



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

# Journalists' Safety Indicators: National Level

Based on the UNESCO's Media Development Indicators

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UNESCO

Division of Freedom of Expression and Media Development  
Communication and Information Sector

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information>

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## **Journalists' Safety Indicators at National Level**

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## Introduction: Journalists' Safety Indicators at National Level<sup>1</sup>

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### The importance of journalists' safety

Freedom of expression is a fundamental element of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and is widely seen as underpinning other democratic freedoms such as the right to form political parties, the right to share political ideas, the right to scrutinise the actions of public officials, and so on. In this sense, it also supports good governance and democratic accountability.

For this reason, media are considered to require special protections to enable them to operate freely. It follows therefore that journalists need to be free and safe to provide the content that is carried on media platforms. This content represents an exercise of the public expression of our collective rights.

In a world of increasingly ubiquitous digital content it is important to understand that the term journalist is now wide-ranging and includes not just those media workers formally organised in a professional body or employed by a media organisation.<sup>2</sup> As the UN Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression stated in his 2012 report:

“Journalists are individuals who observe and describe events, document and analyse events, statements, policies, and any propositions that can affect society, with the purpose of systematizing such information and gathering of facts and analyses to inform sectors of society or society as a whole.”<sup>3</sup>

UNESCO's International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) used the following formulation in its Decision of 23 March 2012: “*journalists, media workers and social media producers who generate a significant amount of public-interest journalism*”. For the purposes of the Journalists' Safety Indicators, the term journalists covers media workers such as reporters and photojournalists, support staff and fixers, those active in community media and so-called citizen journalists – i.e. not all users of social media and digital outlets, but particularly those who use them to produce, curate or distribute significant volumes of public interest content.

Alongside freedom of expression, the right to life and to the integrity and security of persons are fundamental human rights that are recognized and guaranteed by international conventions and instruments. Such rights clearly apply to everyone. But they are important to the practice of journalism for at least three reasons:

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<sup>1</sup> Note that a separate instrument exists for Journalists' Safety Indicators at Global Level.

<sup>2</sup> The UN Human Rights Committee defines journalism as: “*a function shared by a wide range of actors, including professional full-time reporters and analysts, as well as bloggers and others who engage in forms of self-publication in print, on the Internet or elsewhere*”. General Comment No. 34 on Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

<sup>3</sup> <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G12/137/87/PDF/G1213787.pdf?OpenElement>

- Unless journalists are safe and secure they cannot be expected to carry out their professional duties that enable the media to provide the public platform for the exchange of ideas, opinions and information.
- Unpunished killings and violence lead to self-censorship – journalists come to believe that it is simply too dangerous to cover certain topics.
- The high visibility of journalists means that members of society at large do not feel that they themselves are safe to speak when they see a journalist is attacked, and especially when there is impunity for the attackers.

The safety of journalists is therefore an important human rights issue in itself and one that is also central to the realization of freedom of expression more broadly.

### **The nature of threats**

Journalism is frequently unsafe. UNESCO's Director-General condemned 122 killings of journalists in 2012. Many indices of press freedom treat violence against journalists as a key factor in determining the relative freedom of the media environment: for example, Reporters Without Borders' Press Freedom Index and Freedom House's Freedom of the Press Index of 2012. More specifically the Committee for the Protection of Journalists (CPJ) analyses attacks, and in 2012 they reported that 70 journalists were killed where the motive was known and a further 31 died but with no confirmed motive<sup>4</sup>. Accordingly to CPJ, 30 percent of journalists killed were using the internet as a medium, which reflects its growing importance not just as a communication medium but as a platform that can lead to danger.

Most journalists who are killed are not famous international reporters - of the deaths reported, around 95 percent were local journalists or freelancers rather than foreign reporters<sup>5</sup>. Many attacks are perpetrated by police and security personnel, militia as well as non-state actors, such as organised crime groups. Threats to journalists do not just involve killings but also cover non-lethal attacks and threats of harm to the individual, their sources and their families.

The indicators here do not distinguish between different categories of journalist. Anyone involved in the provision of news or information is deemed worthy of protection. Any threats or attacks against the family members of journalists that are related to their work can also be considered to be a threat or attack against the journalist concerned.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://cpj.org/killed/2013/>

<sup>5</sup> According to the [2012 UNESCO Director-General's Report on the Safety of Journalists and the Danger of Impunity](#)

**The problem of impunity**

According to the information received from UNESCO Member States and reported in the 2012 *UNESCO Director-General's Report on the Safety of Journalists and the Danger of Impunity* to the IPDC, only **nine** out of **245 cases** (2006-2009) had led to a conviction. CPJ claims that in nine of out ten murders, no-one is held responsible or punished.

The impunity for the killers of and perpetrators of violence against journalists serves to fuel a cycle of killings. It serves to intimidate the broader citizenry and undermines public confidence in the rule of law. It is widely accepted that the safety of journalists will never be resolved if impunity is not addressed. Throughout this document, the term "safety of journalists" or "journalists' safety issues" generally includes the issue of impunity even if not explicitly stated.

### UNESCO's role

UNESCO has a unique role within the United Nations system for promoting freedom of expression and its corollaries press freedom and the right to information. This is done through both normative and programmatic work. Activities range across many areas, with journalists' safety being a major component.

Recently UNESCO led the *UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity*<sup>6</sup> which was endorsed by the UN Chief Executives Board in 2012. In November 2012, a multi-stakeholder meeting adopted a 120-point *Implementation Strategy*<sup>7</sup> for the Plan of Action and to coordinate the UN system's response in securing the safety of journalists and combatting the impunity of those who commit crimes against them. Member States of the UNESCO Executive Board at its 191<sup>st</sup> Session in April 2013 endorsed the UNESCO Work Plan on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity.<sup>8</sup> It is in this context that the Journalists' Safety Indicators have been developed.

