



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



REINFORCING REGIONAL COOPERATION TO  
**PROMOTE FREEDOM  
OF EXPRESSION  
AND THE RULE OF LAW  
IN ASIA**

**THROUGH ENDING IMPUNITY FOR  
CRIMES AGAINST JOURNALISTS**

**AGENDA**  
**4 DECEMBER 2017**  
**COLOMBO, SRI LANKA**

# IMPUNITY

for crimes against journalists constitutes one of the main factors fueling the cycle of violence against the exercise of freedom of expression. It weakens not only freedom of expression and access to information, but all other fundamental rights. In order to raise awareness on this issue, foster actions of all stakeholders and curb the cycle of violence, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Resolution A/RES/68/163 at its 68th session in 2013, which proclaimed 2 November as the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists (IDEI). The Resolution urged in particular Member States to implement definite measures to counter the present culture of impunity. UNESCO has been requested in the Resolution to facilitate the implementation of the IDEI.

Combatting impunity for crimes against journalists is an important step in addressing the high levels of journalists killed, as it perpetuates the cycle of violence against them. Worldwide, only 10% of the 930 cases of crimes against journalists have been resolved in the period 2006-2016, according to UNESCO statistics. In Asia & the Pacific, only 17 cases of the 237 crimes against journalists have been resolved in the same period (15% of the cases solved).

The one-day seminar entitled: *"Reinforcing regional cooperation to promote freedom of expression and the rule of law in Asia through ending impunity for crimes against journalists"* will seek to advance dialogues and strategies to strengthen the regional cooperation on safety of journalists and ending impunity in Asia. Through encouraging the exchange of best practices and identifying steps ahead and concrete solutions, the event aims to strengthen the fight of impunity for crimes against journalists in Asia and inscribe this issue in the larger framework to protect fundamental human rights.

# AGENDA

4 DECEMBER 2017  
COLOMBO, SRI LANKA

09:00 - 09:30

## Opening statements

### Keynote speech:

Hon Ranil Wickremesinghe, *Prime Minister of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka*

### Introductory remarks:

Hon Mangala Samaraweera, *Minister of Finance and Media, Sri Lanka*

Video message by Mr Frank La Rue, *Assistant Director-General for Communication and Information, UNESCO*

Mr Guy Berger, *Director, Division of Freedom of Expression and Media Development, UNESCO*

09:30 - 11:00

## Session 1: National protection and impunity mechanisms in Asia

**Moderator:** Mr Guy Berger, *Director, Division on Freedom of Expression and Media Development, UNESCO*

### Speakers:

Mr Laxman Datt Pant, *Chairperson, Media Action Nepal*

Mr Ilias Alami, *Operations Manager, Afghan Journalists Safety Committee (AJSC)*

Ms Angkhana Neelapaijit, *Commissioner, National Human Rights Commission, Thailand*

Ms Fathimath Isha Afeef, *Journalist, Maldives Independent*

Ms Geeta Seshu, *Journalist; Contributing Editor, The Hoot; Member of UNESCO's Media Freedom Committee, India*

Mr Owais Aslam Ali, *Pakistan Press Foundation*

11.00 - 11.30

## Coffee break

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11:30 - 13:00

**Session 2: Fighting impunity in Sri Lanka: review of challenges and achievements**

**Moderator:** Mr Nalaka Gunawardene, *Writer, Journalist and Development Communication Specialist, Sri Lanka*

**Speakers:**

Ms Sonali Samarasinghe Wickrematunge, *Minister, Permanent Mission of Sri Lanka to the United Nations, New York*

Ms Deepika Udagama, *Chairperson, National Human Rights Commission, Sri Lanka*

Mr Thevanayagam Premanath, *Editor, Uthayan, Sri Lanka*

Mr Ruwan Gunasekera, *Police Superintendent, Police Media Spokesman, Sri Lanka*

Mr Sanjana Hattotuwa, *Senior Researcher, Centre for Policy Alternatives, Sri Lanka*

13:00 - 14:30

**Lunch break**

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14:30 - 16:00

**Session 3: Towards a regional cooperation to foster freedom of expression and safety of journalists in Asia**

**Moderator:** Ms Cynthia Veliko, *Regional Representative, OHCHR*

**Speakers:**

Mr Toby Mendel, *Executive Director, The Centre for Law and Democracy*

Ms Kathryn Raymundo, *Alerts Officer, Southeast Asian Press Alliance (SEAPA)*

Mr Jerald Joseph, *Commissioner, National Human Rights Commission, Malaysia*

Mr Monjurul Ahsan Bulbul, *President, Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists-JFUJ*

Justice Ali Nawaz Chowhan, *Chairman, National Human Rights Commission of Pakistan*

Ms Mohna Ansari, *Commissioner, National Human Rights Commission, Nepal*

16:00 - 16:30

**Coffee break**

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16:30 - 17:30

### **Way forward, including raising awareness and reinforcing capacities**

**Moderator:** Ms Jacqui Park, *Director, International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) Asia-Pacific*

