Operationalizing the UN Plan of Action
ON THE SAFETY OF JOURNALISTS AND THE ISSUE OF IMPUNITY AT THE COUNTRY LEVEL

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UNESCO
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

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

UNESCO
Communication and Information
Sector
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Operationalizing the UN Plan of Action on Safety of Journalists and the Issues of Impunity at the Country Level

A guide to UNESCO field officers

1. Introduction

The UN Plan of Action on Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity is a new UN-wide initiative to provide an overarching framework for the UN system to work together with all the stakeholders including the national authorities and the various national and international organizations to improve the safety of journalists and media workers and also to combat impunity. UNESCO is entrusted with the overall coordination of UN efforts on the Plan, in cooperation with other agencies. It is our responsibility therefore to help ensure that there is implementation by the many stakeholders, both within the UN and outside of it, who are named in the Plan. To this end, we need to catalyse ways in which these stakeholders, both individually and in various forms of joint action, can make an effective and harmonized contribution. In the broader Plan, our value propositions rest in our unique ability to: (a) mobilise colleagues in the UN system to become involved, (b) work harmoniously with state structures in Member States, and (c) convene all stakeholders together to share information and align activities on an ongoing basis. UNESCO already does a lot of work on safety, and has related targets to meet in the C5 programming document. This should be kept in mind so as to find smart ways to synergise this with our work in regard to the UN Plan.

2. Raising awareness of the UN Plan of Action

While the UN Plan of Action has been fully endorsed by the UN Chief Executives Board in April 2012 and it is on many stakeholders' radar, it still requires significant amount of promotion and sensitization especially

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at the local level including the relevant national authorities, UN agencies, and various NGOs. Here are some suggestions:

- Become familiar with the UN Plan of Action. The document is available in six languages at: http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/freedom-of-expression/safety-of-journalists/un-plan-of-action/
- Attached to this guide is a FAQ which would be helpful in answering some of the questions concerning the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity.
- There is also the 2nd UN Inter-Agency Meeting taking place in Vienna, Austria (22-23 November 2012). The aim of this meeting is to come up with a concrete Implementation Strategy for the UN Plan of Action beginning in 2013. Information concerning the meeting is available at http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/freedom-of-expression/safety-of-journalists/2nd-un-inter-agency-meeting-on-the-safety-of-journalists-and-the-issue-of-impunity/. This Vienna meeting is an opportunity to show that there is momentum around the Plan, and it is important to feed into it the possibilities from the field, so that the Implementation Strategy that emerges corresponds closely to reality. The process is therefore a significant element in awareness-raising.

3. Identifying needs and drawing in other stakeholders:

Each country is faced with its unique challenges and opportunities. For a local operationalization strategy of the Plan, you need to decide what areas need be addressed, taking into account of the local context. You will need to assess potential opportunities for synergy with the various stakeholders, and propose steps to be taken in order to realize the full potential of the UN Plan to make a difference. This depends on how you assess what sequence of actions is feasible and logical in terms of local opportunity and UNESCO capacity.

In many countries, there is a lot of work already taking place. In order to assess the needs and who is active in them, you may want to consider items like:

- the need for legislation to protect freedom of expression, whether for media professionals, bloggers or ordinary citizens;
- the need to implement legislation and improve institutional capacity to do so;
- the need to decriminalise laws like criminal defamation which undermine the status of freedom of expression;
- the need for crimes against freedom of expression in general and media professionals in particular (intimidation, and murder) to be investigated and the perpetrators prosecuted;
- the need for safety-related training for media professionals, media owners, lawmakers, police forces, lawyers;
- the need for a safety fund for journalists in danger;
- the need for a network of lawyers for media professionals;
- the need for specific training for female media professionals;
- the need for dialogue with all relevant stakeholders and harmonisation of activities.
- the need for national sensitization campaign

Once you have a provisional mapping of the situation, it will assist you in drawing existing stakeholders together under the framework of the UN Plan, and in involving new stakeholders especially from within the wider UN.