### Safety indicators

In 2008, the Intergovernmental Council of the International Programme for the Development of Communication endorsed the UNESCO *Media Development Indicators (MDI): a framework for assessing media development*, as a unique diagnostic tool for assessing national media landscapes and identifying media development gaps. One relatively short section of these indicators dealt with questions of journalists' safety (paragraphs 3:13 and 3:14)<sup>9</sup>.

These original indicators covered a broad set of factors relating to safety as follows:

- Journalists and associated media personnel are not subject to threats, harassment or surveillance
- Journalists and associated media personnel are not physically attacked, unlawfully detained or killed as a result of pursuing their legitimate activities
- Media organisations are not forced to close down as a result of pursuing their legitimate activities, or threatened with closure
- Crimes against journalists are prosecuted and there is no climate of impunity
- Media organisations have policies for protecting the health and safety of their

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<sup>6</sup>

[http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/pdf/official\\_documents/un\\_plan\\_action\\_safety\\_en.pdf](http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/pdf/official_documents/un_plan_action_safety_en.pdf)

[http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/pdf/official\\_documents/Implementation\\_Strategy\\_2013-2014\\_01.pdf](http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/pdf/official_documents/Implementation_Strategy_2013-2014_01.pdf)

<sup>7</sup>

[http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/pdf/official\\_documents/UNESCO\\_Workplan\\_on\\_Safety\\_of\\_Journalists\\_and\\_the\\_Issue\\_of\\_Impunity.pdf](http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/pdf/official_documents/UNESCO_Workplan_on_Safety_of_Journalists_and_the_Issue_of_Impunity.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> See Category 3.F on Safety of Journalists in the UNESCO Media Development Indicators (MDI): a framework for assessing media development

staff and freelancers

- Measures of social protection are available to all staff, including temporary and freelance employees
- Journalists do not routinely self-censor because of fear of punishment, harassment or attack
- Confidentiality of sources is protected in law and respected in practice

These general safety indicators provide the basis for the more detailed Journalists' Safety Indicators which can be used to generate baseline information against which progress in the implementation of the UN Plan of Action can then be assessed over time. These detailed indicators can also be useful for a range of actors to identify priorities and opportunities for joint actions.

While the state of press freedom (or its absence) has a major bearing on whether journalists can operate professionally and without fear, the safety indicators elaborated here are not intended to measure press freedom as such (which is already extensively covered in the wide-ranging UNESCO Media Development Indicators). The emphasis in the Journalists' Safety Indicators is thus on a narrow definition of safety, relating to physical and psychological security, and to the related problem of impunity for those who violate these aspects of the life of a journalist. These indicators therefore exist "downstream" in the media landscape.

The Journalists' Safety Indicators are sufficiently generic to be useful for application in war and conflict situations, as well as in conditions that are comparatively less violent and where the government authorities generally maintain control of the territory of the State.

The safety indicators here are not normative standards in the sense that they apply to every country. Rather, they are an analytic tool covering a range of possible factors that can impact on the safety of journalists within a given State. Not all indicators may be relevant to a given country. They are not prescriptive. The instrument therefore is designed primarily to help stakeholders identify potentially salient aspects of journalists' safety issues and track any changes in these over time. Published findings should indicate any cases in which certain indicators have not been included (and explain whether this is for reasons of unsuitability, of absence of data or other causes).

### **Detailed safety indicators**

In developing indicators into a working tool focused explicitly on journalists' safety, the framework is one which identifies the context of safety and the responsibility of diverse actors at the national level.

The indicators allow for assessment of the problem, of the systems in place and of the actions of the various actors and institutions concerned, including government, police, judiciary, CSOs, the media themselves, professional associations and journalists' unions, and

international organizations including the UN. These actors have been grouped into four major categories whose actions can directly impact upon journalists' safety: (i) UN and other intergovernmental bodies operating directly in a country; (ii) state and political actors; (iii) civil society and academia; and (iv) the media and intermediaries. In each category, indicators are given covering a variety of actions, including: monitoring safety issues (information collection), promoting norms on safety (which includes the publishing of information, amongst other steps), co-ordination with other actors, training and capacity-building programmes, as well as other activities.

As with the overall Media Development Indicators, for each actor, the **context and main issues** are briefly outlined.

Under each section a range of **key indicators** are given; each of these has a set of sub-indicators to flesh out what the 'headline' indicator looks like in concrete terms

In most cases, for each indicator, various **means of verification** are suggested.

For each category, a guide to **data sources** available is offered; this guidance is not exhaustive but offers pointers towards available online and offline sources. The cited data sources do not include all the different kinds of data available at national level, or in other languages. These information resources should be used to supplement those listed here. The sources mentioned here also do not directly cover previously-unpublished sources, such as information gleaned through interviews and focus groups as part of the research process.

Although a conceptual distinction is made between the means of verification and the data sources, in practice these are often in combined form. These might be multilateral and bilateral meetings; support for policy and legislative development, advice on institutional design in the criminal justice chain; conferences and seminars; training and workshops; media development programmes and projects; reports, research studies and publications; campaigns and other information materials; resolutions, decisions, declarations and other public statements; innovative activities online and any other type of action that has a bearing on the safety indicator concerned. Interviews with key actors, structured-sample focus groups and press reports can also serve as both a means of verification and as a data source.

All these issues are elaborated in the Guidebook associated with the Journalists' Safety Indicators.

## A. General indicators

### ***Context & Main Issues***

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In 2012, the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity was endorsed by the chief executives of all component UN bodies. It aimed to mobilize UN agencies and other stakeholders including UN Member States, regional intergovernmental human rights bodies, NGOs and media actors to work together to create a safer environment for journalists. These indicators below assess the state of safety issues, as well as partnerships among all stakeholders within a country.