**Speakers:**

Mr Ranga Kalansooriya, *Regional Advisor, International Media Support (IMS); former Director-General of the Department of Government Information, Sri Lanka*

Ms Banchita Chakma, *Commissioner, National Human Rights Commission, Bangladesh*

Ms Laxmi Murthy, *International Federation of Journalists Asia-Pacific, India*

Mr Mehdi Benchelah, *Senior Project Officer, Division of Freedom of Expression and Media Development, UNESCO*

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17:30 - 18:30

### **Recap and Closing remarks**

**Moderator:** Mr Bambang Harymurti, *Editor-in-chief, Tempo, Indonesia*

**Rapporteurs:**

Ms Misako Ito, *Advisor for Communication and Information, UNESCO Bangkok Office*

Mr Al Amin Yusuph, *Advisor for Communication and Information, UNESCO New Delhi Office*

**Remarks:**

Hon Karu Paranawithana, *Deputy Minister of Skill Development and Vocational Training, former Deputy Minister of Parliament Reforms and Mass Media, Sri Lanka*

Mr Toby Mendel, *Executive Director, The Centre for Law and Democracy*

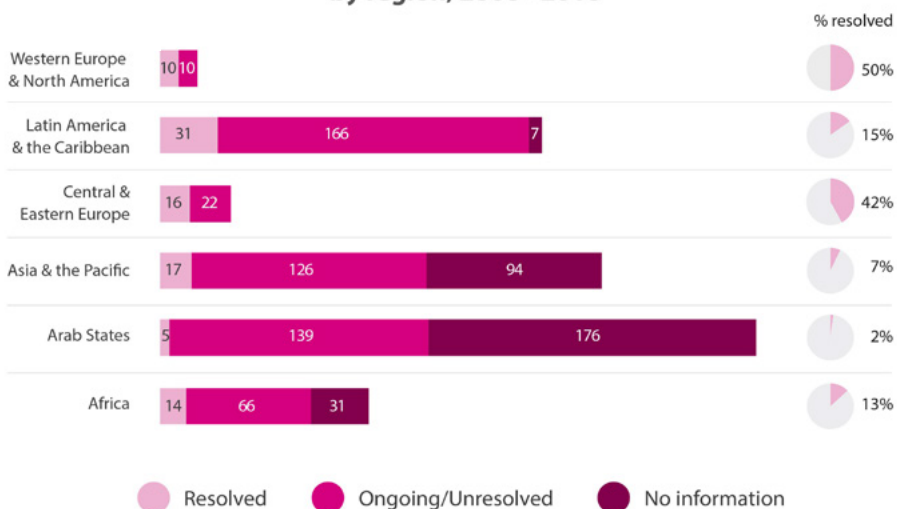
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18:30 - 20:00

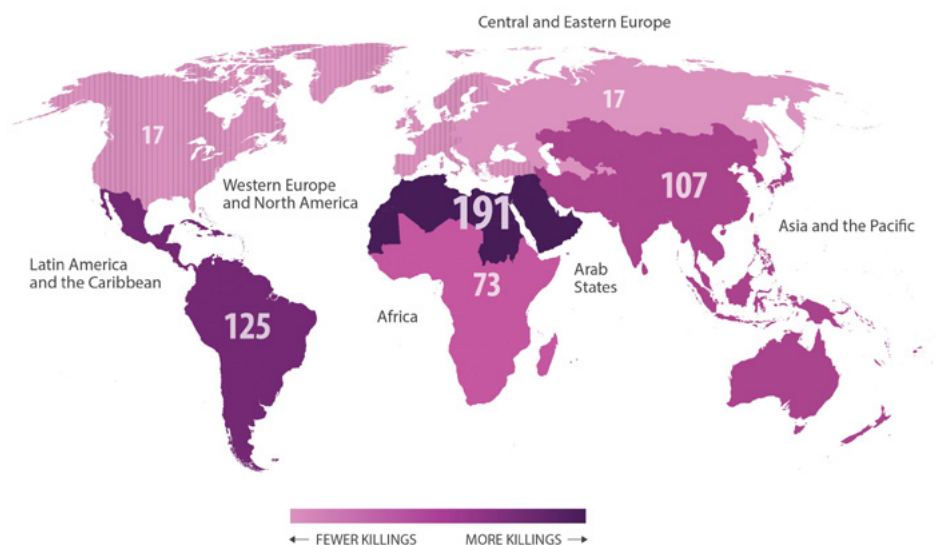
### **Reception**

# UNESCO FIGURES ON JOURNALISTS' SAFETY AND IMPUNITY

**Status of judicial inquiry in killings of journalists  
by region, 2006 - 2016**



## Map of journalists killed by region, 2012-2016



**Source:** UNESCO. 2017. *World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development: 2017/2018 Global Report*

**More information, visit:** [en.unesco.org/world-media-trends-2017](http://en.unesco.org/world-media-trends-2017)

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