

**Proceedings of the National Consultative
Meeting and endorsement of Islamabad
Declaration on Safety of Journalists**

5th November 2012

AGENDA
National Consultation Meeting, on Safety of Journalists
05 Nov 2012

09.00 - 10.00	Registration of Participants – Breakfast-
Session 1: Inaugural Session 10:00 – 10:50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recitation of Quran • Opening Remarks: Ms. Kozue Kay Nagata, Director, UNESCO Islamabad • Introductory Remarks: United Nations System’s view about killing of journalists from Human Right’s perspective (Mr. Timo Pakkala, RC, UN Pakistan) • Member of National Assembly’s Special Committee to Investigate the Issue of Threats to Journalists and Media Personal: to talk on NA’s objectives and findings about safety of journalist issue: Syed Haider Abbas Rizvi • Secretary of Minister of Information and Broadcast: to talk about the state’s perspectives and actions in viewing the issues of safety of journalists and the problem of impunity: Rashid Ahmed • Hamid Mir, Executive Director Geo TV: to share views on role of media organizations and legislative bodies to ensure safety of journalists
10:50 – 11:00	Tea Break
Session 2: 11:00 – 11:20	Nomination of Bureau for Drafting Declaration Facilitator: UNESCO
Plenary Session: 11:20- 12:00	<u>Current Situation of Legal Framework and Practices for Protection of Journalists</u> Speaker: Senator Mohsin Laghari: gaps in legislation reform on safety issues Speaker: Muhammad Ziauddin, Group Editor, Express Tribune: Media ethics and code of conduct for editors and journalists Speaker: Shafqat Abbasi, Chairman Press Council of Pakistan Responsibility and Mechanism of regulatory bodies Q & A Session Chair: Syed Haider Abbas Rizvi

<p>Working Sessions: 12:00-1:00</p>	<p><u>Group Work on “Legal Framework and National Policy”:</u></p> <p><u>Questions to be asked:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the main causes of impunity? Is it something to do with the lack of laws and regulations? Or is it due to lack of state’s and government’s commitments and political will? • What are the concrete steps to be taken to turn around the situation?
	<p><u>Group Work on “Capacity Building towards Safety”</u></p> <p><u>Questions to be asked:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the present challenges in different areas? • How far do media organizations and journalists’ association provide support? • What information, knowledge and skills acquired by journalists to deal with hostile situations, and law-enforcement bodies to deal with impunity?
	<p><u>Group work on “Role of Civil Society as Watchdogs“</u></p> <p><u>Questions to be asked:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media critic/media observer/media watchdog/academia: to see how things can be improved from the journalists’ side, including need to consider ethics, need of training on dealing with threats and attacks • How to improve the situation?
<p>01:00 – 01:45</p>	<p>Lunch</p>
<p>01:45 - 2:30</p>	<p>Presentations of the Group Work</p>
<p>02:30- 03:00</p>	<p>Adoption of Declaration/ Signing of Declaration Facilitator: UNESCO</p>
<p>03:00 - 03:15</p>	<p>Wrapping up Moderator; Phyza Jameel</p>

**THE ISLAMABAD DECLARATION by the members of the National
Consultative Meeting on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity,
05 November 2012**

Addressed to the UN Inter-Agency Meeting on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity in Vienna on 22-23 November 2012, organized by UNESCO.

We, members of the National Consultative Meeting in Islamabad on 05 November 2012:

1. Condemn all cases of killings and other physical attacks, intimidation, harassment, threats, abduction and wrongful imprisonment as well as other forms of oppression of journalists and other media workers;
2. Express our concern over insufficient coordinated efforts to end impunity for the killers of journalists;
3. Urge all parties including non-state actors to respect the professional independence and rights of journalists and media workers;
4. Reaffirm the right of journalists and media workers to work free from harm, harassment and abuse, which is fundamental to freedom of expression and therefore a matter of urgent and legitimate concern for Government of Pakistan as well as for the news media themselves;
5. Seek firmer commitment from Government of Pakistan towards the issue of impunity and security of journalists and urge for concrete and continuous actions towards developing enabling legal frameworks, reviewing and implementing existing laws, building more robust prosecuting mechanisms, and strengthening relevant national policies;