### ***Key Indicators***

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#### **1. Safety and impunity statistics<sup>10</sup>**

- i. Number and types of threats against the lives and limbs of journalists.<sup>11</sup>
- ii. Number and types of other threats to journalists.<sup>12</sup>
- iii. Number and types of actual attacks<sup>13</sup> on journalists.
- iv. Number and types of killings<sup>14</sup> of journalists.
- v. Number and types of threats against media institutions.
- vi. Number and type of attacks on media institutions.
- vii. Disaggregated data on the above indicators relating to gender, fulltime-freelance-citizen status of journalist, media platform (print, radio, TV, online), and other criteria as may be significant (eg. rural/urban; minority group, etc).

#### *Means of verification*

- Press coverage and interviews.
- Reports from NGOs, UN, government, professional groups, police and court reports, and others.

#### **2. Shared understandings and activities**

- i. Amongst national stakeholder groups, there is an accurate understanding of the extent and nature of the problems.

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<sup>10</sup> Diverse sources use different definitions and research methods, and findings for these indicators should reflect this rather than rely on one single source.

<sup>11</sup> Such threats of bodily harm, including death, may be direct, via third-parties, electronic or physical communications, and may be implicit as well as explicit, and encompass references to killing a journalist's friends, family or sources.

<sup>12</sup> These kind of threats may include surveillance or trailing, harassing phone calls, arbitrary judicial or administrative harassment, aggressive declarations by public officials, or other forms of pressure that can jeopardise the safety of journalists in pursuing their work.

<sup>13</sup> Types of actual attacks may include actual physical or mental harm, kidnapping, invasion of home/office, seized equipment, arbitrary detention, failed assassination attempts, etc.

<sup>14</sup> Types of killings may include being killed in cross-fire, assassinated, killed in a bomb explosion, beaten to death, etc.

- ii. Stakeholders are connected to national and international alert mechanisms.
- iii. Good practices are widely shared through online and offline stakeholder group networks.
- iv. Information materials are available in the key national languages.
- v. A national strategy exists that identifies targets and role-players responsible for these issues.
- vi. Stakeholders collaborate in practice in regard to key public events.
- vii. Safety issues have visibility in relevant international days and events.
- viii. Stakeholders create awareness through monuments, naming of streets, meeting rooms or halls, and prizes.
- ix. Indirect stakeholders such as public figures, lawyers' and bar associations, magistrates' associations, Internet freedom NGOs, and women, youth and environmental groups actively promote the safety of journalists.
- x. Existing hotlines and other safety mechanisms and facilities for journalists in distress have adequate visibility and can operate without undue hindrance.

#### *Means of verification*

- Press coverage, individual interviews, focus groups, surveys.
- Reports from NGOs, UN, government, professional groups and others.
- Existence of campaigns or hotlines.

#### *Data sources*

National and international data sources, such as (in random order):

- [International News Safety Institute \(INSI\)](#)
- [Freedom House Freedom of the Press Report](#)
- [International Freedom of Expression eXchange \(IFEX\) – information on safety of journalists:](#)
- [International Research and Exchanges Board \(IREX\)– Media Sustainability Index:](#)
- [United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime](#)
- [International Media Support \(IMS\) Annual Reports](#)
- [UNESCO Director-General's Report on The Safety of Journalists and the Danger of Impunity](#)
- Reports by the UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of freedom of opinion and expression
- Reports by the Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression, Organisation of the American States (OAS)
- Reports by the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information in Africa (AUC)
- Doha Centre for Media Freedom website

- Reporters Without Borders (RSF) website
- Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) Impunity Report
- International Press Institute (IPI) website
- Rory Peck Trust website

## **B. UN & Other International Organisations (IGOs and INGOs) Addressing Safety and the Issue of Impunity**

### *Context & Main Issues*

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An implementation strategy for the UN Plan of Action was agreed for 2013-2014 which listed activities that include those by the UN system within any given country interested in receiving support under the auspices of the Plan.

In order for the UN Plan of Action to be fulfilled it will be necessary for the UN system comprising its agencies, funds and programmes to provide effective support to Member States, and to professional and media organisations and civil society, so as to promote journalists' safety. Alongside this support, the UN and its agencies should foster the normative view that free expression standards include safety of journalists and measures against impunity. The categories of indicators set out below are organised around these functions.

### *Key Indicators*

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#### **1. UN within the country monitors journalists' safety issues**

- i. UN system at national level maps relevant instruments, actions and actors, and establishes partnership and communication channels with specialized monitoring organisations (such as in-country IFJ and IFEX members).
- ii. UN system at national level requests information from the State about the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity.
- iii. UN system at national level makes available information on journalists' safety and impunity to the UN at global level.
- iv. UN system supports specific projects and activities on building and reinforcing the capacity to monitor and assess safety.

#### *Means of verification*

- Statements, events, programming documents, reports, project evaluations, assessments and publications
- Evidence of requests to governments for information

#### **2. UN system within the country fosters normative view that free expression standards include safety of journalists and measures against impunity**

- i. UN system organisations at in-country level promote the existence and scope of relevant normative standards, including the provision that those which exist offline should also apply online.
- ii. Promotion takes cognisance of the fact that women journalists may be subject to specific sexual harassment and violence.

- iii. UN system organizations [at the national level] integrate journalism safety into areas in where they work such as the rule of law, environmental protection, sustainable development, etc.
- iv. UN system at national level publishes information about journalists' safety issues and makes this available in the key national languages.
- v. UN system at national level has a relevant awareness raising strategy and makes statements about killings of journalists.

*Means of verification and data sources*

- Statements, events and publications
- Interviews, surveys, focus groups
- UN agendas, policy papers, reports, minutes of meetings
- Specific references to the status of women journalists and the importance of eliminating all forms of discriminatory treatment
- Specific references to online safety.

