format.

Unwanted incidents through social media

Figure 2 above showed that troublesome and unwanted incidents through social media are the dominant category in all three respondent groups. Figure 4 below looks more closely at the type of unwanted incidents the respondents have experienced through social media.

Figure 3. Unwanted incidents reported by parliamentarians and cabinet members 2013-2021

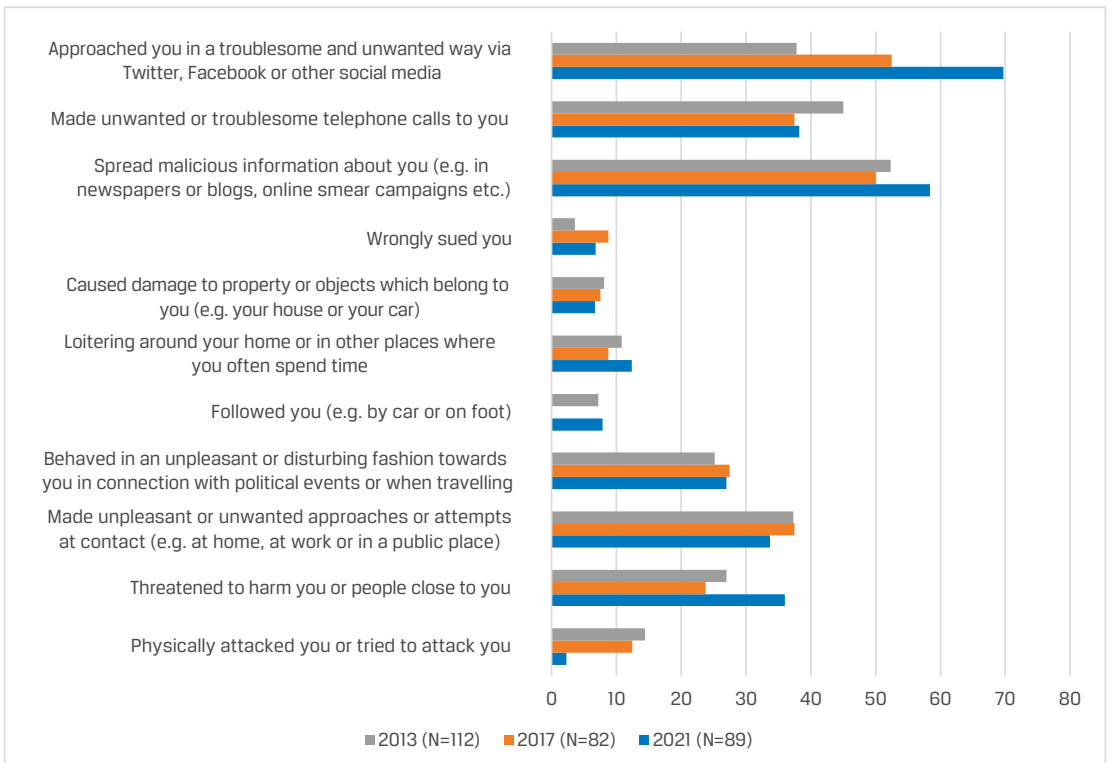
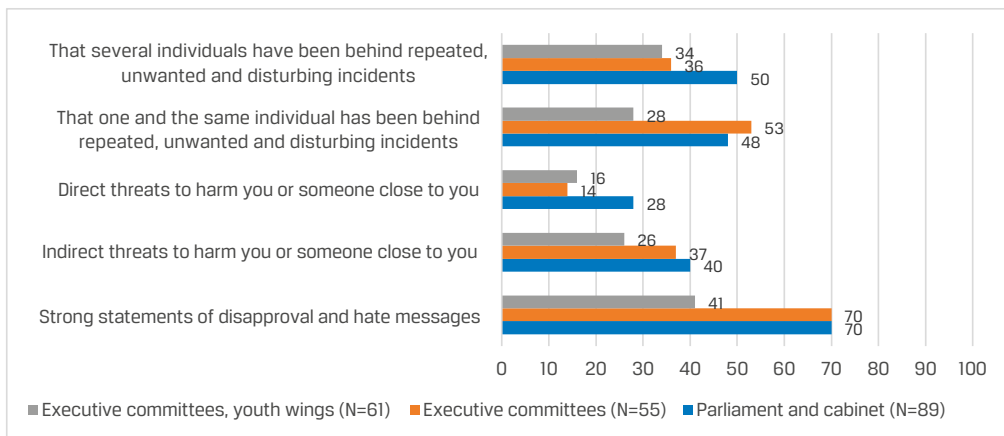


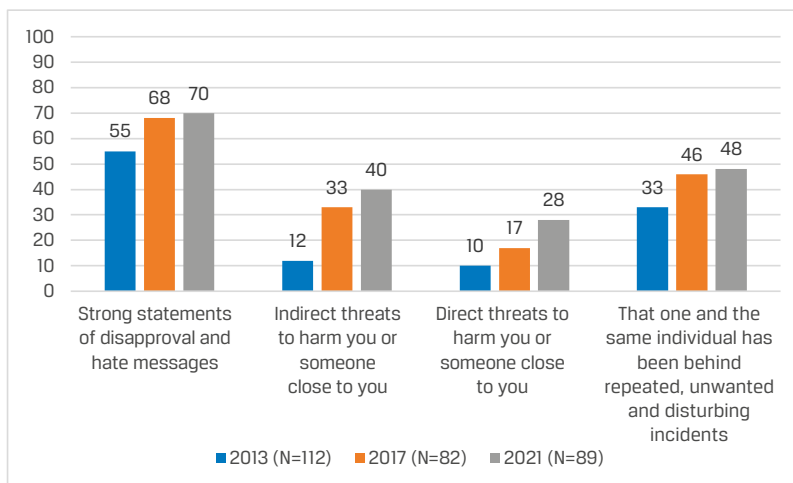
Figure 4. Incidents experienced through social media



The unwanted incidents can be split into two categories, *harassment* and *threats* (Bjørge and Silkoset, 2017: 14). In the first category the most common sub-category in all three groups is “expressions of extreme disapproval and hateful statements”. 70% of the parliamentarians, cabinet ministers and executive committee members report such incidences, while just over 40% of the youth wing executive committee members do so. “Repeated, unwanted and intrusive communications” may come from one, single individual or from several people. Among parliamentarians and cabinet ministers there is no great difference between the two sub-categories (ca. 50%), however among the executive committee members “one and the same person” is the most common (ca. 53%). Among the youth wing executive committee members on the other hand, it is somewhat more common that “many individuals” are involved in the incident (ca. 34%).

In terms of indirect and direct threats via social media about harming politicians or those closest to them, this is not reported with the same frequency as harassment. Indirect threats are the most common in all three respondent groups, and the most common of all among the parliamentarians and cabinet ministers (ca. 40%), followed by executive committee members (ca. 37%) and youth

Figure 5. Incidences experienced on social media 2013-2021



wing executive committee members (ca. 26%). Direct threats to politicians are less reported, however this is still experienced by 28% of parliamentarians and cabinet ministers, while the figure is around 15% for executive committee members both in the mother parties and their youth wings. Among local politicians 5% have experienced threats to harm them or those closest to them (Jupskås 2021).

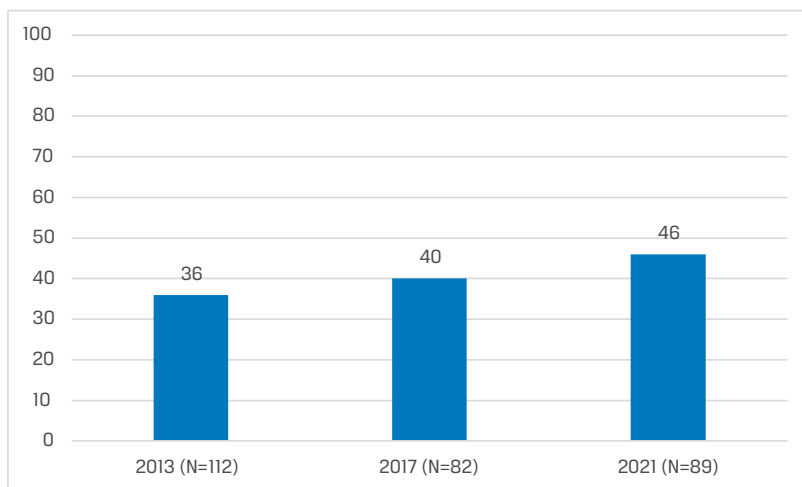
As far as parliamentarians and cabinet ministers are concerned, we have previous comparable data for four of the five categories which dealt with unwanted incidents on social media. Figure 5 below shows the development since 2013.