What follows below are suggested guidelines in regard to UNESCO approaches with three different constituencies of stakeholders:

3.1 Working with UN Agencies:

- As a starting point, be sure to communicate to your own office colleagues about this new UN-wide initiative and UNESCO's role within it.
- Begin identifying the UN agencies on the ground which may have the interest in the UN Plan of Action. However, do not discount the less obvious UN agencies. They may help contribute towards the UN Plan of Action in creative and unexpected ways.
- In order to interest and excite the wider UN, it is important to have a grasp on the character of each component.
- The UNCT and Resident Director are clearly key elements to be canvassed.
- If safety is or can become part of the UN strategies in your country, that is a way to institutionalise involvement and increase accountability of UN participation in the Plan.
- When consulting with the identified agencies, it will obviously be necessary to explain the Plan and what it aims to achieve. But it will also be important to hear in depth what is being done by the institution you are talking with, concerning media and safety issues, which will enrich your map. It may be, for example, that a particular UN agency does a lot of work in training journalists and could then perhaps agree to include a safety component. Another agency may sometimes make representations urging authorities to fulfil certain obligations, meaning that they might be available to join in if there is need for a combined UN delegation on safety issues. To see what is possible, requires finding out what UN colleagues are doing in relevant aspects, and then explore how these might dovetail or have new potential in terms of the Plan.
- Not every UN body will become equally involved in the Plan, but almost all can reasonably be asked, and expected, to do something. The trick is to explore with them what could make easy sense in terms of their core work, rather than place extraneous actions or overload on to their activities. UNESCO can help them see ways in which the UN Plan of Action could complement or add value to their mission and mandate.
- It would be necessary to encourage willing agencies to identify a focal point for further communication and engagement.

3.2 Working with national authorities:

- Parallel to (or perhaps after) the consultations with other UN agencies, the national authorities must be consulted and be involved in the process as early as possible.
- They need to be briefed on the Plan and how it could benefit their work.
- The process of consultation would be similar to that with the UN agencies involving identifying relevant stakeholders, explaining the UN Plan of Action, and identifying a focal point. Prioritise, but do not limit, which aspects of the state could participate in this process? Eg. Ministry of Information, Judiciary, Bar Council, Police and other security forces, Human Rights officials, etc.

3.3 Working with media and NGOs:

- The third leg of the tripartite networking around the UN Plan is the crucial involvement of the relevant media organizations, and non-government organizations (local and international), and bringing them on

board with the UN Plan of Action. UNESCO has a good working relationship with many international organizations active in field of freedom of expression and this relationship could be an asset in the operationalization of the UN Plan of Action.

- The process of consultation would be similar to that of other stakeholders involving identifying relevant organizations, explaining the UN Plan of Action, and identifying the respective focal points.

Food for thought:
Build partnerships: UNESCO by itself cannot achieve what is set out in the UN Plan of Action. Indeed no one single organization or agency could. In order to fulfill this mission, it would be necessary work together in a multi-stakeholder approach as designed in the UN Plan of Action. Without doubt, tried and tested partners and activities will be crucial to the success of the plan but at the same time, each country's situation demands unique solutions which may come out of some creative partnership. Partnerships should be clearly based on voluntary intersections of real interests of diverse contributors to the UN Plan. A partnership is not the same as a subcontractual relationship. To be sustainable, a partnership should entail mutual respect for the integrity and mandate of all sides.

Think long term: The UN Plan of Action should be visualized as a medium to long-term engagement. How can we use the plan as a starting point to move beyond a few immediate collaborations and begin synergizing the strengths of various stakeholders outside a few short-term activities and projects? How can UNESCO help evolve a shared and harmonised approach amongst the various actors and encourage ways of working that avoid duplication or spreading energies too thinly?

"UNESCO by itself cannot achieve what is set out in the UN Plan of Action. Indeed no one single organization or agency could. In order to fulfill this mission, it would be necessary work together in a multi stakeholder approach"

4. Talking Points with Stakeholders

Reasons to become active in the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity:

Participation in the Plan may often be linked by the particular individual's background and values. For instance, former journalists may be personally predisposed to contributing to the actualization of the Plan. This is a good starting point for building a coalition around the Plan. At the same time, to be sustainable, the participation should serve institutional interests. The questions to answer then are:

- Why would it be in the interests of agency X to become involved in the Plan?
- What can it get out of such an engagement that will help meet its own objectives?

In seeking to convince actors to become involved, a number of arguments could be advanced as appropriate to the engagement and the constituency being addressed:

1) New opportunity: Safety is a long-standing (and worsening) problem. Killings are the extreme point on a spectrum of intolerance and intimidation of journalists, and these ills reflect the absence of a culture that cherishes freedom of expression. But now there is a novel and bold opportunity to make a difference to these kinds of problems by joining forces in a Plan which has the important status of having been endorsed by the UN Chief Executives Board. This innovation serves to bring the wider UN on board the issue and promotes alignment of all stakeholders – heightening the historic chance to make societies safe for freedom of expression.

