

FSP violations report

Q1/2 18/19

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Introduction

This report gives a short overview over all incidents reported at Wikimedia events in the first two quarters of the fiscal year 2018/2019 to the Trust and Safety Team of the Wikimedia Foundation. Incidents analyzed in this report include direct violations of Friendly Space Policy (FSP) as well as other safety related issues at events, including medical or criminal issues. They are analysed in this report by type of incident, severity and the event they occurred at.

This report also lists Trust and Safety related incidents not directly linked to the events they were reported at. Those are not sorted further, as they are analyzed elsewhere, but added for information of workflows regarding incident reporting at events. Some of those reports are related to ongoing investigations, but most were about issues Trust and Safety would not have heard about otherwise. Incidents where Trust & Safety reached out to community members themselves are not included in this report, as they are covered under a different workflow.

It should be noted that this report may not provide an accurate representation of *all* the FSP violations that may have taken place during in person events for the aforementioned timeframe, as often incidents at events go unreported, especially those with a low level of severity. Also some reports of incidents reach Foundation staff with a considerable delay. Incidents get reported to volunteer bodies like the Code of Conduct Committee or volunteer organizers who sometimes take several weeks or months until they in turn report to the Wikimedia Foundation.

Data of incidents recorded

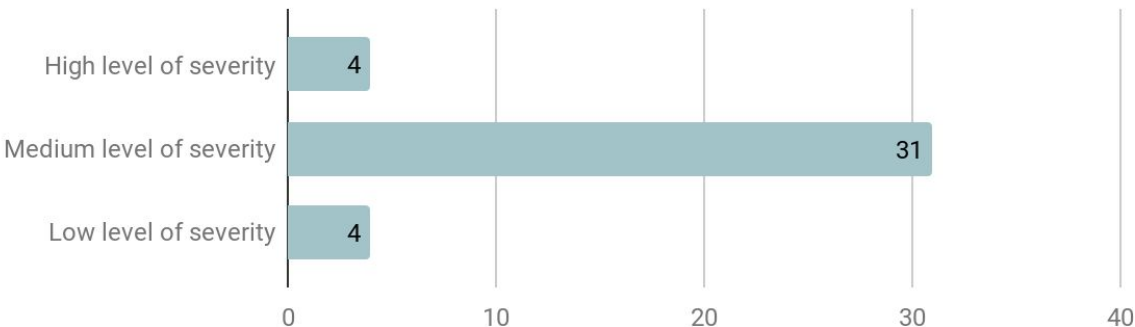
Of the 5 events the team got reports from, four had Trust and Safety Team members in attendance and incidents were directly reported to them during the event. There were no incidents reported through other teams within the Foundation. For one local event the organizing team had asked for support from Trust and Safety in developing and implementing a Friendly Space Policy; they reported all incidents that took place during that particular event retrospectively.

The four events with attendance of Trust and Safety staff were conferences with more than 100 attendees. Two of them had a broader international scope, one worldwide and one more regional and had wide multilingual and multicultural attendance. The other two conferences were more focused on one language and two to three countries. The conference with no attendance from Trust and Safety staff listed in this report was a training workshop with an attendance of 25 people from 11 different language communities. All events had a dedicated Safety Team.

Most of the incidents were reported in person or via a designated conference safety-chat to Trust and Safety team members, either by attendees or the organizing team. The two incidents reported from the local training event were reported in a follow-up call with the safety team of the event.

Taken all conferences together, 39 incidents were reported. 4 of those can be considered to have a high level of severity, 31 a medium level of severity and 4 a low level of severity.