**3. UN system within the country implements effective co-ordination and responses to safety incidents and problems**

- i. UN system organisations have joint, complementary and co-ordinated activity in support of the safety of journalists as per the UN Action Plan.
- ii. UN system encourages multi-stakeholder co-operation with non-UN actors on safety and impunity, and contributes to formulation of national strategies.
- iii. UN system organisations promotes safety issues in their dealings with journalists and other stakeholders (such as within the criminal justice system).
- iv. Safety of journalists issues are reflected in the UN Development Assistance Frameworks and other country programming documents, and are discussed within UN Country Teams including both resident and non-resident agencies.
- v. UN system organisations at national level have, or fundraise, specific budgets for their safety activities.
- vi. UN system has a rapid response mechanism at the national level to assist journalists who are attacked or are under threat.

*Means of verification*

- Regular UN interagency meetings at national level that focus on journalists' safety are held
- Relevant UN organisations have focal points who communicate on a regular basis
- Creation of specific inter-agency task-force or working groups in countries where safety concerns are increasing
- National strategies acknowledge UN input or support
- Interviews and press reports showing that safety issues are integrated into relations with the particular reporters with whom the different specialised UN organisations

deal (e.g. environmental journalists and crime reporters, and categories such as youth; women; and exiled journalists)

- UNDAF and other programming documents reference safety issues
- Public statements on safety by UN Residents Coordinators, agencies' representatives, and UN staff

#### **4. UN within the country builds knowledge and capacity**

- i. UN system disseminates knowledge of relevant good practices and encourages local adaptation
- ii. UN system organisations provide advice and capacity building to stakeholders on issues such as the treatment of journalists; investigation of crimes against journalists; and prosecution and protection measures.
- iii. UN organizations provide safety training to journalists such as on reporting in conflict zones, legal rights, self-protection techniques, first aid, etc. and assist with provision of safety equipment.

#### ***Means of verification***

- National strategy processes
- Statements, publications
- Training workshops and other safety-related events

#### **5. Within the country, other international intergovernmental and non-governmental agencies promote safety of journalists:**

- i. One or more relevant regional intergovernmental organisations promote safety issues in the country.
- ii. International NGOs support local efforts to promote safety.

##### **5.1. These international actors within the country monitor journalists' safety issues**

- i. At national level, they map relevant instruments, actions and actors.
- ii. They make available information on journalists' safety and impunity to the UN at global level.

#### ***Means of verification***

- Statements, events, reports and publications
- Evidence of requests to governments for information

##### **5.2. These international actors within the country foster the normative view that free expression standards include safety of journalists and measures against impunity**

- i. They promote the existence and scope of relevant normative standards, including the provision that those which exist offline should also apply online.

- ii. Promotion takes cognisance of the fact that women journalists may be subject to specific sexual harassment and violence.
- iii. They have a relevant communication strategy and make statements about killings of/attacks on journalists.
- iv. They publish information about safety of journalists and the issue of impunity, and make them available in the key national languages.

*Means of verification*

- Statements, events, publications, projects documents and evaluations, reports
- Specific references to the status of women journalists and the importance of eliminating all forms of discriminatory treatment
- Specific references to online safety

**5.3. These international actors promote co-ordinated approaches to safety issues**

- i. They have focal points who communicate on a periodic basis
- ii. They have joint, complementary and co-ordinated activity with the UN, and other non-UN actors including the State, in regard to journalists' safety issues.
- iii. They contribute to the formulation of national strategies.
- iv. They include safety issues in their existing relations with journalists and other stakeholders (such as within the criminal justice system).
- v. They have, or fundraise for, specific budgets for their safety activities.
- vi. They operate or participate in a joint rapid response mechanism at the national level and/or international level/s.

*Means of verification*

- Regular inter-organisational meetings at national level that focus upon journalists' safety issues are held
- Interviews and press reports

**5.4. The international actors within the country build knowledge and capacity**

- i. These actors disseminate knowledge of relevant good practices and encourage local adaptation.
- ii. These actors provide advice and capacity building to stakeholders on issues such as: the treatment of journalists; investigation of crimes against journalists; and prosecution and protection measures.
- iii. These actors provide safety training to journalists such as on reporting in conflict zones, legal rights, self-protection techniques, first aid, etc. and assist with provision of safety equipment.

*Means of verification*

- National strategy processes

- Statements, publications
- Training workshops and other safety-related events

#### *Data sources*

- [International News Safety Institute](#)
- [Freedom House Freedom of the Press Report](#)
- [International Freedom of Expression eXchange \(IFEX\) – information on safety of journalists:](#)
- [International Research and Exchanges Board \(IREX\)– Media Sustainability Index:](#)
- [United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime](#)
- [International Media Support \(IMS\) Annual Reports](#)
- [UNESCO Director-General's Report on The Safety of Journalists and the Danger of Impunity](#)
- Reports by the UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of freedom of opinion and expression
- Reports by the Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression, Organisation of the American States (OAS)
- Reports by the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information in Africa (AUC)
- Doha Centre for Media Freedom website
- Reporters Without Borders (RSF) website
- Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) Impunity Report
- International Press Institute (IPI) website
- Rory Peck Trust website

## C. State institutions and political actors

### *Context & Main Issues*

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It is widely recognised that the primary responsibility for the protection of journalists, as with any other citizen, rests with the State. For example, the OSCE has called for “coordinated and consistent State policies and practices” and goes on to say that “it is necessary to ensure that national laws, administrative and judicial systems protect and promote freedom of expression and safeguard the lives and professional rights of journalists”.<sup>15</sup> It is also accepted in international law that State is responsible for all the actions of its officials and organs, even if they are acting outside of the law and/or are formally independent. The State is also responsible if non-State actors violate journalists' safety when under the direction or control of the State and may be held responsible if it is negligent in upholding its human rights responsibilities when those rights are threatened by non-State actors such as criminals or terrorists.

Much of the State's responsibility for journalists' safety is inherent in general State obligations to uphold human rights. More specifically, and for the purposes of these indicators, States can be seen as having specific responsibilities, for example by ensuring that journalists working in conflict areas are treated as civilians and protected as such, rather than as combatants. It is also necessary for the State to investigate threats and acts of violence against journalists effectively; to ensure control over its military, judiciary and law-enforcing agency based on rule of law; and to proactively counter impunity. States need to develop and implement appropriate laws, regulations and policies that enable journalists' safety to be protected. Those who hold political offices in government or political parties are included in this section of the indicators as well.