The figure shows an increase during the period in terms of both threats and harassment on social media, but the relative (and actual) increase is greatest as far as threats are concerned. The proportion who reported indirect threats on social media has increased from ca. 12% in 2013 to ca. 40% in 2021, while the proportion reporting direct threats has increased from ca. 10% to ca. 28% during the same period.

Serious incidents – development over time

Another interesting parameter when it comes to development over time is the seriousness of the incidents. In previous surveys the incidents have been grouped into serious and less serious incidents. The category ‘serious incidents’ included incidents where (1) someone **physically attacked or threatened to attack the respondent**, (2) someone **threatened to harm the respondent or someone else close to them**, (3) someone **caused damaged to their property or personal belongings**, or someone on social media exposed them to (4) **direct threats** or (5) delivered **indirect threats** to harm the respondent or someone close to them. Figure 6 shows the development of the proportion reporting ‘serious incidents’.

Figure 6. The proportion reporting serious incidents 2013-2019



This increase over time represents a very negative trend, where nearly half the parliamentarians and cabinet ministers report experiences of serious incidents.⁶ We will examine in more detail how this development also has negative consequences for the private lives and political work of politicians.

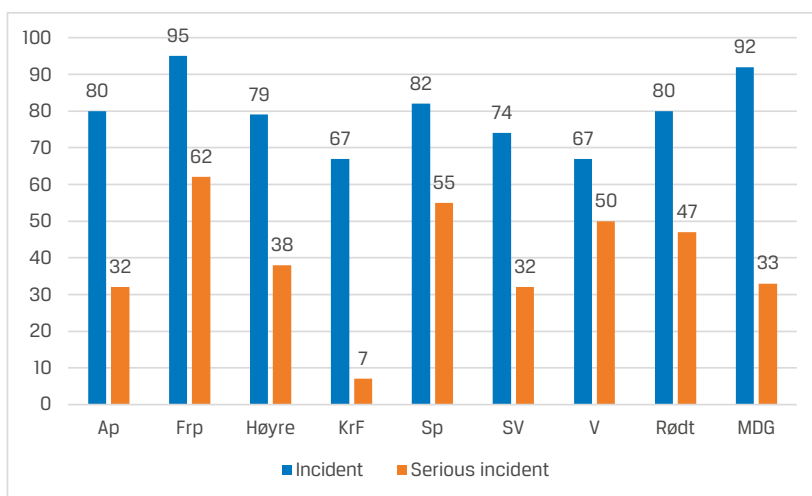
⁶ We need to consider that the response among parliamentarians and cabinet ministers is a little under 50% and we might assume that those who have experienced serious incidents would be slightly more inclined to respond to this survey than those who did not respond. However, we do know from previous surveys that some of those who did not respond to the survey were politicians who were publicly known to have experienced serious threats.

Who is most susceptible?

Party affiliation and exposure

Previous surveys and reports have looked more closely at exposure to unwanted incidents based on party membership (Bjelland og Bjørgo, 2013; Bjørgo and Silkoset, 2017). One of the problems with the inclusion of parliamentarians and cabinet ministers only, is that there are not enough respondents to be able to say anything statistically meaningful about several of the smaller political parties. Including executive committee members, as we have done here, gives us a better statistical basis for a comparison between all the political parties. Figure 8 below shows the proportion reporting one or more incidents within each of the political parties. The proportion reporting serious incidents (see definition above) is also included (red column).

Figure 7. Proportion reporting incidents based on party membership (N=205)



A clear majority within each party reports one or more incidents, but in line with previous surveys the figure shows some variation between the parties.⁷ At the lower end are the Christian Democratic

⁷ The Norwegian party landscape may be described along an axis from the far left to the far right: Red (Rødt), the Socialist Left Party (Sosialistisk Venstreparti, SV), the Labour Party (Arbeiderpartiet,

Party (KrF) and the Liberals (Venstre), where just under 70% report one or more incidents, and at the top end are the Greens (MDG) and the Progress Party (FrP), where more than 90% report unwanted incidents. The other parties, including the large parties like the Conservatives (Høyre) and the Labour Party (Ap), show around 80%. Previous surveys which included only parliamentarians and cabinet ministers also found that the Progress Party (FrP) reported the most unwanted incidents, while the Conservatives and the Labour Party (Ap) reported slightly fewer incidents. Among the smaller parties there has been considerable variation over time, and certain policy issues can make a big difference (Bjørngo and Silkoset, 2017). As far as the rest of the parties are concerned, generally few parliamentarians and cabinet ministers responded and it is therefore difficult to say anything about susceptibility over time.

The picture is more or less the same in terms of *serious incidents*, the Progress Party (FrP) are at the top and the Christian Democratic Party (KrF) at the bottom end. However, a couple of parties stand out in this context. One of them is the Liberals (V), where a relatively low proportion (ca. 67%) responded about incidents in general, while a relatively high proportion (ca. 50%) reported serious incidents. The reverse is true of the Greens (MDG) who are nearly at the top in terms of reporting incidents in general (ca. 92%), but is among the lowest when it comes to more serious incidents (ca. 33%). The same pattern was also found in the survey of threats against local politicians (Jupskås 2021, p. 3).

A police report from 2019 mapping hate speech and threats against politicians provides a slightly different picture of the most susceptible politicians according to party membership in the relevant 12-month-period, but here both the selection of politicians and the incidents are different from our survey. The mapping looks at

Ap), the Greens (Miljøpartiet de grønne, MDG), the Centre Party (Senterpartiet, Sp), the Christian Democratic Party (Kristelig forkeparti, Krf), the Liberals (Venstre, V), the Conservatives (Høyre, H), and the Progress Party (Fremskrittspartiet (FRP). During Winter 2021, when the survey was carried out, the government coalition consisted of the Conservatives (with the Prime Minister), the Liberals and the Christian Democratic party. The Progress Party had left the government coalition one year before.

criminal statements and actions, and comprises parliamentarians and cabinet ministers, local council representatives in three counties and youth wing executive committee members. Here politicians from the Labour Party (Ap) were in a majority as the aggrieved party (22 cases), followed by politicians from the Conservatives (12 cases) and the Progress Party (7 cases). However, the report emphasises that the result is based on a relatively short period of time with a few isolated incidents which may have had a disproportionately big effect on the data. Examples of such incidents are a big article in the colour supplement A-Magasinet on threats against members of the Labour Party's youth wing (AUF) following the 22 July attacks, and (the Progress Party) Sylvi Listhaug's Facebook post claiming that the Labour Party prioritises the rights of terrorists over the security of the nation.⁸ These prompted a large number of hateful Facebook posts, particularly directed against the Labour Party and its youth wing, AUF, in the period that followed.

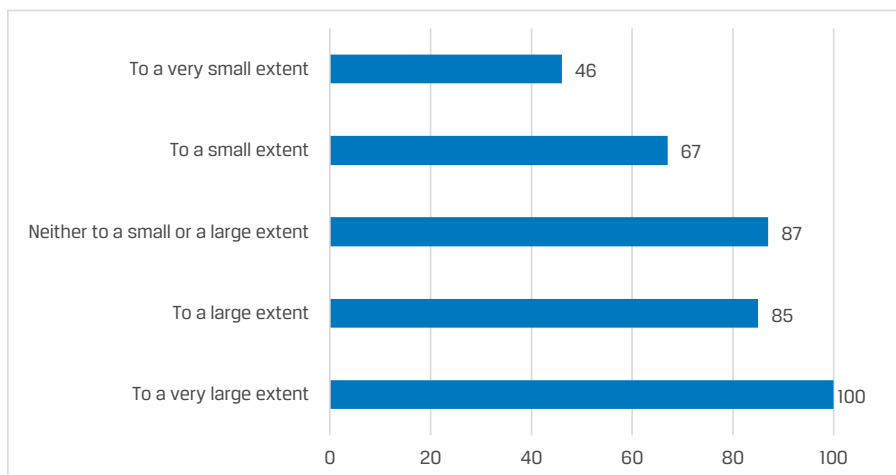
The PST report and events reported in the media raise questions of whether the activists in Ap's youth wing are particularly susceptible. However, the data in this survey do not give us grounds to say whether there is a difference between AUF and the youth wings of other parties. There are so few respondents from each of the youth wings that we are unable to draw any reliable conclusions in this respect. There are for example only six respondents from the AUF executive committee and roughly the same from the other youth wings.

Media exposure and susceptibility

Previous surveys have shown media exposure to be a factor which appears to increase the likelihood of susceptibility to unwanted incidents. In Figure 9 below the respondents are grouped according to their self-reported degree of media exposure. Each group shows the proportion reporting one or more incidents.

⁸ Sylvi Listhaug, representing the Progress Party, had to resign as the Minister of Justice and Public Security due to this Facebook post. In 2021, she became the new leader of the Progress Party.