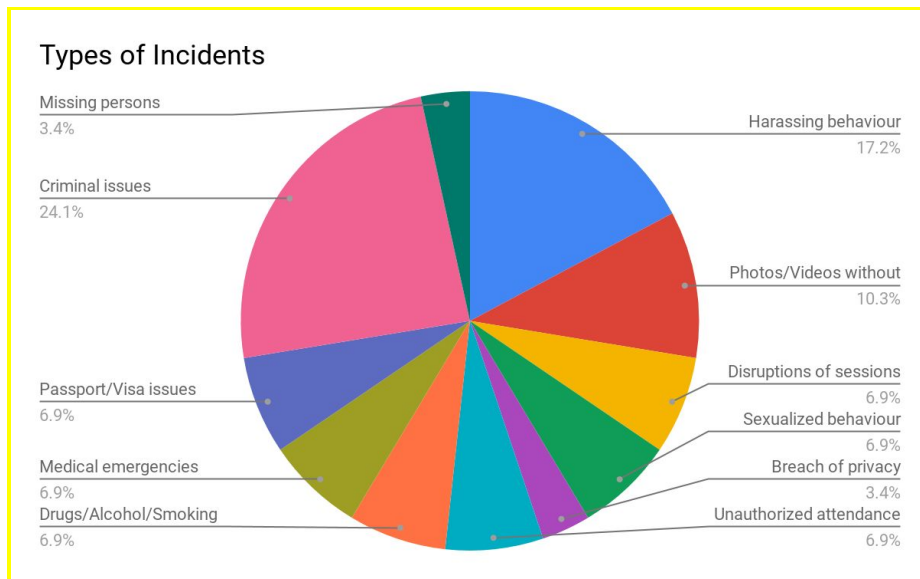
Levels of incident severity



18 of those incidents can be seen as direct violations of FSP, 12 as other safety related issues at the conference and 9 were reports of incidents not related to the conference. All incidents that can be considered to have a high level of severity were direct FSP violations.

Of the 18 direct FSP violations, 5 were harassing behaviour, 4 in person, one in writing, 3 were connected to photography or videography, 2 were disruptions of sessions, 3 had to do with sexualized behaviour. There was one breach of privacy issue, two attempts to attend an event unauthorized and two incidents involved smoking/drugs or alcohol.

Of the 12 other safety related issues, 2 were medical emergencies, 2 had to do with passport or visa issues, 7 were of criminal nature and one person was reported missing at a conference. Incidents of criminal nature were only reported from the global event; no such issues were reported during other events.



Of the four incidents of a high level of severity, one resulted in a cancellation of the registration of the participant that had to be enforced with the help of venue security. This was not the result of an isolated incident, rather it was a number of connected incidents that took place over the course of several days and at different locations/venues that lead to the aforementioned action. Two incidents led to a volunteer organizer being admonished and removed from their roles. One incident was successfully resolved by volunteer bystanders at the time it happened, and required no follow up.

Of the 31 incidents with a medium level of severity, all resulted in one or several follow-up talks with the involved persons by Trust and Safety staff members. Event organizers or staff encouraged several people to contact police around the criminal issues, but did not report anything themselves. For the 2 incidents involving unauthorized attendance, staff got assistance from the venue security. One of the incidents listed here involved the same perpetrator as one

of the more severe incidents; this person got removed from their role as volunteer organizers as stated above.

Trends observed and recommendations

The total number of participants at all in-person events we received reports from was well over 1000, and included people from widely different backgrounds and cultures. Each of those events was a multi-day event. It is to be expected that stressful encounters or mishaps like lost passports happen in such a context. With this understanding, the numbers above are low and probably indicate that Wikimedia events are mostly safe events.

Several major events, like the Wikimedia Tech Storm, GLAMTLV2018, WikiCite 2018 or the Wikimedia Developer Summit 2018 happened during the period we are reporting about. We received no reports about any of those events. This hopefully means that no major violations of FSP happened at those conferences and confirms the assumption that Wikimedia conferences are mostly safe spaces. Another interpretation could however be that major incidents did go unreported. It also hopefully indicates that attendees and organizers of events are mostly comfortable with handling incidents with medium or low levels of severity themselves.

While incidents happening at the conference were reported from two conferences where Trust and Safety staff was present, at the two other conferences only reports of not conference related incidents were made. This might be due to the fact that at these two conferences only one team member was present. Another explanation could be that the local/regional culture is one of not reporting. Another factor might be the fact that it was the first time a designated safety team was present at the conference. Those trends will have to be observed in the coming quarters.

One thing that seems unusual in this quarter is the high number of criminal issues reported around the global event. While the Wikimedia Foundation did not collect this data in previous years, the Trust and Safety Team knows this is the first time we had several incidents reported from one conference. This most likely is due to the location of the conference in a city with a high crime rate. As the Wikimedia movement strives to reach into more places with underserved communities, more conferences need to happen in locations with higher security risks. This can be countered by better planning. Most of those incidents happened on the way between hotel and venue, while somebody was walking alone. A more detailed security plan that makes it (among other things) easier for people to form groups for walking or provides escorts should be provided for future conferences in locations that are deemed to be less safe.

To keep the high standard of safety or even improve it, it is recommended to continue to support event organizers through the Trust and Safety team through trainings and materials. It is also recommended to continue sending Trust and Safety team members to conferences to be part of the designated Safety teams on the ground, especially for major conferences.

A continuing trend from events of recent years can be observed. Attendees use the presence of Trust and Safety staff at conferences to address issues of harassment that happen onwiki or at local events in person. Reporting such things via mail or other means online seems to be a barrier in some cases, especially for contributors from marginalized groups. This venue of reporting should be kept open or even purposefully widened to encourage those contributors to report harassment.