### *Key Indicators*

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#### **1. State has laws which can protect journalists**

- i. With relevance to armed conflict situations, the State is a signatory to the Geneva Conventions and additional protocols, and human rights instruments such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the UN Convention against Torture, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.
- ii. With further relevance to armed conflict situations, the State and all its controlled agents (including, where applicable, paramilitary, contractors, mercenaries) recognise journalists as civilians in accordance with Geneva Convention and additional protocols

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<sup>15</sup> <http://www.osce.org/fom/85777>

- iii. The State's laws do not include sweeping or arbitrary provisions on treason, terrorism, state security or insult/ defamation offences etc. that are susceptible to misuse for the purpose of intimidating or prosecuting journalists.
- iv. The State's laws and policies on safety of journalists cover online as well as offline, and do not exclude community media or citizen journalists.
- v. Attacks on the safety of journalists (including community media and citizen journalists) are recognized by the State as a breach of human rights law and the criminal law, and in the case of armed conflicts, humanitarian law.
- vi. Where appropriate, there is legislation that sets out special/higher penalties for crimes against freedom of expression and/or crimes against journalists.

#### *Means of verification*

- Actions and statements recognising the civilian status of journalists during conflicts
- Laws mentioning journalists do not exclude community media or citizen journalists
- Constitution; statute law, case law and jurisprudence
- Legal or policy statements
- Public statements by government representatives/ other politicians and public figures
- Universal Periodic Review

## **2. There are appropriate normative statements, policies, and institutional frameworks that safeguard the importance of journalist's safety.**

- i. The State is well informed on the subject through adequate mechanisms (institutions, programmes and budgets) being in place for monitoring and reporting on threats, harassment and violence towards journalists – including arbitrary arrest, torture, threats to life and killing.
- ii. The State has specific policies to support the protection of journalists, offline and online, and the implementation is assured of sufficient resources and expertise.
- iii. Government officials, law-enforcers, military officials, civil servants and representatives from the (independent) judiciary make clear statements recognising the safety of journalists and condemning attacks upon them.
- iv. States have indicated commitments and support for journalists' safety in international fora.
- v. Public statements by politicians, military and security commanders recognise the importance of journalism, especially during election periods or times of conflict.
- vi. Guidelines are issued to military and police prohibiting harassment, intimidation or physical attacks on journalists; effective channels of communication exist between journalists' organisations and security forces concerning coverage of street protests, public events, etc.

- vii. The State enables the work of NGOs on safety issues and cooperates with them in appropriate ways.
- viii. The State recognises that women journalists may be particularly at risk from sexual harassment and violence, and adopts appropriate measures to ensure safety on an equal basis between women and men.
- ix. The State refrains from endorsing or promoting threats to journalists including through judiciary, police, fiscal, administrative, military and intelligence systems.

#### *Means of verification*

- Media statements; declarations by officials, other publicity by the State
- Institutional framework analysis
- Policy guidance issued to military and police
- Appropriate formal reporting arrangements, e.g. periodic reporting to the legislature
- The production and distribution of training materials and reports on relevant capacity-building initiatives
- Identifiable resources allocated to journalists' safety
- Statements and voting records on resolutions at UN bodies

### **3. Criminal and civil justice system deals effectively with threats and acts of violence against journalists**

- i. The State has specific institutions/units dedicated to investigations, prosecutions, protection and compensation in regard to ensuring the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity.
- ii. The State establishes specialist units that can deal appropriately with attacks on women, including women journalists.
- iii. Budgets of state agencies are transparent and provide adequate resources to cover investigations into threats and acts of violence against journalists;
- iv. Protection measures are provided to journalists when required in response to credible threats to their physical safety.
- v. Investigations of crimes against journalists, including intimidation and threats, are investigated promptly, independently and efficiently.
- vi. Where there is violence or threats against a journalist, due account is given by the authorities to any evidence showing linkage to the journalist's professional activities.
- vii. Successful prosecutions for violence and intimidation are carried out against the full chain of actors in attacks, including the instigators/masterminds and perpetrators.
- viii. The State monitors the performance of specific state institutions and processes set up in relation to safety at national and local levels.
- ix. The State ensures that appropriate training and capacity is provided to police, prosecutors, lawyers and judges.

*Means of verification*

- Statistics on the percentage of cases investigated in relation to those reported
- Statistics on the percentage of cases resolved in relation to those investigated
- Public reports; reports of independent civil society groups; news reports
- Case law;
- Statute law and legislative frameworks at all levels, and jurisprudence
- Prosecutorial statements
- Financial budgets of state institutions are adequate to ensure effective investigations
- Reports of investigations; independent reports of civil society groups; witnesses interviewed
- Reports of police' and prosecutors' activities
- Outcomes of cases
- Training courses and institutions are provided for criminal justice personnel
- Training materials; distribution channels; involvement of relevant civil society groups
- Documentation of safety violations

**4. The State takes other effective measures in regard to journalists' safety**

- i. The State publishes updated data about attacks on journalists and impunity. The State consults with women's rights organisations on the appropriate policies and frameworks to counter specific threats to women journalists.
- ii. The State recognises that protections applying to journalists may also be required to protect persons who represent sources of information for journalists and human rights defenders.
- iii. The State has measures to support and compensate families of murdered journalists.
- iv. In cases of electronic surveillance, the State respects, and ensures respect for, freedom of expression and privacy, through international standards of transparency, proportionality and legitimate purpose..
- v. The State reports on attacks to the appropriate UN agencies, including responses to the UNESCO Director-General's requests for information on judicial follow-up to any killing/s of journalists.