Figure 8. Self-reported media exposure and susceptibility to unwanted incidents (N=205)



The figure shows a clear connection between experienced media exposure and susceptibility to unwanted incidents. Of those who feel they have a high degree of media exposure, all respond that they have been exposed to one or more unwanted incidents. A lower degree of media exposure means a reduction in the proportion reporting such incidents.

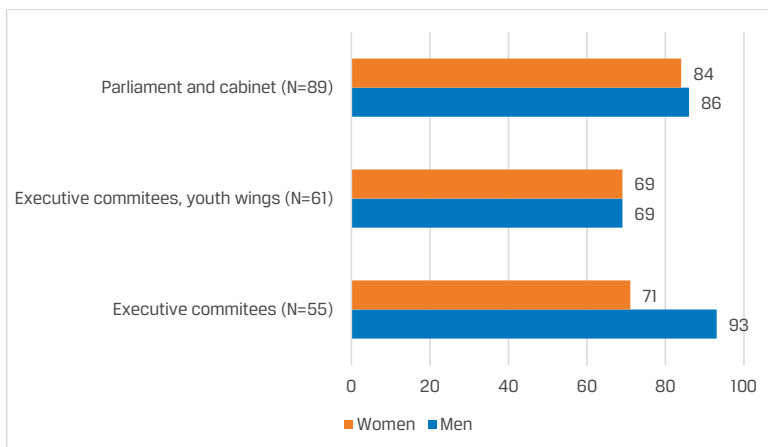
Gender and age

It has been generally thought that female politicians have been particularly susceptible to online harassment.⁹ This is not supported by our data, at least not when it comes to the number of reported incidents generally.

Men appear to be somewhat more susceptible than women to unwanted incidents when we look at the whole sample, however if we look at the three categories (cabinet/parliament, party executive committees and youth wings) separately, we see that the gender difference is primarily found among the executive committee members of the parties, where men are clearly more susceptible.

9 Jfr. Amnesty International (2018). Kvinnelige politikeres erfaringer med netthets. (Report dated 3 July 2018). https://amnesty.no/sites/default/files/3688/Kvinnelige%20politikere_RAPPORT.pdf

Figure 9. Gender and susceptibility to unwanted incidents



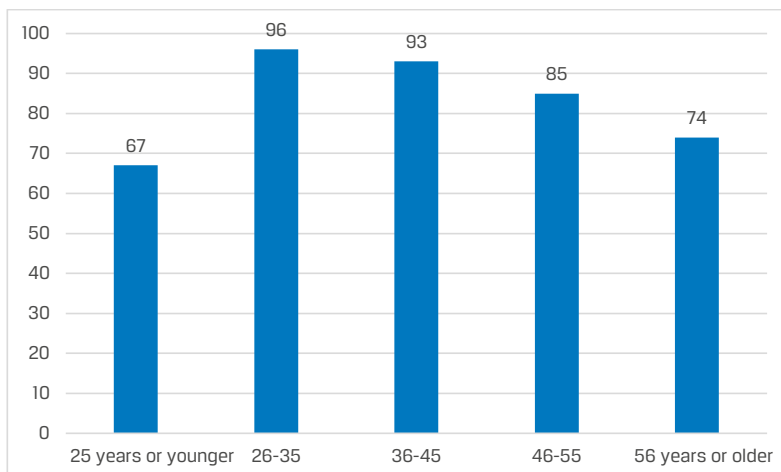
The 2013 and 2017 surveys did not show particular differences of general susceptibility between genders either. And neither the police mapping (2019) nor the survey of local politicians (Jupskås 2021) show that female politicians are generally more susceptible than male politicians. On the other hand, the local politician survey (which has far greater numbers) shows the effect of the combination gender and age: young female politicians (under the age of 30) and men in their 30s and 40s are the most susceptible to threats, hate speech and troublesome approaches.

Not unexpectedly, female politicians are far more often exposed to harassment of a sexual character than their male colleagues. One example of this:

“I don’t know if it classifies as a threat, but I have been sent penis pictures, and other coarse sexual messages. I do not experience it as sexually motivated, but more that the aim is harassment.”

There are also age-based differences in reported incidents. Figure 10 below breaks down the sample into the five age categories used in the questionnaire.

Figure 10. Age and susceptibility to unwanted incidents (N=205)



The relationship between age and susceptibility to exposure to unwanted incidents appears to be curvilinear, i.e. the susceptibility appears at first to increase with age, only later to fall as one gets older. The reason why the youngest are the least susceptible is likely to be that they have less media exposure. The reduction in susceptibility above a certain age is hard to explain. One possible hypothesis is that one becomes more thick-skinned with age and the threshold for what is reported is raised.

Characteristics of people who threaten and harass

Gender and identification of individuals

In line with previous surveys, a majority of the respondents, ca. 67%, reported that the person behind the incident was a man. Around 6% reported that it was a woman, while ca. 14% reported that it involved both a man and a woman. Around 13% stated that the person's gender was unknown.¹⁰

The distribution is roughly the same in all three respondent groups.

¹⁰ In their study *Gråsoner og grenseoverskridelser på nettet: En studie av deltagere i opphetede og aggressive nettdebatter*, Nadim, Thorbjørnsrud and Fladmoe (2021) also find that the majority of participants in aggressive online debates were men.

If we look solely at the parliamentary/cabinet minister group and compare with previous surveys, there is an increase of around 14 percentage points from 2017 in the proportion who report that the person was a man.

Around half of the respondents stated that they knew the identity of the person responsible, however the proportion varies somewhat between the respondent groups. Among the executive committee members (political parties) the proportion is ca. 58%, while it is ca. 49% for the youth wings. In the parliamentary/cabinet minister group the proportion who stated that they knew the identity of the person responsible is ca. 45%. This is a considerable fall from 2017 when the proportion was ca. 70% (Bjørge og Silkoset, 2017). One possible explanation is that those who carry out online harassment have become better at covering their tracks over the past few years.

Our data do not give direct insight into who these perpetrators are. The police mapping on the other hand provides more specific data about this. Of the 45 perpetrators identified by the police, 43 were men (95%), and 31 (69%) were over the age of 40. In addition, half (23 out of 45) had previously been reported for one or more violence-related issues. 60% of the perpetrators were unemployed (Norwegian Police 2019).

Characteristics of the individuals or the communication

In this as in previous surveys, the respondents were asked to think about the most serious incident and say something about what characterised the person or the communication in this incident. Nine pre-defined characteristics were listed where the respondents were given the option to select more than one. Table 2 below shows the proportion in each of the groups who marked a given characteristic. For the group parliamentarians/cabinet ministers figures for 2013 and 2017 are also given.

Table 2. Which characteristics describe the communication or the person best? (SMP = executive committee member, mother party, SUP = executive committee member, youth wing, S&R = parliamentarians and cabinet ministers))

	SMP	SUP	S&R (2021)	S&R (2017)	S&R (2013)
Hostile (expresses anger and bitterness, verbal insults or sarcasm)	61	56	64	44	43
Threatening	37	35	43	29	29
Preoccupied by ideas or perceptions which are clearly incorrect	39	51	30	15	16
Confused (illogical and contradictory thoughts which are difficult to understand)	26	28	14	2	17
Compulsive (repeats the same thing over and over)	15	26	18	8	16
Suspicious/has thoughts about being persecuted	9	12	12	6	11
Boasting or bragging	11	21	4	2	5
Intoxicated	4	16	10	0	16
Sexual approaches	13	14	5	4	11
Other	2	7	5	10	24
N=	46	43	77	53	78

The characteristics are ranked according to the frequency with which they appear across all three groups. The characteristic which clearly appears most frequently is “hostile”, i.e. that the perpetrator “expresses anger and bitterness, verbal insults or sarcasm”. A majority of the incidents within all three groups has been characterised as such. A considerable proportion in all three groups further reports that the person or the communication appeared threatening. Another frequently mentioned characteristic is that the person is “preoccupied with ideas or perceptions which are clearly incorrect”. In terms of issues such as “intoxicated” and “sexual approaches”, these are reported to a lesser extent. However, there is some variation between the groups, even though the picture is more or less the same for all three.

If we break it down by gender we also find more or less the same picture, though with smaller variations. The greatest difference is found in the proportion reporting “sexual approaches”, where

women (ca. 18%) are clearly more susceptible than men (ca. 3%). On the other hand we see that the proportion of men (ca. 46%) who experience the incidents as threatening is higher than the proportion of women (ca. 37%) who are reporting the same.

In terms of development over time in the parliamentarian/cabinet minister group we see, broadly speaking, the same characteristics appearing most frequently. The ranking of the three top characteristics is almost unchanged from 2013 to 2017, but there was a strong increase of 15-20 percentage points in all the three characteristics in 2021. The other characteristics appear to fluctuate over time without a clear trend.

Presumed motives

In line with previous surveys the respondents were also asked about the motives they think are behind the most serious incident. Table 3 shows the proportion in each of the groups who state a given pre-defined motive. On the far right of the table are the proportions of parliamentarians/cabinet ministers in 2017 and 2013, respectively.

