

Strengthening the Implementation of the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity

Draft Outcome document (21 June)

This list of draft recommendations has been compiled in the light of submissions from multiple interested parties within the framework of a global consultation. It is founded on a longer report aggregating these submissions, and which summarizes the achievements, challenges and lessons learnt, and suggestions for the way forward.

This document will constitute the primary object of discussion at a Multi-Stakeholder Consultation Meeting on 29 June 2017, convened by UNESCO and OHCHR, in Geneva.

Comments can be sent to M.Benchelah@unesco.org by COB June 29, as well as orally during the 29 June meeting itself. This Recommendations document will then be revised. Thereafter, a second version will be circulated for a last round of comments before being finalized by UNESCO and OHCHR as a non-binding outcome document that can inform stakeholder actions going forward.

1. ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS:

UN system:

1. Take steps through UNESCO, supported by OHCHR and the UN Secretary-General's designated person on safety of journalists, to help ensure more participation and co-ordination by UN actors in the UN Plan,
2. Consider, at the Chief Executives Board of the UN, reinforcing the system of focal points for safety of journalists at senior levels of relevant UN entities, and developing clear terms of reference for them,
3. Continue to promote normative work and standards, grounded in gender analysis and gender-sensitivity, as set out in UN resolutions, as well as keep the issue high on the international agenda, and respond to new aspects as they emerge such as in SDG global reporting,
4. Raise awareness about all mechanisms existing within the UN system to advance the safety of journalists and address impunity,
5. Advance implementation of the UN Plan and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16.10, through the Development Operations Coordination Office (DOCO) and UN Resident Coordinators, along with UN Country Teams, with the aim of integrating the safety of journalists into development plans and UN Development Assistance Frameworks,
6. Support work on safety of journalists through mechanisms such as the UN Peace Fund and UN funds for countering terrorism and any other relevant UN funding mechanism,
7. Earmark more financial and human resources within UN entities for implementation of the UN Plan, particularly at national level,

OHCHR:

8. Continue to promote and raise awareness about the opportunities to advance the safety of journalists through the Human Rights Council (HRC), the Universal Periodic Review process, and the relevant Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council and human rights treaty bodies,
9. Ensure continuously improved global reporting on SDG indicator 16.10.1. as custodian agency for this indicator, and, in collaboration with UNESCO and other stakeholders, broaden the scope of monitoring journalists' safety beyond cases of killing to include enforced disappearance, torture, arbitrary detention, kidnapping and other harmful acts,
10. Consider mainstreaming the issue of safety of journalists and impunity into all UPR sessions to provide an opportunity for systematically measuring state progress on this issue.

UNESCO:

11. Continue and enhance leadership of the UN Plan by expanding scale and outreach, especially at national level, by engaging with UN entities, UNESCO National Commissions, governments, civil society, judges and security forces, media, internet intermediaries and academia.
12. Continue to strengthen UN's normative work on safety of journalists, such as through providing leadership on themes for commemorations of international days, publicising UNESCO's statistics on safety and impunity, and ensuring attention to gender and digital dimensions to safety issues,
13. Continue research on emerging issues regarding freedom of the press and the safety of journalists, creating synergies with the work carried out by NGOs, academia, journalists' associations and other relevant stakeholders,
14. Expand the scale of provision of technical advice to Member States in terms of draft laws and national mechanisms dealing with safety issues,
15. Increase capacity-building efforts regarding safety issues with all actors in the media community, journalism schools, judges, law enforcement agents including security forces, and other local actors,
16. Continue and enhance roll-out of Journalists' Safety Indicators studies and in more countries,
17. Build capacity and strengthen reporting and responses to the UNESCO Director-General's requests for information from Member States on judicial follow up to killings of journalists.
18. Deepen work with OHCHR in developing more comprehensive safety reporting on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicator 16.10.1 as per terms of the indicator, and assist Member States in their own monitoring in this area,
19. Strengthen UNESCO's convening role in reporting on SDG indicator 16.10.2, which is relevant to public access to information and transparency concerning official information on safety and impunity.

2. ROLE OF MEMBER STATES

Joint actions:

20. Consider co-sponsoring and supporting resolutions in UN and regional intergovernmental bodies, thereby explicitly acknowledging that safety of journalists and the issue of impunity are the responsibility of the state,
21. Encourage the Group of Friends of Safety of Journalists to expand its co-ordinating work, further develop its expertise and designate focal points to share information between the instances in New York, Geneva and Paris,
22. Consider increasing engagement on safety issues with the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), the UN treaty body system, the special rapporteurs and working groups, SDG reporting processes and UNESCO's reporting mechanism, including by strengthening support and accountability for Member States who do not provide information to UNESCO regarding judicial follow-up concerning cases of journalists who have been killed,
23. Encourage those Member States who do respond to UNESCO requests for information on judicial follow-up to make their responses publically available.