*Means of verification*

- UNESCO reports and public information
- Reports of media NGOs, women's NGOs, human rights civil society groups;
- News reports
- Case law;
- Statute law and implementation measures (rules, regulation, policies etc)
- Existence of a fund for murdered journalists' dependents

*Data sources*

- Data available from National Statistical Offices and government ministries, operators' published statistics, industry press, independent media monitoring

reports etc.

- Hansards (parliamentary records), white papers, official reports
- Reporters Sans Frontières – *Worldwide Press Freedom Index*: [www.rsf.org/rubrique.php3?id\\_rubrique=554](http://www.rsf.org/rubrique.php3?id_rubrique=554)
- Committee to Protect Journalists: Journalists Killed Statistics: [www.cpj.org/killed/killed\\_archives/stats.html](http://www.cpj.org/killed/killed_archives/stats.html)
- International News Safety Institute: [www.newssafety.com](http://www.newssafety.com)
- Freedom House – *Freedom of the press survey* – indicators relating to political environment: <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/freedom-press-2012>
- Article 19 reports <http://www.article19.org/cgi-bin/search.cgi?q=journalist+safety>
- Civicus reports and actions <https://civicus.org/component/search/?searchword=journalist%20safety&searchphrase=all&Itemid=330>
- International Federation of Journalists – annual reports on journalists and media staff killed: [www.ifj.org/default.asp?Issue=KILL&Language=EN](http://www.ifj.org/default.asp?Issue=KILL&Language=EN)
- International Freedom of Expression eXchange – information on impunity: [www.ifex.org/en/content/view/full/240/](http://www.ifex.org/en/content/view/full/240/)
- UN Periodic Review country reports <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/Documentation.aspx>
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- CIA World Factbook – country data on communications: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/docs/refmaps.html>
- Online commentary and data (e.g. Google free expression search reports)
- National crime figures and crime reports

## **D. Civil Society Organisations and Academia**

### *Context & Main Issues*

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In the UN Plan of Action, civil society and academics are recognised as important actors as regards journalists' safety. Civil society groups/NGOs and academics working in the field of media development and the protection of free expression or related fields of human rights share a responsibility to take what steps they can to protect journalists from risks that they face on account of their work. Civil society groups lack the formal authority and powers of state institutions, but they can warn, advise and counsel the range of other actors about the nature of the problem and possible solutions. They can also lead public opinion, and may provide direct support, including training, to journalists. Nothing civil society does, however, should be taken as reducing the responsibility of other actors. (The same applies to media actors and intermediaries, see Section E below).

### *Key Indicators*

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#### **1. CSOs and academia monitor safety:**

- i. CSOs research and monitor safety issues of journalists, including the extent of pressures for self-censorship, and the chilling effect amongst the wider public as a consequence of killings of/attacks on journalists.
- ii. CSOs analyse data to produce high quality understanding of circumstances and causes of killings and impunity.
- iii. CSOs monitor and report upon specific attacks upon or harassment of women journalists or other specifically targeted groups.
- iv. CSOs provide information to UN agencies and to Universal Periodic Review process. about journalists safety.

#### **2. National CSOs promote journalists' safety issues**

- i. CSOs have resources to work on safety issues.
- ii. CSOs provide information to the media and wider public.
- iii. National NGOs have significant consultation and co-ordination with international NGOs.
- iv. CSOs co-operate effectively with state, legislative bodies, UN and others in contributing to law and policy making.
- v. CSOs co-operate among themselves and with other stakeholders.
- vi. CSOs introduce safety issues into the mainstream of national strategies for media development and donor funding.
- vii. CSOs work with and support lawyers and legal organisations who are challenging impunity.

### 3. CSOs provide appropriate training and support for media workers

- i. Academic and other journalists' training courses include adequate professional training on safety issues, offline as well as online, especially to media actors, jurists and civil servants.
- ii. CSOs provide relevant information, including about training opportunities and resources, to journalists.
- iii. CSOs develop programmes that provide specific support for women journalists.
- iv. CSOs evaluate and report on their training and support.
- v. CSOs provide safety equipment for vulnerable media workers.
- vi. CSOs provide legal advice and services to journalists on safety issues, including counselling and assistance to journalists under threat and to families of murdered journalists.
- vii. CSOs provide, where appropriate, places of refuge or safe houses, for media workers under severe threat.
- viii. CSOs participate in humanitarian relief efforts for journalists under threat or who have been killed or injured.

#### *Means of verification*

- Civil society reports (e. g, Women's NGOs, Human Rights NGOs);
- Relevant news reports
- Strategy documents about media development reflect the importance of journalists' safety
- Meetings, campaigns and exchanges between civil society groups
- Meetings and exchanges within civil society groups including with lawyers and jurists
- Existence of support services for journalists provided by CSOs
- Training curriculum of academia and CSOs/NGOs in the field of media development

#### *Data sources*

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- Reports of civil society groups e.g. NGOs on initiatives undertaken
- The International News Safety Institute (INSI) Safety Code : <http://www.newssafety.org/page.php?page=165>
- International Media Support (IMS) <http://www.i-m-s.dk/>
- Article 19 [www.article.org](http://www.article.org)
- Freedom House <http://www.freedomhouse.org/>
- Committee for the Protection of Journalists <http://www.cpj.org/>
- Reporters Without Borders <http://en.rsf.org/>

- World Association of Newspapers <http://www.wan-iffra.org/>; <http://www.wan-iffra.org/articles/2013/01/03/journalists-killed-multimedia-package>
- World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters: [www2.amarc.org](http://www2.amarc.org)
- Rory Peck Trust: [www.rorypecktrust.org](http://www.rorypecktrust.org)
- Data available from relevant donor reports, independent media monitoring reports and media reports of civil society activities

## **E. Media actors and intermediaries**

### *Context & Main Issues*

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Media organisations employing journalists or who are using freelancers have a particular professional responsibility for the safety of their journalists. This responsibility embraces providing the necessary support and training to journalists operating in areas of danger, adequate risk assessment procedures and appropriate planning. Intermediary organisations including search engines, Internet Service Providers (ISP), email/software/application providers, or social networks play an increasing role as gatekeepers and conveyors of content and thus have increasing responsibilities in terms of privacy issues, digital data security, etc.