Table 3. Presumed motives behind the most serious incident

	SMP	SUP	S&R (2021)	S&R (2017)	S&R (2013)
Interest in a particular policy issue/case	24	26	31	34	21
Conspiracy theory	24	33	26	19	21
Conflict with public services (e.g. children's and welfare services)	28	2	35	No data	No data
Unknown	20	7	19	25	38
Racism or hostility towards strangers	13	26	9	6	9
Right-wing extremism	15	21	7	8	7
Other	9	16	5	17	17
Environment or animal rights activism	7	5	7	8	1
Left-wing extremism	4	2	5	2	4
Religious activism	2	2	7	6	12
Anti-racism	2	5	0	2	1
N=	46	43	77		

As in the previous table, the motives are ranked according to how frequently they are registered for all three groups collectively. We see that certain motives seem to occur fairly frequently in all three groups, among them “interest in a particular policy issue/case” and “conspiracy theory.” Otherwise there is considerable variation between the groups in what they regard as motives for the unwanted incidents. “Conflict with public authorities like children’s services, welfare services (NAV) etc.” is for example the most frequent motive among both executive committee members of all parties and the parliamentarian/cabinet minister group. However, among the youth activists this motive is hardly mentioned at all. On the other hand, motives like “racism or hostility towards strangers” and “right-wing extremism” are mentioned relatively frequently among youth wing executive committee members, but to a somewhat lesser degree among the mother party executive committee members and to an even lesser degree among the parliamentarians and cabinet ministers. Motives like “environment or animal rights activism,” “left-wing extremism,” “religious activism” and “anti-racism” are registered to a lesser extent regardless of group.

If we put the focus on the parliamentarian/cabinet minister group, we see that the picture is relatively stable over time. “Conflict with public authorities” which is the dominant category in the last survey from 2021 was unfortunately not included in 2013 and 2017, however it is not unreasonable to assume that this category was prominent also in previous years.

Since it is politicians from the Progress Party (FrP) who over time have most frequently reported experience of intimidation and threats it is especially interesting to find out more about who the FrP politicians feel are behind this harassment, and what it is means. What they most frequently point to is that this is about interest in a particular policy issue or case (38% of the responses), or conflict with public authorities (also 38%). One might have expected that FrP politicians on the far right, from a party with a particular anti-immigration profile, would be harassed by left-wing extremists or

anti-racists, but such actors are only mentioned by four of the 21 FrP respondents (19%).

The respondents were also asked what they believe the person(s) wished to achieve with the actions. Table 4 below shows presumed objectives of the incident ranked according to how frequently they are mentioned across the groups.

Table 4. Presumptions about what the person(s) wished to achieve

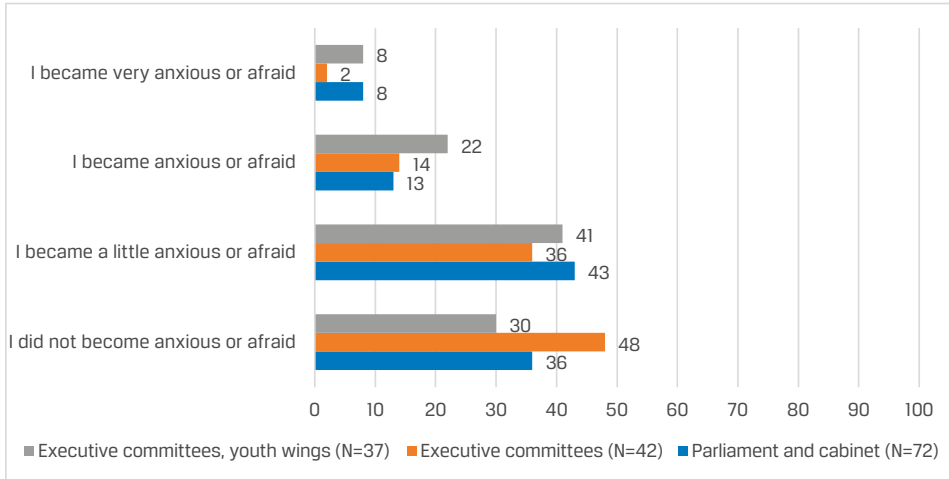
	SMP	SUP	S&R (2021)	S&R (2017)	S&R (2013)
Demonstrate displeasure	39	58	42	34	44
Scare me or create fear	41	35	37	25	No data
Influence me in my actions or decisions as a politician	37	42	34	31	31
Offend or humiliate	35	42	28	36	22
Make me quit as a politician	11	14	20	17	14
Don't know	4	14	13	11	15
Revenge	13	2	12	9	9
Other	7	5	0	4	12
N=	46	43	77		

The perception of a considerable proportion of the respondents, and in particular those from the youth wings, is that the person behind the incident wished to “show displeasure”. A relatively high number also think that the objective is to “frighten or create fear”. There is also a relatively high number who perceive the incident as an attempt to “influence me in my actions or decisions as a politician” and/or to “insult or humiliate”. A somewhat smaller number feel that the aim is to “make me quit politics” or exercise “revenge”. In the parliamentarian/cabinet minister group there is little change compared to 2013 and 2017.

Consequences of unwanted incidents

Threats and harassment can have a serious impact both on an individual and societal level, and for those who experience it directly

Figure 11. Experience of fear



it can be particularly frightening. In this and the previous survey the respondents were asked to think about the most serious incident and how they experienced it. Figure 11 shows the degree to which the respondents in the three groups experienced anxiety or fear in connection with this incident.

A clear majority within all three respondent groups state that they, in varying degrees, experienced being anxious or afraid in connection with the incident. It may not be surprising that the highest proportion here are the executive committee members from the youth wings (ca. 70%). It is conceivable that the older and more experienced politicians are a little more thick-skinned when it comes to such incidents. However, parliamentarians and cabinet ministers are not far off (ca. 64%) and also among the mother party executive committee members there is a small majority who to a greater or lesser degree experience fear (ca. 52%).

Even if female politicians are not exposed to more frequent harassment and threats than their male colleagues (see Figure 9), a greater proportion of women (ca. 68%) experience fear compared to

men (ca. 59%). This may partly be explained by the sexual character of a considerable part of the harassment, but also that women are generally not as physically strong as men and therefore feel more vulnerable.

Threats and harassment have potential consequences both for private lives and political activity. In both this and previous surveys the respondents have been asked to think about all types of unwanted and troublesome approaches, including intimidation and attacks which they have been exposed to, and then consider a series of pre-defined statements/questions about the consequences. Table 5 ranks the consequences according to how frequently they are mentioned by the survey respondents.

Table 5. Consequences of unwanted incidents based on the whole sample (consequences for private life are shown in red, and consequences for political activity are shown in blue)

	SMP	SUP	S&R (2021)
Became worried about the safety of those closest to you	15	13	28
Hesitated to state a particular opinion	18	21	17
Became worried about being out in public	13	21	19
Avoided engaging with or making statements about a specific policy issue or field	20	13	19
Limited your freedom of speech around a policy issue	15	16	17
Became worried about your own safety	7	16	21
Considered giving up politics	18	16	14
Reduced your social activities	15	8	18
Increased security at your home	11	7	19
Became afraid of being physically attacked	9	10	10
Changed your daily routine	4	3	16
Increased security at work	7	3	5
Became worried about being home alone	2	7	3
Changed your telephone number	4	0	5
Took time off work	4	2	3
Was influenced to make a different decision	2	2	0
N=	55	61	89

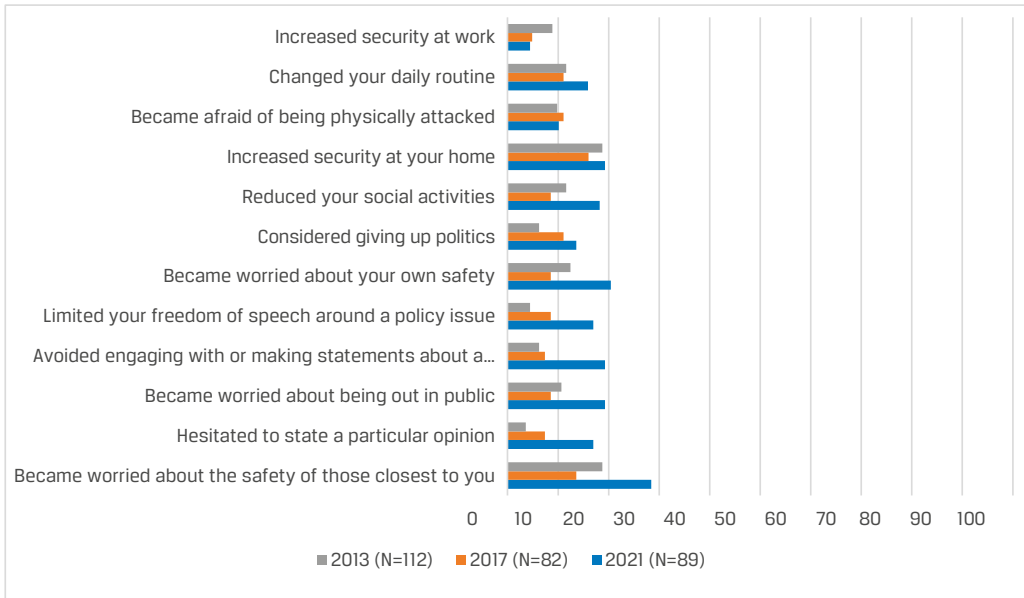
The respondents are reporting consequences both for their political activity (in blue) and for their private life (in red), however there is some variation between the different groups in the prominence of the consequences. Among the mother party executive committee members, it is particularly consequences linked to political activity that come to the fore. The most frequent consequence mentioned in this group is that they “avoided engaging with or making statements about a specific policy issue or field” (ca. 20%), followed by “hesitated to state a particular opinion” and “considered quitting politics” (both ca. 18%). As for the consequences for private life, ca. 15% “became worried about the safety of those closest to them” and the same percentage “reduced their social activities”.