Each individual Member State:

24. Acknowledge the responsibility of the State in ensuring that each attack against journalists is swiftly and efficiently investigated, and recognise impunity for crimes against journalists as the root problem,
25. Integrate safety of journalists into national development frameworks as part of the 2030 Development Agenda, and work to ensure an enabling environment for press freedom and the right to information,
26. In the light of SDG 16.10, each Member State should consider developing a plan for safety of journalists, that includes establishing multistakeholder safety mechanism to prevent, protect, prosecute and monitor, and dedicate adequate resources to it; Such mechanisms can include dedicated units for investigation and prosecution as appropriate; An all-of-government approach is needed to avoid a fragmentation of efforts and the risks of poor co-ordination, especially between ministries dealing with policing and other security issues, human rights, justice, information/media/communications, gender, and foreign affairs, as well as work with ombudspersons and independent Human Rights Commissions,
27. Designate a focal point at senior level of government to liaise with stakeholders including UNESCO, OHCHR, media and civil society, as well as the SDG and UPR processes, and take advantage of the technical and financial resources of UN and other stakeholders,
28. Establish an information system as a knowledge base for domestic policies as well as for serving as a resource for reporting on SDGs, responding to UNESCO's requests on judicial follow-up to killings, and engaging with UN human rights mechanisms, in particular the UPR; strengthen data collection including by partnerships with UN entities, civil society and other stakeholders; consider using SDG indicator 16.10.1 for national monitoring and reporting on safety issues; ensure that monitoring includes online harassment of journalists; and disaggregate data on gender lines,

29. Ensure training of law enforcement, judicial and other public officials so as to ensure they have the requisite media and human rights literacy which includes a thorough understanding of the work of journalists, including online, and the importance of the safety and impunity issue to society, as well as protocols for their operating procedures in this area; and strengthen capacities for effective protection and prosecution;
30. Ensure implementation of regional judgements and share relevant international jurisprudence with national judiciaries,
31. Respect the status of journalists as civilians during conflict situations in accordance with international humanitarian law,
32. Ensure investigation and, where required, prosecution of attacks on journalists in all situations, even after a lapse of years, in order to combat the prevailing impunity in relation to these attacks,
33. Give particular attention to the specific violence against and threats to the safety of women journalists, and take strong gender-sensitive measures to prevent such violence and threats, including by taking action against sexual harassment and discrimination of women journalists, online and offline, including by political actors.

Parliaments:

34. Repeal legislation out of line with international standards on freedom of expression, and introduce or strengthen freedom of information laws which create a climate conducive to safety and which assist with transparency in regard to state monitoring and practice in regard to safety and impunity issues,
35. Engage on the issue of safety, and where appropriate develop legislation aimed at protecting journalists, giving special attention to prevention policies, ending impunity and securing the confidentiality of journalistic sources online and offline.

3. ROLE OF REGIONAL INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS, CIVIL SOCIETY, MEDIA, INTERNET INTERMEDIARIES AND ACADEMIA

3.1 Recommendations – Regional Intergovernmental Organisations

36. Nominate senior officials to serve as focal points for engagement with other actors in the UN Plan,
37. Intensify the work of approving resolutions, issuing statements, developing standards and building the capacity of Member States and other stakeholders in the area of safety and impunity,
38. Enhance the sharing of good practices and joint capacity building exercises, especially on data collection, monitoring and guidelines,
39. Bring awareness of the UN Plan to regional constituencies, including the regions where there is a lack of equivalent regional intergovernmental structures working on safety and impunity,
40. Consider, in the case Regional Intergovernmental Organisations which do not yet give attention to safety, or which lack Rapporteurs with a mandate covering this area, adapting good practice from those regions that do.

3.2 Recommendations – Civil Society

41. Strengthen internal co-ordination amongst NGOs, through information exchanges, especially on a south-south basis, joint projects including missions and advocacy, and avoidance of duplication,
42. Enhance external coordination and synergies with different stakeholders, particularly in regard to establishing nationally-owned protection mechanisms and local appropriation of the UN Plan,
43. Make better use of UN channels and outputs, such as UNESCO's monitoring reporting mechanisms, and the mechanisms supported by OHCHR, as well as maintain civil society's own monitoring and alerts,
44. Continue support for capacity-building for Member States and the media on issues of safety and impunity, and increase communication about the availability of resources (financial, technical, knowledge-based, etc.),
45. Continue to strengthen networks for journalists in distress, and provide support for emergencies and relocation of media professionals under threat,
46. Increase strategic litigation – including use of right to information laws - in the context of coalitions and campaigns, and draw in law firms to a greater extent,
47. Intensify work around the issues of women journalists, freelancers and actors outside the media industry who produce significant amounts of journalism,
48. Diversify/enhance sources of funding to support international efforts to foster journalist safety and address impunity.