6. Seek justice from concerned authorities and duty bearers for the families of the victim journalists through conclusive legal investigations into the killings of journalists;
7. Encourage the Government, media organizations and the civil society, in cooperation with the international community, to develop a mechanism and ensure necessary resources to protect media personnel from security threats and support the families of the victims;
8. Encourage media organizations including owners, editors, managers and journalist unions to adopt a common code of conduct, establish proper legal status of employees, and have strong security policies and capacity building measures to ensure safe working conditions of all working media personnel, especially those in conflict areas;
9. Call for more effective, inclusive and coordinated initiatives by the United Nations System, including continuous monitoring and reporting of the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1738 on the safety of journalists in conflict and an end to impunity;
10. Urge One UN in Pakistan under the leadership of Resident Coordinator to mainstream this issue into its developmental and humanitarian activities in 2013 to 2017;
11. Welcome the initiative towards the implementation strategy of UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity and declare that this historic commitment should fulfill the high expectations to which it gives rise;
12. Propose that the acute concerns of the media for meaningful and practical actions are fully and seriously taken into account at the UN Inter-Agency Meeting being held in Vienna in November and thereafter in the effective implementation of the UN Plan and its stakeholders at all levels.

PAKISTAN SPECIFIC INPUTS TO THE IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY OF THE UNITED NATIONS' PLAN OF ACTION ON THE SAFETY OF JOURNALISTS AND THE ISSUE OF IMPUNITY- 2012

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The safety of journalists and media workers in Pakistan remains a major concern in the light of high levels of violence, including threats, intimidation, assaults, kidnappings and killings targeting print, broadcast and online media workers in the country. This calls for the action of Government, Civil Society and the Journalists themselves to increase their commitment towards safety of Journalists and end impunity for the killers of journalists.
2. There is a general consensus that the single biggest challenge to the establishment of a safe journalism is the prevailing culture of impunity for those who commit violence against media. The fight against impunity must therefore be at the heart of plan of action to inspire strategies for raising awareness about this issue and establishing effective partnerships among all stakeholders to tackle it together.
3. The Freedom of Expression is inherent of Article 19-A of 1973 Constitution which states: "Every citizen shall have the right to have Access to information in all matters of public importance subject to regulation and reasonable restrictions imposed by law." Which calls for the greater action for effective legislation and policy to safe guard right to Freedom of Information Act, and related obligations under international law instruments.
4. In this regard, journalists and their organizations need to develop effective mechanisms to monitor and gather information about press violations as well as to identify pro-active and result-oriented initiatives to ensure such information is shared with the authorities and other partners at the local, national, regional and international levels. This approach would increase the pressure on the authorities to take action against those responsible and over the long the term through consistent practice, provides deterrence against future attacks on journalists.

II. OVERALL OBJECTIVES

5. Working to create a culture of safety for Pakistani journalists and media workers through sustained efforts including enacting policy and legal framework, enabling civil society as accountability and watchdogs, and equipping media workers with capacity to practice their duties, to protect them against attacks and to combat impunity, in the interest of freedom and democracy,

III. GOALS

6. This Plan of Action foresees the attainment of the following goals towards the overall objective:

Legal and Policy Frameworks

- ***Enactment of Freedom of Expression Act:*** Advocacy, pressure from political, academic and civil society circles is required to ensure timely enactment of the pending Information Bill to prevent further delay in enactment. Civil society organizations' and media need to combine efforts to make freedom of information laws a citizen concern. Access to Information Policy characterized by proactive disclosures. The media should be engaged in sensitizing the public about the bill and the stakes in delaying the enactment of the bill.
- ***Cooperation with Governmental bodies and Law Enforcement Agencies on promoting and guaranteeing journalists' rights and freedoms:*** Every effort should be made to guarantee the implementation of existing international standards and the rule of law. Joint training/courses with police and security forces on their legal obligations towards working journalists should be encouraged.
- ***Creating media safety protocols in newsrooms:*** Editors, Journalists and their organizations must give top priority to the safety of their staff, by putting in place clear protocols to follow when on assignment and develop guidelines for handling situations of attack,

kidnap, arrest, etc. In time of crisis, media organizations should devise mechanisms to report and alert the legal instruments to provide safety to journalists in challenging situation. Due regard should be given to working conditions of freelance journalists who lack employers' backing.