Among the youth wing members, unwanted incidents appear to have consequences for both political activity and private life. Around 21% stated that they “hesitated to state a particular opinion”, while the same number say they “became worried about being out in public”. Around 16% also said they “limited their freedom of speech around a policy issue” and “considered giving up politics”. The same proportion also reported that they “became worried about their personal safety”.

Among the parliamentary/cabinet ministers the most frequently reported consequences were those linked to private life. Around 28%, the highest proportion, reported that they “became worried about the safety of people close to them”. Around 21% reported that they became “worried about their own safety”, ca. 19% “became worried about being out in public”, while the same number “reduced their social activities”. Around 18% of parliamentarians and cabinet ministers also reported that they had “increased security at home”. In terms of consequences for political activity, 19% “avoided engaging with or speaking out on particular policy issues”, while ca. 17% “hesitated to state a particular opinion” and who “limited their freedom of speech around a policy issue”.

If we compare this with data from 2013 and 2017 (parliamentarians and cabinet ministers), there is a considerable increase in the

Figure 12. Consequences of unwanted incidents 2013-2021 (whole sample, parliamentarians, and cabinet ministers)



proportion who report various types of negative consequences (Figure 12). In terms of consequences linked to private life, there appeared to be a certain improvement in several areas during the period 2013-2017, only for it to become considerably worse up to 2021. This is particularly in relation to “the security of those close to them”, but also anxiety linked to “personal safety”. In terms of consequences for political activity there has been a considerable increase in the proportion who state that they either “limit their freedom of speech”, “hesitated to state a particular opinion”, “avoided engaging with a specific policy issue”, and that they were considering giving up political life. This negative development particularly gained momentum during the last parliamentary term.

There is reason to believe that there is a close link between the increase in the proportion of parliamentarians and cabinet ministers who experienced serious threats in the period 2013-2021 (see Figure 6) and this negative development in consequences for the private life

and political activity of politicians. We will discuss further how these negative trends represent a threat to democracy in the next chapter.

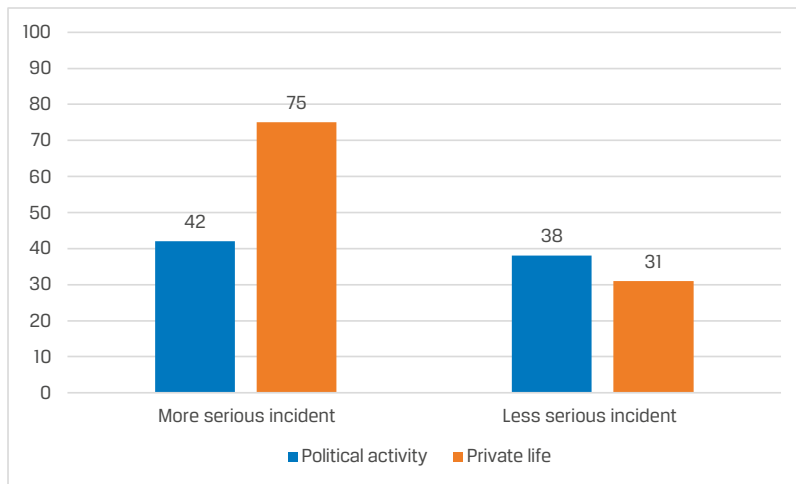
So far, we have looked at the consequences for the whole sample regardless of whether they have experienced an unwanted incident or not; that is to say we have looked at the consequences for the various groups as a whole. The disadvantage is that we risk undercommunicating the consequence of unwanted incidents when we look at groups who report fewer incidents, such as the youth wing politicians. If we only look at those who do report unwanted incidents, the proportion reporting consequences becomes even higher.

Table 6. Consequences of unwanted incidents based on those who have reported incidents

	SMP	SUP	S&R (2021)
Became worried about the safety of those closest to you	17	19	33
Hesitated to state a particular opinion	22	30	20
Became worried about being out in public	15	30	22
Avoided engaging with or making statements about a specific policy issue or field	24	19	22
Limited your freedom of speech around a policy issue	17	23	20
Became worried about your own safety	9	24	24
Considered giving up politics	22	23	16
Reduced your social activities	17	12	21
Increased security at your home	13	9	22
Became afraid of being physically attacked	11	14	12
Changed your daily routine	4	5	18
Increased security at work	9	5	5
Became worried about being home alone	2	9	4
Changed your telephone number	4	0	5
Took time off work	4	2	4
Was influenced to make a different decision	2	2	0
N=	46	43	77

We can see that the proportion reporting consequences increases in all three groups, which is natural when we limit ourselves to those who report incidents, but the increase is greatest among politicians on the youth wings, who also reported fewer incidents. We see for example that nearly a third of the youth wing politicians who reported unwanted incidents state that they “became worried about being out in public” and “avoided engaging with or making statements about a specific policy issue or field”.

Figure 13. Consequences of serious and less serious incidents for private life and political activity (N=166)



There is also reason to presume that the consequences will vary somewhat based on how seriously an incidence is perceived to be. Figure 13 compares those who have reported one or more serious incidents with those who have reported one or more less serious incidents in terms of the reporting of consequences for political activity and private life respectively.

The figure shows that consequences for political activity appear more or less the same for the two groups, i.e. that around 40% in each group report consequences in this area. On the other hand,

more serious incidents appear to have a greater effect on private life than less serious incidents. In the first-mentioned group around 75% report consequences in this area, but the equivalent proportion in the other group is around 31%.

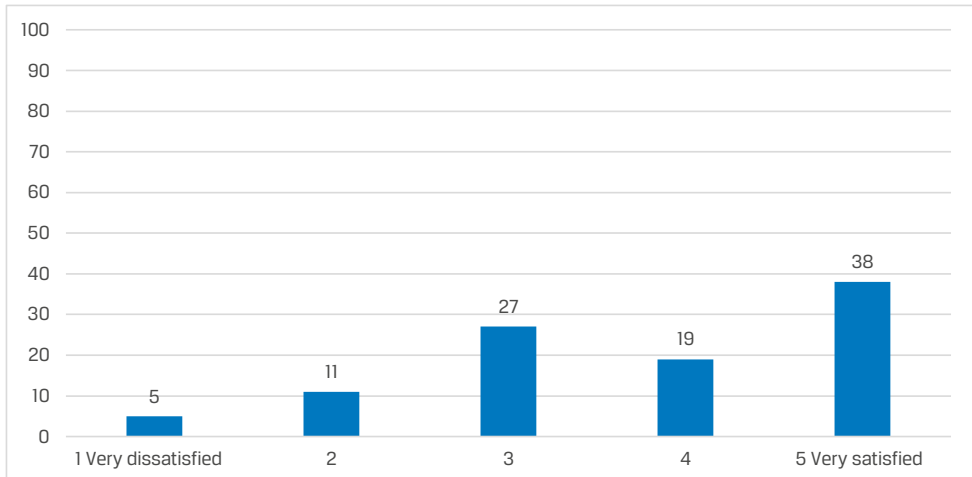
Notification and formal reporting to the police / the Police Security Service (PST)

Some incidents are either notified or formally reported to the police/ the PST. A total of 37 respondents, i.e., around 18% of the sample, stated that they had notified the police and/or the PST about one or more incidents. Parliamentarians and cabinet ministers are responsible for 21 of 37 notifications, while the figure for executive committee members of mother parties and youth wings are 13 and 3 respectively. When asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they were with the response they received when they notified the police, a small majority said they were either satisfied or very satisfied (figure 14).