3.3 Recommendations - Media

49. Instil a greater culture of safety among media owners and news managers, who may not understand the risks facing journalists and the particular threats to women journalists. Media owners need to provide for tailored insurance and social protection cover, and strengthen collaboration with media associations/unions around the safety of journalists.
50. Ensure updated and publicized newsroom safety policies and protocols, and designated focal points, for the protection of journalists including freelancers. These systems should cater to the physical, psychological and digital dimensions of safety,
51. Train media professionals to ensure they have comprehensive knowledge of their rights and restrictions as journalists, as well as training to mitigate risks and dealing with threats, particularly in environments where journalists have been previously killed and where impunity is rife,
52. Improve digital safety and develop strategies to address online harassment of journalists, particularly women journalists, including cooperation with social media companies so as to obtain immediate support in cases of threats made on their platforms,
53. Increase awareness within the profession as to how media can better apply existing legal provisions (official channels to make complaints and lay charges, freedom of information requests, etc.) to enhance the safe practice of the profession,
54. Develop reporting systems for threats, including protocols for involving the police, and increase real-time exchange of alerts between focal points in different newsrooms,
55. Increase media coverage of attacks against the media, including but not limited to coverage on 3 May, World Press Freedom Day, and 2 November, the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists; and develop professional

- training on how to cover attacks against journalists with a view to ending impunity, as well as improving public engagement by explaining the overall public interest in ending attacks against journalists,
56. Consider conducting independent investigations into attacks against journalists whenever state institutions fail to do so, and co-operate in order to finish investigative stories left uncompleted by the killing of a journalist,
 57. Bridge the gap with civil society media support groups, and take up their offerings of training such as on first aid and digital defence; and communicate that safety measures are more effective and stand a better chance of being implemented when elaborated by and/or in cooperation with the industry,
 58. Pool efforts by developing industry-wide co-operation and campaigns, and take a full part in coalitions,
 59. Strongly and publicly counter all discriminations against journalists, such as those based on gender or on social or cultural background; encourage and enhance a policy of gender equality inside media institutions, and counter social, cultural and other obstacles to equality between male and female journalists,
 60. Support and initiate legal action that helps to ensure that governments do more to protect journalists under threat and to prosecute the persons who attack them,
 61. Strengthen networks of newsroom safety officers, and replicate these in regions where these do not exist.

3.4 Recommendations – Internet intermediaries

62. Recognise, through public statements and internal policy, the risk to society and to their own business models, of online attacks against journalists, such as hacking, Distributed Denial of Service (DDOS) attacks on websites, and targeted cyberbullying,
63. Recognise and monitor the specific situation of threats to women journalists as impacted on their platforms and services,
64. Develop more consistent and increased engagement with UN Plan stakeholders across a range of issues such as support, training, research, advocacy, transparency and awareness-raising,
65. Designate senior staffers as focal points to liaise on safety issues with media and other stakeholders in the UN Plan,
66. Coordinate better with news media organisations to identify effective technical and standard operating procedures that can provide solutions to emergency as well as medium-term challenges.

3.5 Recommendations - Academia

67. Widen the Journalism Safety Research Network by encouraging other academic researchers to take up and share knowledge on safety issues, including the gender dimensions, such as through organising seminars and publishing research,
68. Develop specific courses as part of the core curriculum in all journalism schools, including using and adapting specialised teaching resources that have been produced by UNESCO and others; invite practising journalists to share practical experience with journalism students;

69. Promote closer engagement with other stakeholders, including UNESCO, explaining the roles and resources of academia, and publicising new research results and where to find them;
70. Take up the opportunities for research as availed by the Journalists' Safety Indicators, and make use of UNESCO and UN data on safety and impunity.

4. Recommendations – All stakeholders in awareness raising

71. Continue and heighten awareness of the existence of the UN Plan, its Implementation Strategy and ongoing activities aligned to its framework, and highlight how the initiative encourages multi-stakeholder co-operation to protect journalists at global, regional and national levels,
72. Build media literacy by conducting awareness-raising about the linkage that journalistic safety has to sustainable development, rule of law, human rights and democracy, and how media self-regulatory systems can provide channels for dissatisfied persons;
73. Ensure that sensitisation strategies include both campaigns for the general public, as well as campaigns with more targeted audiences such as media leaders, parliamentarians, law enforcement agencies, prosecutors and judges, UN entities, UN Country Teams, Internet intermediaries, etc.,
74. Mobilise prominent personalities to speak out and function as ambassadors for the right to freedom of expression and the safety of journalists,
75. Highlight particular cases beyond the statistics, in order to create public awareness about the importance of journalistic safety, e.g. by publicising the status of the judicial investigations into specific murdered or missing journalists, and explaining the wider significance of the case,
76. Capitalise on key dates for partnerships in awareness-raising, such as 3 May (World Press Freedom Day) and 2 November (International Day to End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists), as well as 13 February (World Radio Day), 28 September (International Day for Universal Access to Information), 9 December (International Human Rights Defenders Day), 10 December (Human Rights Day), and 29 November (International Women Human Rights Defenders Day),
77. Make use of innovative and creative communications, including entertainment formats and Internet memes,
78. Communicate these recommendations to all Member States and other stakeholder representatives, including Groups of Friends of Safety in New York, Geneva and Paris, UN Resident Coordinators, the UN Chief Executives Board, regional organisations, media, civil society networks, academia, and Internet companies.