Stand with UNESCO for a free and safe environment for journalists

HOW TO ACTIVELY SUPPORT FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND THE SAFETY OF JOURNALISTS

Stand with UNESCO for a free and safe environment for journalists
Journalists around the world face increasing risks in the exercise of their work. Yet, the issue of journalists’ safety has become a priority not only for UNESCO, but also for the UN system as a whole, with the adoption in 2012 of a UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity. In addition, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes the importance of public access to information, fundamental freedoms and the safety of journalists for the creation of peaceful, just and inclusive societies, under Goal 16, Target 10.

As the UN agency in charge of promoting freedom of expression and press freedom around the world, UNESCO works closely with Member States, media organizations, other UN agencies and civil society organizations to shape policies and regulations to protect press freedom, support independent media, reinforce capacities and create a safe environment for journalists around the world.

The Multi-Donor Programme on Freedom of Expression and Safety of Journalists (MDP) gives UNESCO the flexibility to channel funds towards emerging programmatic priorities and adapt to the most pressing needs to achieve our Programme’s Expected Results. It provides significant advantages to address complex freedom of expression and safety of journalists’ issues, by designing and implementing large projects at national, regional and global levels.

The clear advantage of the MDP is that it allows UNESCO and its partners to achieve greater scale, impact and sustainability.

The current state of freedom of expression

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Ensuring Programme Objectives

Contributions to the MDP advance the attainment of UNESCO’s objectives for Communication and Information 2018-2021, in line with its 39 C/5 programme, specifically to:

- Enhance freedom of expression, including press freedom and the right to access information, online and off-line.
- Reinforce the safety of journalists by implementing the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, including during times of crisis and transition.
- Promote media pluralism and diversity, especially youth empowerment and gender equality, and empower citizens through media and information literacy competencies.
The MDP helps UNESCO intensify its work for the universal safety of journalists and media workers and address global challenges to freedom of expression:

- Growing threats to freedom of expression and press freedom and the curtailment of independent and pluralistic media online and off-line.
- The extent of the risks faced by journalists and the high levels of impunity of crimes against them, is demonstrated by over 800 killings recorded by UNESCO over the course of ten years. Less than 8% of these cases have been judicially resolved.
- Growing challenges with the new digital environment such as hate speech and corruption of elections through abuse of social media.
- Lack of media and information literacy (MIL) competencies, for people to be able to consume media critically at a time of ‘fake news’ and ‘alternative facts’.
- Gender parity has come to a standstill in media. Gender-sensitiveness has regressed.

Freedom of expression and freedom of information are indispensable for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in building peaceful, just and inclusive societies:

- SDG 4: Quality education
- SDG 5: Gender equality
- SDG 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions
- SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals

Partner with UNESCO for Freedom of Expression

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