Furthermore, 15 respondents, or around 7% of the sample, state that they have formally reported an incident to the police/PST. Also here most of them are parliamentarians and cabinet ministers (8), while six (6) executive committee members and one (1) youth wing politician state that they have reported an incident. When asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they were with the response from the police/PST to their report the respondents are pretty evenly distributed across the scale (1-5). In other words, those who reported the matter tend to be slightly less satisfied than those who merely gave a notification.

The respondents were also given the opportunity to elaborate on their experience of how the threatening incidents against them were followed up. One recurring issue was the importance of being taken seriously: “To be listened to and understood was the most important.” Someone else mention having “notified the PST, who took it seriously and as far as I know contacted the individuals behind the most serious messages. That had an effect, as far as I could see”.

Figure 14. Satisfaction with the response from the police/PST when notifying an incident on a scale from 1-5 (N=37)



Generally, many were satisfied with the follow-up from the PST, but many missed more information about action taken by the PST further down the line. Was the case just shelved or were further measures taken by the PST or the police?

Experiences were more varied in terms of follow-up from local police forces. Some had very positive experiences, for example rapid emergency response, guard and patrols in the area following serious threat incidents. Others experienced not being taken seriously, being patronised or that the local police (or local PST) lacked competence in dealing with threats against politicians.

This is also in line with the findings in the local politician study (Jupskås 2021, Brandtzæg et al. 2022), where the majority are satisfied with the follow-up from the party, municipal administration and the police, but where there are also reports of considerable local differences. The fact that such cases are managed differently by different police districts is a challenge which has also been highlighted by the Director of Public Prosecution (Riksadvokaten) (2019).

4. Discussion of the main findings

The survey of national politicians in the winter of 2021 has provided far greater opportunities than before to make comparisons over time and between different categories of national politicians.

The most striking and worrying finding concerns the development over time of threats and harassment experienced by cabinet ministers and parliamentarians, and the impact this has had.

The timeline of the surveys from 2013, 2017 and 2021 shows a very negative development in the experience of what we define as serious incidents,¹¹ particularly when it comes to direct or indirect threats to harm politicians or people close to them. In 2013, 36% of the adult respondents reported serious incidents, in 2017 the figure was 40%. In 2021, 46% of the respondents among parliamentarians and cabinet ministers reported such experiences. This cannot, though, be interpreted as nearly half our top politicians having experienced serious threats, since the response rate is just below 50%. Those who have experienced serious threats may have been more inclined to respond to the survey than those who have little experience of it. There is nevertheless reason to believe that the increase in serious threats is real. This increase mainly concerns direct and indirect threats posted on social media. This is undoubtedly linked to the general increase in the use of social media during the past decade, but also to the fact that the growth of social media has provided fertile ground for an ever more hateful debating environment.

Just as serious as the increase in experienced threats, if not more so, are the consequences this is having for the private life and political

¹¹ The term "serious incidents" includes incidents where (1) someone has physically attacked or tried to attack the respondent; (2) that someone has threatened to harm the respondent or someone close to them; (3) that someone has vandalised the property or belongings of the respondents; or that someone through social media has exposed them to (4) direct threats, or (5) put forward indirect threats to harm the respondent or someone close to them.

activity of politicians. In this respect the negative consequences accelerated even more than the increase in experienced threat in the course of the last parliamentary term, in particular the consequences for political activity. When asked in 2013, 3 to 6% of parliamentarians and cabinet ministers confirmed that threats and harassment had led to a reluctance to state specific points of view, to them avoiding engaging with or speaking out about particular topics, or that it limited their freedom of speech as politicians. In 2021 as many as 17 to 19% answered yes to these questions. In 2013, 6% considered giving up politics because of these burdens. In 2021 this figure was 14%.

As far as consequences for the private lives of top politicians are concerned there was a certain improvement from 2013 in the majority of categories from 2013 to 2017. In the period after that and up to 2021, however, the consequences have developed in a markedly negative way in areas such as anxiety about security for themselves and for those closest to them, worry about being out in public and reducing social activities.

When politicians report that threats and harassment have negative consequences for both private life and political activity this can in turn harm democracy and democratic processes in several ways. In a democracy, both the electorate and the people they elect should be able to freely state their opinions without fear of intimidation and violence. This freedom of speech has sadly come under pressure. That may affect the quality of democratic processes and the political debate.

We are also seeing that the burden of threats and harassment can influence the recruitment to elected positions. This will probably not lead to difficulties with filling the seats in parliament or the cabinet, but it can influence the type of person who is willing to step into the most important political posts, and those who does not have the stomach for it. If only the most thick-skinned among us occupy the most important political positions, our democracy may

miss politicians with important life experiences who ought to have a political voice – individuals who may have experienced abuse, violence and trauma in their lives which make them less resilient towards intimidation and threats in their role as political actors. More generally we know that many withdraw from the public debate because they are faced with so many hateful comments – or they see how other people are treated. This is bound to affect young people who are not prepared for a tough debating environment. The survey of local politicians (Jupskås 2021; Brandtzæg et al. 2022) shows that intimidation and hate speech make women more inclined to withdraw from public life than men, and the same is the case for young people.

The main picture is that elected politicians at all levels – from local politics to the youth wings and all the way up to parliament and the cabinet – risk an unwanted burden in the form of intimidation and harassment. The higher the position in the political hierarchy and the degree of media exposure, the heavier the burden. Among the parliamentarians and cabinet ministers the majority (87%) report unwanted incidents linked to their political activity, while around half (52%) of local politicians report the same. Most of the intimidation and harassment is probably within the ill-defined limits of freedom of speech, and is just something politicians have to find ways of dealing with. There is a particularly strong case for freedom of speech when it comes to political statements (Ipsos and Lund & Co, 2020). The police are therefore unable to intervene with preventive dialogue unless the statement is very close to the limit of what constitutes a criminal offence (Spurkland 2021). Various forms of social support from institutions and party organisations may be helpful when it comes to managing such intimidation. Individual politicians should not be left to themselves in such situations. One politician expressed it in this way in our survey:

“I’m not sure whether [others] understood how this felt. Some thought I should be less bothered about it. This is a lonely business.”

Much of the intimidation, however, does come close to the limit of what is a punishable offence, and a considerable proportion qualifies as criminal intimidation or hate crime. In recent years there have been a number of criminal proceedings with convictions for threats, reckless conduct and hate crime towards politicians, and there has been a steady increase in the number of cases formally reported to the police since 2015.¹² Even if part of the increase in criminal proceedings may reflect the increase in the experience of incidents of intimidation and threat which is documented in this report, it is very likely that this also reflects an increasing awareness by the police, prosecution services, courts and the politicians themselves that such intimidation and hate speech represent a danger to democracy and must be taken seriously through police action and criminal prosecution.

... case law [shows] that where there have been threats to politicians because of their political activity this is regarded as particularly serious by the courts. It is regarded as an attack, not only on the elected individual, but as a threat to the elected individual's freedom of speech and therefore also to democracy. (Ipsos and Lund & Co, 2020)

The Director of Public Prosecution has for several years asked the police to prioritise hate crime against politicians and participants in the public debate, for example in circular 01/2020 dated 15 February 2020 from the prosecution service:

“What is known as hate crime is still to be given particular attention. The Director of Public Prosecution is very pleased that several police districts have put the crime reform on the agenda in 2019. The Government's strategy on hate speech 2016-2020 emphasises that it wants hate crime to be prioritised in all police districts, and that chief constables

12 According to circular 1/2021 from the Director of Public Prosecution (Riksadvokaten). This emphasises that particular attention shall continue to be paid to hate crime, and hateful and threatening statements directed towards politicians, participants in the public discourse, representatives of different minorities and others are given a special mention.

must ensure that hate crime is given the necessary follow-up. The police must also keep their attention on hate speech towards politicians and other participants in the public debate which can influence the debating environment in such a negative way that some either withdraw from politics or choose not to participate in the public debate.”

Even if freedom of speech gives even extreme, offensive and tasteless statements a wide scope when they are delivered in a political context, politicians are protected against attacks on the private life and personal integrity of individuals according to the same regulations that protect other citizens. The most relevant statutory provisions in the Criminal Code comprise threats (§ 263), reckless behaviour (§ 266) and § 185 of the Criminal Code on hateful and discriminatory statements. In addition, § 115 of the Criminal Code contains a particular protection for parliamentarians and cabinet ministers (and other government officials):

“Those who by the use of force, threats or in another unlawful way generate a danger that the King, the Regent, the government, parliament, the Supreme Court or the Court of Impeachment or a member of these institutions are obstructed or impacted in their activity will be punished by up to 10 years in prison.”