2) Rights-based appeal: In principle, each and every person should have the right to speak freely and without fear. The greatest violation of this right is the killing of people for exercising the right to freedom of expression, and both journalists and bloggers are usually the greatest victims here. The killings send a signal of intimidation to society at large that no one should broach certain topics or circulate certain kinds of information. The UN Plan seeks to change this, and a society freed of fear in terms of speaking out is something that all stakeholders can agree upon. Human rights are indivisible, and it is humans who need to stand up for them – and particularly those who recognize how freedom of expression is fundamental to the realization of other rights.

3) An appeal based on the knowledge society: Freedom of expression and press freedom are the cornerstones of a democracy. It is in the best interest of the country to have a vibrant, pluralistic, and independent media. Countries with freer media have been shown to have lower levels of corruption and stronger economic development. Corruption threatens the rule of law and undermines public trust in political institutions. In many societies, violence and threats against free speech and media freedom undermine social progress. In this way, attacks on freedom of expression inhibit the effective operation of governments, UN agencies, media, civil society, business and other constituencies. Where media is not safe, the free flow of information is constrained, and this obstructs the emergence of the knowledge society. There is therefore a strong self-interest in everyone helping to create a free speech environment that is conducive to development and progress.

4) An appeal relating to governance: It is the responsibility of the State to ensure a safe environment for its media professionals to work in. The UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalist and the Issue of Impunity aims toward the creation of a free and safe environment for journalists and media workers in both conflict and non-conflict situations, with a view to strengthening peace, democracy and development worldwide. Stakeholders within the State, and outside it, can all play roles in helping to ensure that the State in all its components lives up to its responsibilities, including having the political will, institutional capacity and partnerships to do so.

5) An appeal to justice and the rule of law: If those who threaten free speech and who kill our most public practitioners, i.e. the journalists, the rule of law is undermined. Those who commit crimes against free expression should know their actions will incur legal consequences for them. The problem of impunity is that it serves to embolden attackers and triggers a vicious cycle of further violence. Breaking the cycle requires combating impunity and strengthening protection for media professionals. The UN Plan envisages advocacy, as well as training and other activities, all of which constitute easy entry points for many stakeholders to make a contribution.

6) An appeal to national interests: The UN Plan of Action is an opportunity for the individual countries to access the resources available in the UN system including best practices, expertise, funding possibility for capacity building, etc. The Plan is also an opportunity for national governments to show leadership in these issues by becoming an exemplary country in this initiative. The Plan will celebrate successes and disseminate good practices for consideration and adaptation in other countries.

6) *Organizational interests are served:* Killings of journalists disrupt social cohesion and hamstring the prospects for any institution to do its work. Supporting the UN Plan of Action will help to secure a conducive social environment to work in. In addition, support has the potential, where desired, for stakeholders to raise their public visibility as being friends of freedom of expression. Such involvement is also likely to assist in strengthening media relations. Many bodies provide training for journalists – backing the UN Plan is a way to protect this investment.

"The UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity was endorsed by the UN Chief Executives Board, representing the highest level coordination mechanism of the UN system on 13 April 2012"

FAQ on UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalist and the Issue of Impunity

Q: What is the UN Plan of Action?
A: The UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity aims toward the creation of a free and safe environment for journalists and media workers in both conflict and non-conflict situations, with a view to strengthening peace, democracy and development worldwide.

Concretely, the UN Plan of Action includes measure for the establishment of a coordinated inter-agency mechanism to handle issues related to the safety of journalists, and the involvement of other intergovernmental organizations at international and regional levels to encourage the incorporation of journalists' safety within their respective strategies.

The plan also foresees the extension of work already conducted by UNESCO to prevent crimes against media workers. This includes assisting countries to develop legislation and mechanisms favourable to freedom of expression and information, and by supporting their efforts to implement existing international rules and principles. However, the Plan is not a UNESCO Plan, but a UN Plan, which means that all UN actors share ownership and responsibility for implementation. UNESCO's role is to contribute and to help co-ordinate, but in many countries without a UNESCO presence, other UN agencies should be encouraged to champion implementation.