Civil Society and Human Right's Activists

- ***Develop Advocacy Skills:*** Effective media advocacy requires skills to ensure that the issues of concern to journalists get a fair chance to be debated at national, regional and international levels which media representatives can't access. These skills range from the preparation and presentation of the information to preparing and presenting information to the timing of submission and targeting of potential sponsors.
- ***Maintain strong networks and Encouraging collective action:*** Solidarity should be the cornerstone of the campaign for the safety of journalists and the fight against impunity. Journalists and their organizations should condemn every incident of violence across the country. The more united front they present, the less likely their call will be ignored. In particular, Press Clubs should priorities organizing its affiliated organizations to strengthen their capacity to act in defense of independent reporting.
- ***Develop mechanism of prosecution:*** Civil society and human rights commission should put in place a mechanism, which provides a platform to seek justice from concerned authorities and duty bearers by efforts towards conclusive investigation and prosecution for the families of the victim journalists through conclusive legal investigations into the killings of journalists;

Press Clubs, Media workers and Organizations

- ***Safety training:*** Every journalist needs to have basic training in life saving techniques for hostile environments. Such training should involve trauma counseling, including a gender-based approach, and the use of social media to share crucial information in time of crisis in a secure manner. One UN Pakistan together with stakeholders shall take lead role in this regard.

- ***Accountability through Media Credibility Index based on MDIs:*** A separate mechanism of evaluating, media organizations through media Credibility Index based on Media Development Indicators, to alert and highlight issue of unethical, biased, self censored policies, to invoke free and ethical media practices among journalists. Based on MCI, journalists should receive training on recording evidence about an incident and feed that information back to their organization. To this end, there is also need to create the post of a safety officer in every Press Club whose responsibility should focus on monitoring attacks on media and issue alerts to partners.
- ***Commitment to Islamabad Declaration on Safety of Journalists:*** Commitment to Islamabad Declaration on Safety of Journalists: Media workers and their organizations should spearhead the campaign to urge all stakeholders to sign, ratify and domesticate instruments, regional and international, related to the protection of human rights. A close collaboration with lawyers' organizations and human rights organization should be considered. Member States who are parties to existing instruments must undertake to comply with obligation thereof.
- ***Work towards the implementation of the UN Plan of Action on The Safety of Journalists:*** Safety and the Issue of Impunity in cooperation with all actors involved such as international and regional organizations, neighboring countries, professional associations, media industry and society at large should work towards the implementation of UN Plan of Action on the Safety and impunity Issues.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE GROUP WORK

Group 1: Legal and Policy Framework

The group participant suggested following interventions to be addressed on the issue of impunity regarding policy and legal Frameworks:

- i. Compliance of industrial relations and laws such as Industrial Relation Act, Workmen Compensation Law, insurance related obligations, etc. by the media industry owners should be introduced and implemented.
- ii. Media industry owners should be demarcated from working journalists.
- iii. Reviewing and reforming procedural and legal frameworks governing media industry in particular. Linkages may be developed between existing legal structures, such National Human Rights Commission, governing human rights and journalists' rights.
- iv. Independence and autonomy of the media regulators must be ensured.
- v. Groups/association of media friendly lawyers may be organized. A media legal fund may be created to support journalists with limited resources to hire expert lawyers for their cases in the courts.
- vi. Parliament should enact an enabling law on right to information, which should cover journalists' right to access to information.