This also means that the responsibility to investigate the most serious cases of threats and intimidation against persons of authority (§ 115) lies with the PST, while it is the regular police who are responsible for investigating less serious cases against persons of authority as well as all cases against local politicians and executive committee members who are not also members of the cabinet or parliament. It is well documented (Jupskås 2021, Ipsos and Lund & Co 2020) that the follow-up from local police forces has been very varied. Based on the article in A-magasinet on threats and harassment to young people belonging to the AUF (19 July 2018) and the police mapping

of threats to politicians in 2017-18, the Director of Public Prosecution decided (dated 29 May 2019) that the PST “shall investigate, decide whether to prosecute, and prosecute criminal cases that are brought to court which have been committed against executive committee members of the parties’ youth wings and are based on their political activity.”

The report from the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS) “Hate speech and threats against locally elected politicians: legal frameworks, judicial precedents and municipal sector practice” (Ipsos and Lund & Co 2020) discusses in some details the dilemma between the right to express dissatisfaction in a liberal democracy and the politicians’ need for protection against hate speech and intimidation. The extensive review of both penal provisions and, not least, a range of other measures for following up politicians who are susceptible to threats and intimidation, is particularly useful. Because a large part of the intimidation against local politicians does not come under penal provisions, it is necessary to develop other forms of follow-up in order to reduce the burden. The KS report contains a series of relevant contributions, for example concerning follow-up from relevant political parties and municipal organisations and suggestions for improving the debating environment.

On 18 February 2021, ahead of the parliamentary elections, the Police Directorate issued an operational order to the police districts for the police to facilitate an open public debate and a safe and secure election. In their work to protect democracy, freedom of speech and political activity, chief constables were asked to initiate a range of lasting initiatives, among them actively using the police councils (local arenas for strategic collaboration between heads of police and municipality) to exchange knowledge about the topic and to discuss actual follow-up as well as establishing a permanent contact person for dialogue with individual municipalities and political parties about preventive advice and initiatives, such as local preventive police officers.

Among other initiatives to protect democracy and freedom of speech is the establishment of a national competence centre for hate crime (under Oslo Police District), and *Innbyggerstemmen* ('Citizens' voice'), which provides preventive advice against hate speech, particularly directed towards youth wing politicians and other relevant youth organisations.

* * *

It is important to emphasise that intimidation, hate speech and threats against politicians comprise a broad spectrum of statements and actions. Many such statements are obviously of a criminal nature and in recent years there have been many convictions in cases of threats and hate speech towards politicians. Other statements directed at politicians may be slanderous, offensive and degrading for those at the receiving end, but they are often not sufficiently strong or intimidating to qualify as law-breaking. Freedom of speech allows a great deal of scope for slanderous statements when they are made in a political context. There is also a large grey area where it is uncertain whether a possible criminal proceeding would lead to a conviction. Were the police to bring a few such uncertain cases into the judicial system it might contribute to the provision of further legal clarification of where the boundaries are and when the police can take action.

“Police mapping of hate speech and threats towards politicians: a collaboration between the police, Kripos and the PST” (2019)¹³ deals with a total of 51 criminal cases and other incidents (both formally reported and not formally reported) registered in police data systems (Strasak and Indicia) in the period from 20 October 2017 to 20 October 2018. Of these cases, 41% were statements which talked about killing in some form or other, either as encouragement to kill, death threats or wishing that someone would die. There were also other forms of threatening statements.

13 This report is not available to the public, but we have been given permission to report some of the results.

Since all these cases were registered by the police over a 12-month period and our three surveys cover a considerably longer timespan, we have to assume that the police have captured a number of serious cases which our surveys have not captured. At the same time, our methodology has captured a broader spectrum of cases some of which the police were unaware of. These investigations are not comparable; however they complement each other. The police still feel that the scale of serious incidents is greater than what emerges from our research report (from 2017).

The surveys which have been conducted on threats and hate speech toward local politicians (Ipsos 2019; Ipsos and Lund & Co 2020; Jupskås 2021/Brandtzæg et al. 2022) help to broaden our knowledge about this phenomenon at a local level. The patterns mostly concur with our data. Even if local politicians generally are less frequently exposed to serious threats than national politicians, it appears that the consequences for those who experience them are regarded as more serious. A higher proportion of local politicians consider quitting politics or refrain from engaging in controversial cases (Ipsos 2019; Jupskås/Brandtzæg et al. 2022). One reason for this may be that locally elected politicians to a lesser degree are professional, full-time politicians, that they to a lesser degree have security arrangements in place around them than what is the case for parliamentarians and cabinet ministers, and that threats appear more threatening when they come from the local community.

The report from the previous survey on threats against parliamentarians and cabinet ministers (Bjørge og Silkoset 2017) placed the Norwegian findings in a broader, international context, for example by comparing equivalent data from other countries. It also included the international research literature on threats to and attacks on politicians. The 2020 edition of the annual C-REX publication *RTV Trend Report 2020: Right-Wing Terrorism and Violence in Western Europe, 1990 – 2019* (Ravndal, Lygren, Jupskås & Bjørge 2020) contained a review of right-wing extremist violent attacks on politicians.

We do not enter further into international dimensions and comparisons in this year's report. Instead we refer to the 2017 report and the future special issue on "Anti-Government Extremism" in the journal *Perspectives on Terrorism*, which is planned for (open access) publication in December 2022.

Hate speech, intimidation and threats towards democratically elected politicians and participants in the public discourse will seemingly continue to put pressure on political participation and democratic processes in the coming years, and the main trends show a negative direction. The challenge will be to find ways to manage such hate speech so that the safety, private life, freedom of speech and political working conditions of democratically elected politicians can be safeguarded without removing the right of citizens to state their opinions – even opinions which may be both slanderous and offensive. Statements which cross the criminal threshold can be punished by law, while other measures have to be employed to support politicians who are exposed to other forms of intimidation and harassment.

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Appendix 1. Questionnaire.

1. During your time as a parliamentarian, cabinet minister or executive committee member, has anyone subjected you to any of the incidents below?

Please answer all the questions even if you have never experienced anything like this, and state how many times you have experienced it if you have. We emphasise that we are asking about incidents which you think are linked

If YES, how many times have you experienced or been made aware of such approaches?

Has anyone...

Physically attacked you or tried to attack you	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Yes	No	1	2	3-9	10+
Threatened to harm you or people close to you	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Yes	No	1	2	3-9	10+
Made unpleasant or unwanted approaches or attempts at contact (e.g. at home, at work or in a public place).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Yes	No	1	2	3-9	10+
Behaved in an unpleasant or disturbing fashion towards you in connection with political events or travel.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Yes	No	1	2	3-9	10+
Followed you (i.e. in a car on foot)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Yes	No	1	2	3-9	10+
Loitered around your home or in other places where you often spend time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Yes	No	1	2	3-9	10+
Caused damage to property or items belonging to you (e.g. your house or car)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Yes	No	1	2	3-9	10+
Brought false prosecutions against you	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Yes	No	1	2	3-9	10+
Spread malicious information about you (e.g. in newspapers or blogs, online smear campaigns etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Yes	No	1	2	3-9	10+
Made unwanted and troublesome telephone calls to you	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Yes	No	1	2	3-9	10+
Approached you in a troublesome and unwanted way via Twitter, Facebook or other social media	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Yes	No	1	2	1	10+

If 'no' to all questions in question 1 → GO TO (QUESTION 20 ON PAGE 10)

2. Have you experienced unwanted incidents in any of the following locations??

If YES, how many times have you experienced or been made aware of such approaches?

At your address in the population register	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Yes	No	1	2	3-9	10+
At your place of residence in Oslo (if different from above)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Yes	No	1	2	3-9	10+
At parliament/party office	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Yes	No	1	2	3-9	10+
While travelling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Yes	No	1	2	3-9	10+
POn the town/at a restaurant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Yes	No	1	2	3-9	10+
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Yes	No	1	2	3-9	10+

If you chose "Other" please specify the type of place(s) you have experienced unwanted incidents.?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

3. Is/are the unwanted incident(s) still ongoing?

Yes No

UNWANTED BEHAVIOUR – THE MOST SERIOUS INCIDENT

We now ask you to think about your experience with the incident you felt was the most serious. All the following questions therefore concern the person or incident you experienced as most serious.

4. How did you feel about the incident(s)

- I was not anxious or afraid
- I was a little anxious or afraid
- I was anxious or afraid
- I was very anxious or afraid

5. When did the most serious incident take place?

- During the past 12 months
- Between 1 and 4 years ago
- More than 4 years ago

6. How long did the unwanted behaviour last?

- It was just one, isolated incident
- Days
- Weeks
- Months
- One year or more

7. What did you do about this incident?

Notified the police/the PST.....	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Formally reported the incident to the police/the PST.....	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Notified the party organisation.....	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Notified parliament/the Office of the Prime Minister.....	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Told my family/friends/colleagues.....	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

If you chose 'Other' in the previous question, please describe what you did?

.....

.....

.....

.....