Q: Who has endorsed the UN Plan of Action?
A: The UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, was endorsed on 13 April 2012 by the UN Chief Executives Board, the highest level coordination mechanism of the UN system. In addition, the Plan has also been highly welcomed by international and regional press freedom organizations.

Q: How did the UN Plan of Action start?
A: The UN Plan of Action on The Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity is the result of a process that began in 2010 with the 39 UNESCO Member States, serving on the Intergovernmental Council of the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC). They unanimously requested the Director-General of UNESCO to consult with Member States on the feasibility of convening an inter-agency meeting of all the relevant UN agencies "with a view to formulating a comprehensive, coherent, and action-oriented approach to the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity."

Consequently, the first UN Inter-Agency Meeting on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity took place at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris on 13-14 September 2011. Representatives of United Nations agencies, programmes and funds met at UNESCO to draft an Action Plan to improve the safety of journalists and combat impunity. The meeting was also attended by a wide range of international and regional institutions, professional organizations, NGOs and Member States that provided recommendations to the UN family on the draft Plan.

Q: What is the follow-up for the first UN Inter-Agency meeting?
A: As a follow-up to the 1st UN Inter-Agency Meeting in 2011, a 2nd UN Inter-agency Meeting on the Safety of Journalists will be held in Vienna, Austria, from 22 to 23 November 2012 with the aim of formulating a concrete UN Implementation Strategy on The Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity in order to implement the UN Plan of Action on The Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, approved by the UN Chief Executive Board on 13 April 2012. The immediate objective is to create a coordination mechanism between the UN agencies and to share plans for operationalising at country level.
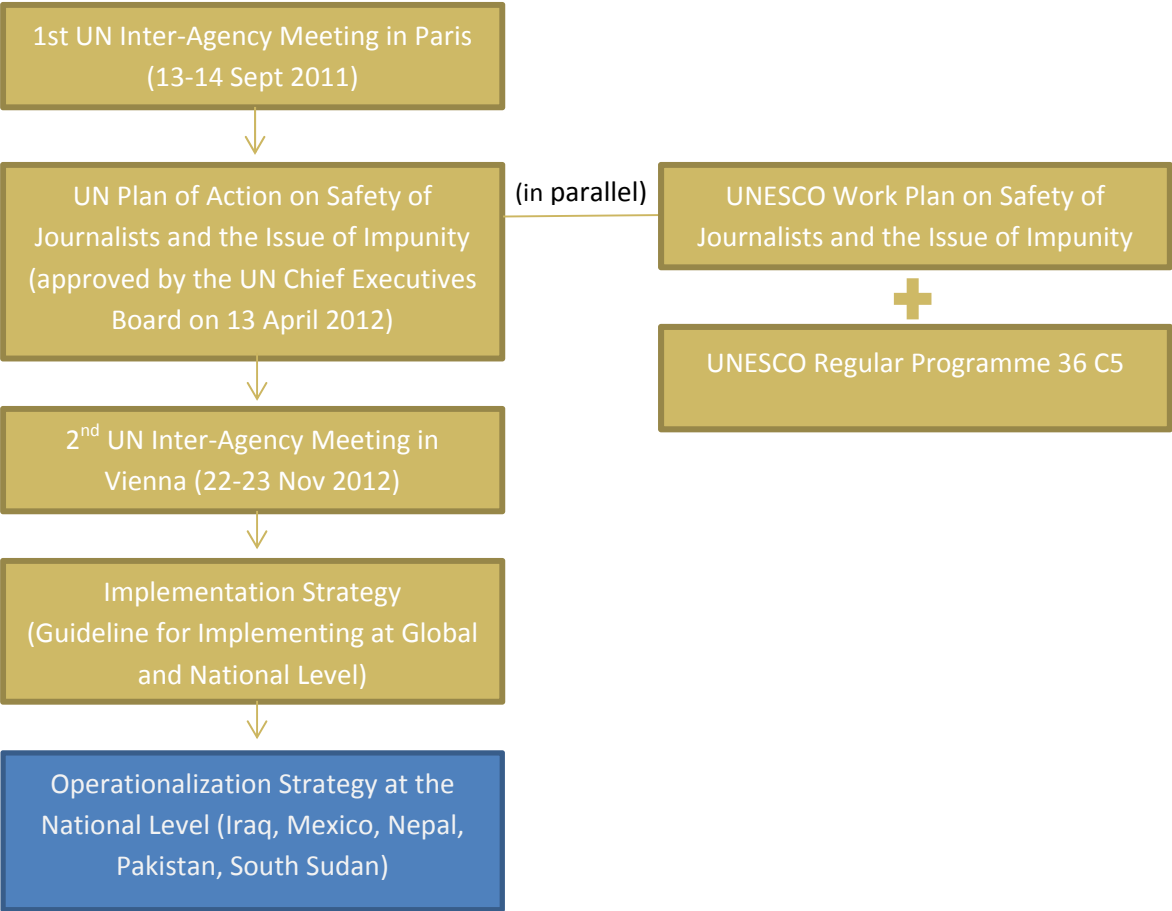
Q: Isn't there also a UNESCO Work Plan on the Safety of Journalists? What is the difference?
A: The UN Plan is a UN-wide plan drawn up by many UN bodies and adopted by the UN's Chief Executive Body in April 2012. Currently, a process is in motion to formalise UNESCO's own ***Work Plan on Safety of Journalists and Combatting Impunity***. The draft version* has being put to the Member States for consultation. This draft speaks to UNESCO's ongoing and broader work on safety, such as the Director-General's reports on the subject. It also covers what UNESCO is specifically doing in regard to implementing its assigned role as overall coordinator of the UN Plan. The final version of this Plan will be presented to Member States represented at the 191st UNESCO Executive Board in early 2013.