Group 2: Capacity Building Towards Safety

The group participant had internal discussion by raising first some questions and then tried to find answers as suggested recommendations to be addressed on the issue of capacity building of media towards safety:

1. What are the present challenges in different areas?

- i. Inattention to/non-prioritization of professional ethics (fairness, balance, verification in reporting/writing) by media and journalists
- ii. Reporting of/coverage on violence (militant, sectarian, ethnic, faith-based, terrorism, etc) is done without acquiring skills of Conflict Sensitive Journalism (CSJ). No training institutes that

teach CSJ, no courses at universities teaching journalism and no interest by media houses to train their staff in CSJ.

iii. Absence of standard set of security protocols - drafted and approved by media houses, endorsed by media associations and adopted by media operators.

iv. Absence of a centralized complaints reporting/documentation of security-related issues facing journalists and redressal mechanisms

v. Absence of an "Alliance of Media on Security" that brings together all key media houses, media associations and other allied media stakeholders that acknowledge, support and help implement policies to reduce risks and enhance safety for journalists

vi. Lack of an enforceable accountability of media houses that may or may not hire journalists as full, formal employees, or contracts staff but who get hurt while working for the media houses.

2. How far do media organizations and journalists' associations provide support?

i. There should be a *Media Threat Index* identifying the types of risks that journalists face in various regions of Pakistan as well as outlining relevant risk mitigation and risk response mechanisms/processes, to generate standard minimum responses when attacks occur.

ii. There should be clear, written lines relating to security in contract letters so that journalists are discouraged from unnecessary risk taking that are likely to result in attacks.

iii. There should be an institutionalized interface between editors/Desk and reporters/Field in all media houses to remove misunderstandings and misperceptions as well as orientation on the sensitivities of reporting from the conflict zones to protect reporters from harm.

iv. Media houses, press clubs and journalists unions should make it mandatory on their members and staffers to undergo orientation and training on risks and mitigation and harm prevention strategies.

3. What information, knowledge, skills acquired by journalists to deal with hostile situations, and law-enforcement bodies to deal with impunity?

- i. Absence of Conflict Sensitive Journalism (CSJ) knowledge, skills, capacity and orientation and lack of trainings for adequate numbers of journalists in Pakistan.
- ii. Absence of an institutionalized interface between the media community and legal fraternity to serve as a legal aid mechanism for journalists in distress.
- iii. Absence of a Fund to provide resources to finance legal aid for journalists seeking justice against attacks and harm.
- iv. Absence of verified, periodic data on violations against media in Pakistan that can serve as a guide on response mechanisms to help journalists under attack

Group 3: Role of civil society of Civil Society and Human Rights Activists as watchdogs

The role of civil society and human rights activists as suggested in UNESCO's proposed plan of action on the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity stands endorsed by the consultation participants.

The measures suggested by UNESCO include

- Develop Advocacy Skills
 - Maintain strong networks and encourage collective action
- i. A number of CSOs issue statements condemning the killing of journalists; however these individual statements do not make a lot of impact. To ensure that CSOs can raise the voices effectively, the formation of a coalition of NGO's and CSOs is recommended, in order to serve as a neutral platform that can take a collective stand against impunity and increasing threats to journalists. This coalition can release

- collective condemnations, statements of concern etc. on all cases of journalist killings, assaults and threats.
- ii. Creation of a consensus credibility index, that can help differentiate good journalism from bad and discourage unethical practices of journalism. CSOs should also ensure that all such data is made public.
 - iii. Regular monitoring and evaluation of media news content. The monitoring and evaluation should include, Monitoring and evaluation of news content for journalism quality; specifically indicating any biases that are likely to put reporters and news teams in danger, Monitoring of news content that can put journalists directly in the way of danger for example live coverage from zones where armed operations being conducted.
 - iv. Formation of a grievance mechanism, where media consumers can lodge complains about media content being aired. The grievance mechanism should be able to follow up on the actions of media regulatory bodies as well as the media outlets once the complaints have been lodged. All information and data generated during this process should be public.
 - v. CSOs should work with academia to conduct a review and revision of mass communication courses. Comparisons with reputed international university courses should be carried out and contextualized accordingly.
 - vi. CSOs should work with universities to develop a module to teach journalism students basic safety and security in the field including but not limited to key ethical considerations, the lack of which could put journalists at risk.
 - vii. CSOs should work with universities and mass communication departments to facilitate in depth empirical, quantitative and qualitative research on media content and practices.
 - viii. One of the reasons for prevailing impunity in journalist killing cases is the lack of a proper pressure group that can continuously lobby and advocate for increasing safety measures and ending impunity for killers of journalists. The CSOs should play a pivotal