Journalists themselves have a responsibility to not be reckless or endanger themselves or others (and, in the case of international journalists, to be mindful of the dangers to which they may expose those local staff that support them on their assignments). Their trade unions and professional bodies also have a responsibility to ensure that their members are prepared for the dangers involved in reporting.

### *Key Indicators*

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#### **1. Media organisations adopt specific measures to protect the safety of journalists**

- i. Media organisations monitor safety issues and have a safety policy that is written, available to staff and the wider public and fully operated.
- ii. Safety policies include risk assessment provisions to establish levels of danger facing employees on particular assignments.
- iii. Safety policies extend to freelance journalists, their assistants, local employees and support personnel.
- iv. Journalists, including freelancers, have contracts with proper terms of employment, including with respect to safety and personal risk.
- v. Media organisations ensure that workplace and working conditions are safe and secure, which protecting journalists from intruders, and which include a secure ICT environment.
- vi. Journalists have the right to refuse dangerous assignments.
- vii. Media organisations provide adequate insurance and necessary safety equipment to journalists on dangerous assignments including equipment that is appropriate to women.
- viii. Media organisations provide hostile environment and risk awareness training before journalists are sent on dangerous assignments.
- ix. Media organisations provide adequate back-up to journalists on dangerous assignments.
- x. Media organisations ensure that stress counselling is available.

- xi. Media organisations recognise that women employees face specific risks and undertake specific mitigation strategies.
- xii. Media organisations liaise with security forces where appropriate to establish guidelines on treatment of journalists before entering a dangerous area.
- xiii. Community media operate safety protocols as appropriate to their circumstances.

*Means of verification*

- Published statements of media organisations;
- Reports of journalist unions;
- Reports of credible civil society organisations;
- Reports of industry bodies such as WAN-IFRA
- Published policies and codes of conduct of media organisations
- Internal guidance/policy of media organisations
- Internal practice and statements of journalists themselves
- Insurance policies
- Documented meetings between media organisations and security personnel

**2. Journalists' unions and professional bodies take specific measures to promote the safety of journalists**

- i. Journalists' unions/associations monitor safety issues and advocate to employers and the authorities to have effective policies about these.
- ii. Journalists' unions/associations highlight the importance of media professionalism.
- iii. Journalists' unions/associations provide information resources and promote good practices.
- iv. Journalists' unions/associations provide practical advice and access to specialist resources to media staff working on dangerous assignments.
- v. Journalists' unions/associations make support available to community media and citizen journalists.
- vi. Journalists' unions/associations establish programmes for women journalists that take account of specific risks they will face on dangerous assignments.
- vii. Journalists' unions/associations provide training and stress counselling to journalists.
- viii. They establish a safety fund for journalists who are victims of violence and their families.

*Means of verification*

- Policy statements by journalist unions
- Reports of NGOs
- Reports of journalists union
- Interviews with individual journalists, focus groups, surveys
- Availability of information material on safety

- Workshops and safety trainings
- Existence of a safety fund

### **3. All media actors, including individual journalists, promote safety in digital communications**

- Journalists are aware of digital dangers and protection measures.
- Journalists effectively use protection in digital communication including appropriate software and other precautionary measures.
- Opportunities exist for training in public key cryptography, and are taken up.
- Employers and others provide software and equipment that enables journalists to protect communications.

#### *Means of verification*

- Workshops
- Materials disseminated
- Interviews with stakeholders and press reports

### **4. Media actors cover safety issues**

- There is sustained coverage of safety and impunity, including follow-up stories.
- The media community demonstrates its own concern on the issues of safety and impunity, is not afraid to report on those issues as matters of public interest, and recognises the common interests with community media and citizen journalists in those matters.
- Media acts as a community advocate for these issues.
- Media actors work with non-media stakeholders to ensure adequate policies and attention to the issue.

#### *Means of verification*

- Public statements by media organisations and professional associations
- News coverage
- Workshops, conferences, campaigns

### **5. Intermediary entities respect journalists' safety**

- Internet, IT and telecoms companies have secure facilities that protect journalists' data from hackers.
- Internet, IT and telecoms companies have clear, transparent and proportionate policies in line with international standards on privacy as regards releasing private data to law-enforcement authorities and others.
- Internet, IT and telecoms companies report transparently and periodically on items i and ii above.
- Internet, IT and telecoms companies have data-protection policies that entitle clients to track any 3<sup>rd</sup> party engagement with their data.

- v. Internet, IT and telecoms companies have a policy to inform their users about data requests by government agencies

#### *Means of verification*

- Company reports
- Self-regulation policies
- Government and regulators' reports
- Academia and independent experts analysis
- User interviews, and news reports

#### *Data sources*

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- Committee for the Protection of Journalists resource manual: <http://cpj.org/reports/2012/04/journalism-resources-and-manuals.php>
- WAN-IFRA - [www.wan-ifra.org/](http://www.wan-ifra.org/)
- UNESCO - <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/>
- European Publishers Council - <http://epceurope.eu/>
- Reports of national media organisations and national associations
- International Federation of Journalists - <http://www.ifj.org/>
- International Press Institute : [http://www.freemedia.at/home.html?no\\_cache=1](http://www.freemedia.at/home.html?no_cache=1)
- Commonwealth Broadcasters Association - <http://www.cba.org.uk/>
- Rory Peck Trust: [www.rorypecktrust.org](http://www.rorypecktrust.org)