* http://www.unesco.org/webworld/en/unesco-plan-safety

UN Plan of Action on Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity Flow Chart

1st UN Inter-Agency Meeting in Paris (13-14 Sept 2011)

UN Plan of Action on Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity (approved by the UN Chief Executives Board on 13 April 2012)

(in parallel)

UNESCO Work Plan on Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity

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UNESCO Regular Programme 36 C5

2nd UN Inter-Agency Meeting in Vienna (22-23 Nov 2012)

Implementation Strategy (Guideline for Implementing at Global and National Level)

Operationalization Strategy at the National Level (Iraq, Mexico, Nepal, Pakistan, South Sudan)

In consulting with stakeholders on their possible alignment with the Plan, it is helpful to work through a number of questions. Below is a sample questionnaire that can serve to elicit detailed answers as well as stimulate creative thinking about support for the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity:

1. Could you tell us if you are aware of the UN-wide *Plan of Action on Safety of Journalists and the Issue of impunity*? If yes, where did you receive the information from?

2. What is the past experience of your organization in dealing with safety of journalists and impunity issues?

3. Has the problem of **safety of journalists** ever affected your past, current, or upcoming programme and activities?

4. Has the problem of **impunity** ever affected your past, current, or upcoming programme and activities?

5. Given the endorsement of the UN Plan by all CEOs of the UN, we hope your agency/department can find creative ways to contribute towards the Plan. Ideally, these could be actions that complement and reinforce your core work. Can you tell us what your contributions could be?

6. Is there anything in addition to your responses in point 5 above that is possible, under the headings of:
   - general awareness-raising,
   - specific training of media/government/justice/security officials,
   - research,
   - dissemination of good practices information,
   - joining delegations to express concern to stakeholders,
   - co-financing of meetings or activities,
   - encouraging your civil society – business – governmental partners also take up the issues.

7. Could you identify which activity or area of your contribution could entail a strong possibility of cooperation with UNESCO in particular, and/or other UN agencies more broadly,

8. Is there any issue, related to safety of journalists and issue of impunity, where your agency/department could take the lead?

9. How might you see success of the UN Plan of Action in general working to your benefit in relation to your agency's mandate?

10. Could you provide the name of a contact person in your organization for the UN Plan Action of Action? (This person will be receiving information concerning the UN Plan of Action, and other information from the group which could then be appropriately relay back to your agency).

DOCUMENT: UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity*

UN PLAN OF ACTION ON THE SAFETY OF JOURNALISTS AND THE ISSUE OF IMPUNITY

1. Introduction

"Every journalist killed or neutralized by terror is an observer less of the human condition. Every attack distorts reality by creating a climate of fear and self-censorship"[1]

1.1. In recent years, there has been disquieting evidence of the scale and number of attacks against the physical safety of journalists and media workers as well as of incidents affecting their ability to exercise freedom of expression by threats of prosecution, arrest, imprisonment, denial of journalistic access, and failures to investigate and prosecute crimes against them. This evidence has been repeatedly brought to the attention of the international community by inter-governmental organizations, professional associations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other stakeholders.