8. How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the response you got when you...

	1 Very dissatisfied	2	3	4	5 Very satisfied
Notified the police/the PST.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Formally reported the incident to the police/the PST.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Notified the party organisation.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Notified parliament/the Office of the Prime Minister	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Told my family/friends/colleagues.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Notified others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please tell us in your own words a little of how you experienced the response – both the good and the bad – to your notification/your formal report?

.....

.....

.....

.....

9. What was the gender of the person(s) who exposed you to the incident?

- Male(s)
- Female(s)
- Both male(s) and female(s)
- Unknown

10. Do you know the identity of the person(s)?

- Yes
- No

11. Were you aware of the person(s) before the incident?

- Yes
- No

12. Please indicate the characteristic which best describes the person(s) or the communication.

You may choose more than one if relevant

- Boasting or bragging
- Sexual approaches
- Preoccupied by ideas or beliefs which are clearly incorrect
- Suspicious/has ideas of being persecuted
- Compulsive (repeats the same thing again and again)
- Hostile (expresses anger and bitterness, verbal abuse or sarcasm)
- Incoherent (illogical and contradictory thoughts which are hard to follow)
- Threatening
- Intoxicated
- Other. Please specify (avoid details which can identify the person):

13. Did you perceive any of the following motives behind the incident?

You may choose more than one if relevant

- Right-wing extremism
- Environment or animal protection activism
- Racism or hostility towards strangers
- Religious activism
- Left-wing extremism
- Anti-racism
- Conspiracy theory

- Conflict with the authorities (e.g. children's services, social security etc.)
- Interest in a particular policy issue or case. Please specify (avoid details which may identify the person):
- Other. Please specify (avoid details which may identify the person):
- Uncertain

14. What do you think the person(s) wanted to achieve with their actions?

You may choose more than one if relevant

- Demonstrate dissatisfaction
- Insult or humiliate
- Frighten or create fear
- Revenge
- Influence me in my actions or decisions as a politician
- Make me quit politics
- Other. Please specify (avoid details which may identify the person):
.....
- Don't know

15. Do you suspect that the person(s) had mental health issues during the period of contact?

- Yes
 - No
 - Don't know
- } **GO TO QUESTION 17**

**16. What makes you think the person(s) had mental health issues?
(avoid details which may identify the person):**

.....

.....

.....

.....

DESCRIPTION OF THE UNWANTED BEHAVIOUR

Are you willing to give us a few more details about any threats and/or physical confrontations you or your family have been exposed to, which you assume are linked to your political activity? They do not need to be related to the person you described in the previous questions.

We emphasise that we will not repeat your story in our report on the results of the survey. We will only use it in a heavily rewritten form and grouped with other examples in order to show general trends.

17. If you (or any member of your family) have ever received a threat, please describe what happened and any consequences this may have had (avoid details which may identify the person(s)):

.....
.....
.....
.....

18. We would now like you to think about all types of unwanted and troublesome incidents, including threats and attacks, which you have been exposed to. Did the incidents make you...

Please tick all that apply

- Increase security at home?
- Increase security at work??
- Change your telephone number?
- Stay away from work?
- Reduce your social activities?
- Change your daily routine?
- Worry about being out in public?
- Worry about being alone at home?

- Worry about your personal safety?
- Worry about the safety of those closest to you?
- Fear being physically attacked?
- Restrict your freedom of speech on a political issue?
- NHesitate to come forward with a particular opinion?
- Become influenced to make a different decision?
- Avoid engaging with or speaking up about a specific policy issue or field?
- Consider giving up politics?

19. Have you ever sought help or advice in connection with further management of unwanted approaches or behaviour? If so, how useful was that? *Please tick one box on each line*

Help or advice from...	Very useful	Quite useful	Some-what useful	Not useful	Have not sought help/ advice
Family, friends or colleagues was.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local police was	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The PST was.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal protection officers was	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The health service was.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Private security company was.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The security section of parliament (or the Government Security and Service Organisation, DSS) was ...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other, please specify:.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

20. How often are you personally active on social media?

- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- More rarely
- I am not personally active on social media

21. Have you experienced any of the following statements, threats or approaches via social media? We are referring to approaches you presume are linked to your political activity.

You may choose more than one if relevant and please state how many times you have experienced this.

If YES, how many times have you experienced or been made aware of such approaches?

Strong statements of disapproval and hate speech	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3-9	<input type="checkbox"/> 10+
Indirect threats to harm you or someone close to you	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3-9	<input type="checkbox"/> 10+
Direct threats to harm you or someone close to you	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3-9	<input type="checkbox"/> 10+
One particular individual has made repeated, unwanted and disturbing approaches	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3-9	<input type="checkbox"/> 10+
Many individuals have made disturbing, unwanted approaches relating to the same issue	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3-9	<input type="checkbox"/> 10+

22. To what extent would you say that your role as a politician is exposed in the media (tv/radio/newspapers/magazines/online-media)?

- To a very great extent
- To a great extent
- To neither a great nor a small extent
- To a small extent
- To a very small extent

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The following questions concern details which may enable us to identify the respondent of this questionnaire. How much you want to share with us is entirely up to you, and you are free to finish at this point. We would nevertheless encourage you to provide as many details as possible. Your answers will give us very useful knowledge about whether particular roles, positions or parties are more susceptible than others. Our treatment of the responses and personal details provided by you is confidential. The answers you have given above cannot be traced back to you when the results of the survey are published.

23. Gender

- Male
- Female

24. Age

- Under 19
- 19 - 25
- 26 - 35
- 36 - 45
- 46 - 55
- 56 +

25. What is your position/role(s)??

You may choose more than one.

- Cabinet minister
- Parliamentarian
- Executive committee member – mother party
- Executive committee member – youth wing

26. Party membership

- Arbeiderpartiet (Ap, the Labour Party)
- Fremskrittspartiet (FrP, the Progress Party)

- Høyre (the Conservatives)
- Kristelig Folkeparti (KrF, the Christian Democratic Party)
- Miljøpartiet De Grønne (MDG, the Greens)
- Rødt (Red)
- Senterpartiet (Sp, the Centre party)
- Sosialistisk Venstreparti (SV, the Socialist Left Party)
- Venstre (V, the Liberals)

27. Civil status

- Single
- Married/civil partner/live-in partner

28. Are you living with children?

- Yes, the youngest is under 18
- Yes, the youngest is over 18
- No

29. How many years in total have you been a parliamentarian and/or cabinet minister?

- Up to 4 years
- 5-8 years
- 9-12 years
- More than 12 years

30. How many years have you been a member of the party executive committee and/or the youth wing executive committee?

- Up to 4 years
- 5-8 years
- 9-12 years
- More than 12 years
- I have not been a member of the executive committee of the party or the youth wing.

Thank you for completing the questionnaire!

Appendix 2. Reported incidents (table format)

	Parliament and cabinet (N=89)	Executive committee (N=55)	Executive committee Youth wing (N=61)
Physically attacked you or tried to attack you*	2	0	3
Threatened to harm you or people close to you	36	16	20
Made unpleasant or unwanted approaches or attempts at contact (e.g. at home, at work or in public places)	34	22	18
Behaved in an unpleasant or disturbing fashion towards you in connection with political events or during travels	27	27	31
Followed you (e.g. by car or on foot)	8	2	5
Loitered around your home or in other places where you often spend time	12	6	2
Caused damage to property or items which belong to you (e.g. your house or your car)	7	4	3
Brought false prosecutions against you	7	4	0
Spread malicious information about you (e.g. in newspapers or blogs, online smear campaigns etc.)	58	52	31
Made unwanted or troublesome telephone calls to you	38	35	20
Approached you in a troublesome and unwanted way via Twitter, Facebook or other social media	70	69	51

Appendix 3. Unwanted incidents reported by parliamentarians and cabinet ministers 2013-2021 (table format)

	2021 (N=89)	2017 (N=82)	2013 (N=112)
Physically attacked you or tried to attack you*	2	13	14
Threatened to harm you or people close to you	36	24	27
Made unpleasant or unwanted approaches or attempts at contact (e.g. at home, at work or in public places)	34	38	37
Behaved in an unpleasant or disturbing fashion towards you in connection with political events or during travels	27	28	25
Followed you (e.g. by car or on foot)	8	0	7
Loitered around your home or in other places where you often spend time	12	9	11
Caused damage to property or items which belong to you (e.g. your house or your car)	7	8	8
Brought false prosecutions against you	7	9	4
Spread malicious information about you (e.g. in newspapers or blogs, online smear campaigns etc.)	58	50	52
Made unwanted or troublesome telephone calls to you	38	38	45
Approached you in a troublesome and unwanted way via Twitter, Facebook or other social media	70	53	38



POLITIHØGSKOLEN

Politihøgskolen
Slemdalsveien 5
Postboks 2109, Vika
0125 Oslo
Tlf: 23 19 99 00
www.phs.no

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