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  - [The Implementation Strategy 2013-2014](#)
  - [The Guide on Operationalizing the UN Plan of Action at Country Level](#)
  - [Newsletter on Safety of Journalists](#)
3. **International Human Rights Laws**
  - [The Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) (1948)
  - [OHCHR 1976 -The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#)
  - [General comment 34 on the article 19](#) of the above ICCPR (2011)
  - [UNHCR 2005 -Human Rights Resolution 2005/81: Impunity](#)
  - [UN Security Council 2006 -Resolution S/RES/1738](#)
4. **Regional Instruments of Human Rights Laws**
  - [African Charter on Human and People's Rights for Africa](#) (1981, in force since 1986)
  - [American Convention on Human Rights for the America](#) (1969, in force since 1978)
  - [European Convention on Human Rights for Europe](#) (1950, in force since 1953)
  - [Arab Charter on Human Rights](#) (1994)
5. **International Humanitarian Law**
  - [The Geneva Conventions of 1949](#) and their Additional Protocols
6. **Measures specific to the Safety of Journalists**
  - [UNESCO Resolution 29 on the Condemnation of Violence against Journalists](#) (1997)
  - [UNESCO's Belgrade Declaration on Media in Conflicts Areas in Countries in Transition](#) (2004)
  - [UNESCO's Medellin Declaration Securing the Safety of Journalists and Combatting Impunity](#) (2007)
  - [UNESCO's Carthage Declaration on Press Freedom and the Safety of Journalists](#) (2012)
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- [Human Rights Council -UN General Assembly, Resolution on the safety of Journalists \(2012\)](#)

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- [The London Statement](#) by members of the global media community on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, October 2012

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**APPENDIX 1:**

There are various UN statements and resolutions relevant to the safety of journalists and to their status as civilians.

1. In 1997 UNESCO Member States passed Resolution 29 on “Condemnation of violence against journalists”. This UNESCO Resolution recommended that governments should ensure that laws made it possible to try anyone involved in the killing of people exercising the right to freedom of expression. It also recommended removing any statute of limitations for crimes when these are perpetrated to prevent the exercise of freedom of expression and information.
2. In 2006, the Security Council of the United Nations, in Resolution 1738 restated war correspondents’ right to the status of prisoners of war under the Third Geneva Convention, and that journalists, media professionals and associated personnel engaged in dangerous professional missions in areas of armed conflict shall be considered civilians, to be respected and protected as such.
3. In 2009 the UN Human Rights Council passed Resolution A/HRC/RES/12/16 on Freedom of opinion and expression, adopted in October 2009. This expressed concern that violations of rights to freedom of expression continued to occur against persons who exercise, seek to promote or defend these rights, including journalists, writers, and other media workers, Internet users and human rights defenders and called for, among other things, for states to extend protection to journalists in situations of armed conflict<sup>16</sup>.
4. The UN Human Rights Council Resolution A/HRC/21/12 on the Safety of Journalists<sup>17</sup>, adopted by consensus on 27 September 2012. The Council condemned in the strongest terms all attacks and violence against journalists and expressed its concern that there was a growing threat to the safety of journalists posed by non-State actors. It stresses the need to ensure better cooperation and coordination at the international level with regard to ensuring the safety of journalists, and invites UN agencies, programmes and funds, other international and regional organisations, Member States and all relevant stakeholders to cooperate further in the implementation of the UN Plan of Action on The Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity.

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<sup>16</sup> <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/G09/166/89/PDF/G0916689.pdf?OpenElement>

<sup>17</sup> Human Right Council Resolution A/HRC/RES/21/12 adopted at its 21st Session on 27 September 2012 at [http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/A-67-53-Add-1\\_en.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/A-67-53-Add-1_en.pdf)

5. The General Comment 34 in July 2011, of the Human Rights Committee<sup>18</sup> that monitors implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) by its State parties stated that all States must put in place effective measures to protect against attacks aimed at silencing those exercising their right to freedom of expression, including journalists. The General Comment 34, identified journalists as among the groups frequently subjected to threats, intimidation and attacks on account of their activities, together with persons who engage in gathering and analysis of information on the human rights situation and who publish human-rights related reports, including judges and lawyers. The range of those threats and attacks are identified as “arbitrary arrest, torture, threats to life and killing”. The General Comment states that all such attacks “should be vigorously investigated in a timely fashion and the perpetrators prosecuted, and the victims or their representatives receive appropriate redress<sup>19</sup>”.
6. UNESCO’s Medellin Declaration on “Securing the Safety of Journalists and Combating Impunity” which was adopted by the participants of the World Press Freedom Day held in Colombia in 2007. It focused upon the responsibilities of states and urged more co-operation between multilateral and international institutions. In 2013, the San Jose Declaration on “Safe to Speak: Securing Freedom of Expression in All Media” as adopted by the participants of World Press Freedom Day in San Jose, Costa Rica addressed the specific issues of safety both online and off line and of impunity.
7. The UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression produced a major report in June 2012 looking at the protection of journalists and media freedom, and focuses particularly on situations outside of armed conflict. The report contains extensive recommendations for UN Agencies, governments and civil society. Country reports by the UN Special Rapporteurs and regional Special Rapporteurs are also useful sources of information about violations of journalists’ safety<sup>20</sup>.
8. The OSCE’s Representative on Freedom of the Media has frequently addressed concerns about journalists’ safety, highlighting violence, harassment and intimidation. The office has also looked at cases involving unwarranted arrests and imprisonment of journalists or the violation of journalists’ personal or professional rights as well as the failure to investigate and prosecute crimes against journalists<sup>21</sup>.

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<sup>18</sup> <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrc/docs/CCPR-C-GC-34.doc>

<sup>19</sup> General Comment 34 on Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights  
<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrc/docs/CCPR-C-GC-34.doc>

<sup>20</sup> For example <http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/expression/reports/country.asp>; or  
<http://www.achpr.org/search/>;

<sup>21</sup> [http://www.osce.org/search/apachesolr\\_search/safety%20of%20journalists](http://www.osce.org/search/apachesolr_search/safety%20of%20journalists)

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