1.2. Statistics gathered by UNESCO, as well as by other organizations such as the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), Reporters Sans Frontières (RSF), the International News Safety Institute (INSI), the International Freedom of Expression Exchange (IFEX) and the Inter American Press Association (IAPA) all testify to the staggering number of journalists and media workers killed while performing their professional duties.

1.3. Furthermore, according to IFEX, in nine out of ten cases, the perpetrators of these crimes are never prosecuted. Impunity, which may be understood as the failure to bring perpetrators of human rights violations to justice, perpetuates the cycle of violence against journalists and must be addressed.

1.4. The safety of journalists and the struggle against impunity for their killers are essential to preserve the fundamental right to freedom of expression, guaranteed by Article 19 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. Freedom of expression is an individual right, for which no one should be killed, but it is also a collective right, which empowers populations through facilitating dialogue, participation and democracy, and thereby makes autonomous and sustainable development possible.

1.5. Without freedom of expression, and particularly freedom of the press, an informed, active and engaged citizenry is impossible. In a climate where journalists are safe, citizens find it easier to access quality information and many objectives become possible as a result: democratic governance and poverty reduction; conservation of the environment; gender equality and the empowerment of women; justice and a culture of human rights, to name a few. Hence, while the problem of impunity is not restricted to

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[1] Barry James in Press Freedom: Safety of Journalists and Impunity. UNESCO Publications: 2002

the failure to investigate the murders of journalists and media workers, the curtailment of their expression deprives society as a whole of their journalistic contribution and results in a wider impact on press freedom where a climate of intimidation and violence leads to self-censorship. In such a climate societies suffer because they lack the information needed to fully realize their potential. Efforts to end impunity with respect to crimes against journalists must be associated with the defence and protection of human rights defenders, more generally. In addition, the protection of journalists should not be limited to those formally recognised as journalists, but should cover others, including community media workers and citizen journalists and others who may be using new media as a means of reaching their audiences.

1.6. Promoting the safety of journalists and fighting impunity must not be constrained to after-the-fact action. Instead, it requires prevention mechanisms and actions to address some of the root causes of violence against journalists and of impunity. This implies the need to deal with issues such as corruption, organized crime and an effective framework for the rule of law in order to respond to negative elements. In addition, the existence of laws that curtail freedom of expression (e.g. overly restrictive defamation laws), must be addressed. The media industry also must deal with low wages and improving journalistic skills. To whatever extent possible, the public must be made aware of these challenges in the public and private spheres and the consequences from a failure to act. The protection of journalists should adapt to the local realities affecting journalists. Journalists reporting on corruption and organized crime, for example, are increasingly targeted by organized crime groups and parallel powers. Approaches that are tailored to local needs should be encouraged.

1.7. In light of the above, a number of measures have been adopted by the United Nations (UN) to strengthen legal frameworks and enforcement mechanisms designed to ensure the safety of journalists in both conflict and non-conflict areas. The UN's strengths and opportunities lie in the areas of building free, independent and pluralistic media as well as the legal frameworks and democratic institutions to support it.

1.8. At the international level, the UN Security Council adopted *Resolution S/RES/1738* in 2006, which established a coherent, action-oriented approach to the safety of journalists in armed conflicts. Since then, the UN Secretary-General has presented an annual report to the General Assembly on the implementation of this Resolution.

1.9. Additionally, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) plays an important role in raising awareness regarding the issue, including through its reports to the Human Rights Council (HRC). It works in close cooperation with the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Expression and Opinion and is mandated to: gather information relating to violations of freedom of expression; seek, receive and respond to relevant information from governments, NGOs and other parties; and make recommendations on how best to promote freedom of expression. A number of other Special Rapporteurs, including the Special Rapporteur on Extra-judicial, Summary or Arbitrary Execution; the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women; the Special Rapporteur on Torture and the Working Groups on Forced Disappearances and Arbitrary Detentions are also all relevant in this regard.

1.10. As the United Nations specialized agency with a mandate to 'promote the free flow of ideas by word and image'[2], the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has been an important player in the defence of freedom of expression through the promotion of the safety of journalists and the fight against impunity. Often in collaboration with other organizations, UNESCO has taken a number of decisive actions in this field. For example, it has been working together with Reporters Sans Frontières (RSF) to publish a regularly updated practical guide for journalists working in conflict zones, now available in ten languages. In 2008, UNESCO co-authored a UN Charter for the Safety of Journalists Working in War Zones or Dangerous Areas, which includes a commitment by the media, public authorities and journalists to systematically seek ways to reduce the risks involved. It has also supported a number of organizations to provide safety and risk awareness training for journalists and media workers.