- role in the formation of such a pressure group and lobby together to for measures that ensure safe working environment for journalists. The pressure group should target; Government / State Agencies that have to undertake investigations into journalist killings and are responsible for providing justice. Media owners who have to place internal safety protocols in place and provide safety equipment, medical and life insurance to employees.
- ix. The rat race for breaking news has been identified as one of the key reasons which compel journalists to work in risky situations. The CSOs can act as a pressure group to discourage this type of competition among news organization and suggest alternative news [and competition] models that keep journalist safety in mind.
 - x. A majority of journalists killed in the last 10 years (2002-2012) were working for electronic media. The electronic media in the private sector is regulated by the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA), whose board is governed almost entirely by government-service persons, with virtually no representation from the civil society. At least one-third representation on the PEMRA board should be from the civil society so that they can check the unannounced media policies that lead to unnecessary risk taking by journalists.
 - xi. The biggest television (Pakistan Television) and radio (Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation) operations in Pakistan are run and managed by the state. These mostly serve government interests, not public interest. being outside the regulatory jurisdiction of PEMRA, they indirectly force private sector broadcasters to indulge in the breaking news culture in an environment of conflict, which hurts journalists. Both the TV and radio operations in state hands should be converted into public service broadcasting through setting up boards of governors, which should have a majority of members drawn from civil society who, in public interest, can effectively discourage unnecessary risk taking.
 - xii. CSOs should put up a united front to start litigation and pursue legal against the killers of journalists. Among the 86 journalist killings in Pakistan only one has been solved so far, the killing of Daniel Pearl. In most cases, the families of the Pakistani journalists

being killed do not have the capacity to pursue legal action. A lot of them are threatened themselves and are forced to withdraw cases. The Civil Society can be effective in perusing justice for the slain journalists if they get together to file cases and act as a pressure group.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

S.No.	NAMES	DESIGNATION
1.	Syed Haider Abbas Rizvi	Member, National Assembly's Special Committee to Investigate the Issue of Threats to Journalists and Media Personnel
2.	Rashid Ahmed Chaudhry	Secretary, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting
3.	Amjad Bhatti	Spokesperson for Minister, Information and Broadcast
4.	Amin Yusuf (Sindh)	Pakistan Federation on Union of Journalists
5.	Iqbal Khattak (Peshawar)	Correspondent, RSF/ Bureau Chief Daily Times
6.	Ihsan dawar (FATA)	Khyber Union of Journalists
7.	Ehsan Sehar (South Punjab)	Rural Media Network of Pakistan
8.	Adnan Rehmat	Intermedia
9.	Sadaf Baig	Intermedia
10.	Mazhar Abbas	Prominent Journalist, President All Pakistan Newspaper Association

11.	Talat Hussain	Journalists, Anchorperson
12.	Hamid Mir	Journalist, Executive Director GEO TV
13.	Amir jahangir	AGAHI, Media Development NGO
14.	Puruesh Chadhray	Focal person in Pakistan, Center for Ethical Journalism
15.	Aftab Alam	IRADA, Media Development NGO
16.	Senator Mohsin Laghari	Member of Senate of Pakistan
17.	Timo Pakkala	Resident Coordinator
18.	Kazue Tase	Director, UNIC
19.	Shaheen Hussain	UNWOMEN
20.	Ghazala Rafiq	UNICEF
21.	Fatimah Inayat	UNDP
22.	Saima Alvi	UNDP
23.	Najam Ud Din	Human Rights Commission of Pakistan

24.	Saqib Khan	Associated Press of Pakistan
25.	Masood Hassan	FM 100
26.	Asad Khalid Baig	Open Society Foundation
27.	Shafqat Abbasi	Chairman, Press Council of Pakistan
28.	Hassan Abbas	Urdu Times, Pakistan
29.	Lab Bestle	IMS
30.	Ranga Kalansooriya	IMS
31.	Asghar Khan	Sindh Express
32.	Saeed Minhaas	Journalist, Dunya TV
33.	Shaheryaar Mufti	Freelance Journalist, Mufti Media
34.	Maira Amir	Freelance, Media Researcher