

**Follow-up options for what UNESCO and its Member States could do
to take forward the initiative:**

“News organizations standing up for the safety of media professionals”,

Conference, 5 February, 2016, UNESCO Headquarters, Paris

Background:

The 5 February conference, convened on the mandate of the Executive Board, and with the support of UNESCO’s International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC), involved close to 300 participants from countries from across the world, including media leaders and Member State delegations. They exchanged ideas and views about the media’s role in enhancing the safety of journalists and ending impunity.

The participating media leaders came from 51 countries and five continents, and from all types of media: print and audiovisual, online and off-line, local and community, international and national. They exchanged ideas and views about media’s role in securing safety of journalists and ending impunity. The male/female ratio among the registered participants (including delegations) was 60/40 per cent; the ratio among the speakers was 55/45 per cent.

Australia, Austria, Finland, Latvia, the Netherlands, Sweden, the United States of America, the Open Society Foundations and Al Jazeera supported the event. The World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers (WAN-IFRA), the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), the European Broadcasting Union (EBU), the International Press Institute (IPI), the International Women’s Media Foundation (IWMF) and the World Association of Community Broadcasters (AMARC) joined as partners.

A smaller follow-up meeting the next day elaborated the ideas raised at the conference. A final list of almost [40 ideas of actions for the media to consider](#) was compiled and is being distributed.¹

The event saw extensive social media coverage with more than 700 tweets recorded, representing a potential reach of almost 10 million. The tweets from the @UNESCO account generated 538,517 retweets with a total of 443 link clicks. Twelve media companies, NGOs and professional media organizations exhibited their training and ICT resources aimed to provide safety measures for media professionals. A [selection of almost 50 articles](#) from global media coverage in seven languages is available at the conference site.² UNESCO’s own focus article is also [online](#).³ A photo gallery is also [online](#).⁴

The event will enrich the impact of World Press Freedom Day celebrations on 3 May, and it has also raised the profile of 2 November, the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists.

¹ It is available at: https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/ideas_for_news_organisations_en.pdf and is also linked at the main conference site.

² And also at: <http://en.unesco.org/node/254937>

³ http://www.unesco.org/new/en/media-services/single-view/news/media_executives_press_organizations_and_states_brainstorm_concrete_measures_to_better_journalists_safety_at_unesco_meeting/#.Vrso1OaqbCY

⁴ <https://www.flickr.com/photos/131897504@N08/sets/72157664357761085/>

Against this background, there are a number of possible ways that UNESCO Member States and the Organization may wish to consider for possible follow-up on their part. These are presented below:

Possible actions by UNESCO (with extrabudgetary support):

1. Encourage field offices where relevant to initiate, where relevant, similar in-country meetings to share media best practices and to create dialogue with government officials.
2. Arrange workshops for media leaders in selected countries, aimed to sensitize them on safety related issues and inform them about training and IT resources available.
3. Develop under the auspices of UNESCO, and in cooperation with regional broadcasting unions, a number of pilot partnerships between big (incl. international) media companies and local media companies in conflict and post-conflict countries.
4. Organize an event on the safety of journalists at the UN General Assembly focused on exchanging good practices within the media industry and enabling dialogue with Member States. The event could be held in cooperation with the UN Department of Information and take place on 2 November, the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists.
5. Participate in efforts by media and civil society actors to develop a website that shares best practices and existing resources in the field of safety (in cooperation with Reuters, EBU, network of security departments of media companies, etc.).
6. Encourage projects such as through the IPDC that could educate stakeholders about UNESCO's impunity monitoring mechanisms, and support states to develop or strengthen national information capacity to respond to the Director-General's annual requests and inform national actions to secure safety.
7. Apply UNESCO's Journalism Safety Indicators in selected Member States as a fundamental mapping exercise to (a) identify gaps in knowledge and monitoring of the safety and impunity situation, and (b) build multi-stakeholder processes that can strengthen political will and capacity to establish a credible monitoring system.
8. Collect and share good practices in monitoring and reporting, by launching a series of innovative projects such as through IPDC, with national associations of media professionals and media organizations.
9. Support the establishment of protection, impunity and compensation mechanisms and information about good practices.
10. Explore greater synergies with other UN processes relevant to the safety of journalists. These include the Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review, the UN Secretary-General's reporting to the General Assembly and the Security Council, and possible developments such as the proposed special representative on safety in the UNSG's office, as well as reporting on progress towards Sustainable Development Goal 16.10 on "public access to information and fundamental freedoms".

Options for possible actions by Member States

Discuss in UNESCO governing bodies what additional steps can be taken to strengthen the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and Issue of Impunity, and UNESCO's role therein. Possible items to consider are:

1. Recommitting to the protection of journalists, and their rights, in all circumstances.
2. Recommitting to respond to the UNESCO Director General's requests for information on the status of the judicial inquiries in the killings of journalists in their respective countries, by ensuring that the appropriate ministries and officials generate and share reliable and updated information which tracks progress in this area.
3. Providing financial support to UNESCO to enhance the impact and reach of its activities to promote the safety of journalists and fight impunity.
4. Promoting dialogue with the media industry and its professional organizations at country level in order to strengthen the safety of journalists based on the multi-stakeholder approach advocated in the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity.
5. Recognizing the importance of state support for training programs and the development of other safety related measures.
6. Encouraging national judiciary and law enforcement to work together with UNESCO (and media organizations) in order to strengthen safety of media professionals.
7. Consider providing necessary human resources for investigation, prosecution and special courts dealing with crimes against journalists.