1.11. In addition to these practical steps, UNESCO has undertaken a number of activities designed to raise awareness about journalists' safety and the issue of impunity. Among UNESCO's flagship activities in this area are *World Press Freedom Day*, celebrated every year on May 3rd, and the *Guillermo Cano/UNESCO World Press Freedom Prize*, intended to honour the work of an individual or an organization defending or promoting freedom of expression anywhere in the world, especially in dangerous conditions. The importance of this issue was further highlighted by the *Medellin Declaration*[3] of 2007, which specifically focuses on securing the safety of journalists and combating impunity in both conflict and non-conflict situations, and the *Belgrade Declaration* of 2004, which focused on supporting media in violent conflict-zones and countries in transition. In line with Resolution 29, of the 29th session of UNESCO's General Conference, the Director General has, since 1997, publicly condemned the killing of individual journalists and media workers, as well as massive and repetitive violations of press freedom and urged the competent authorities to discharge their duty of preventing, investigating and punishing such crimes. Finally, the *International Programme for the Development of Communication* (IPDC) plays a crucial role in promoting the safety of journalists and combating impunity. As well as developing projects to address this issue in the field, IPDC has, since 2008, encouraged Member States to submit information, on a voluntary basis, on the status of the judicial inquiries conducted on each of the killings condemned by UNESCO, for inclusion in a public report submitted every two years to the IPDC Council by the Director-General.

1.12. International legal instruments represent one of the key tools that the international community, including the United Nations (UN), has at its disposal in the struggle for the safety of journalists and against impunity. These are internationally recognized and often legally binding. Relevant conventions, declarations and resolutions include the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*; the *Geneva Conventions*; the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*; *UN Commission on Human Rights Resolution 2005/81*; the *UN Security Council Resolution 1738 (2006).*

1.13. Regional systems in the human rights context are also essential, instituted within the framework of regional and sub-regional organisations such as the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR); the African Union (AU); the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), the League of Arab States, the Council of Europe (CoE) and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Whilst there are many international legal instruments

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[2] UNESCO Constitution 1945, Article 1
[3] Read Medellin Declaration at http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/flagship-project-activities/world-press-freedom-day/previous-celebrations/worldpressfreedomday2009000/medellin-declaration/

addressing human rights in general, only a small number are specifically concerned with the situation of journalists and their safety.

1.14. Some of the regional systems are also reinforced by monitoring bodies which observe the level of state compliance with their commitments, and call attention to violations when necessary. These include the Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression within the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights (IACHR), the Special Rapporteur on the Freedom of Expression and Access to Information within the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights in Africa, and the Special Representative on Freedom of the Media in the OSCE.

1.15. At the national level, many agencies, funds and programmes of the UN system are also working toward an approach which promotes the safety of journalists and addresses the issue of impunity. This is relevant to the UN strategic discussions and joint programming within the Delivering As One framework.

1.16. While recognizing that investigating crimes against journalists remains the responsibility of Member States, the acts of violence and intimidation (including murder, abduction, hostage-taking, harassment, intimidation and illegal arrest and detention) are becoming ever more frequent in a variety of contexts. Notably, the threat posed by non-state actors such as terrorist organizations and criminal enterprises is growing. This merits a careful, context-sensitive consideration of the differing needs of journalists in conflict and non-conflict zones, as well as of the different legal instruments available to ensure their protection. It also necessitates an investigation into how the dangers faced by journalists in situations that do not qualify as armed conflicts in the strictest sense (such as sustained confrontation between organized crime groups) may be dealt with.

1.17. Female journalists also face increasing dangers, highlighting the need for a gender-sensitive approach. In carrying out their professional duties, they often risk sexual assault, whether in the form of a targeted sexual violation, often in reprisal for their work; mob-related sexual violence aimed against journalists covering public events; or the sexual abuse of journalists in detention or captivity. Furthermore, many of these crimes are not reported as a result of powerful cultural and professional stigmas.[4]

1.18. There is a pressing need for the various UN agencies, funds and programmes to develop a single, strategic and harmonized approach to the issue of the safety of journalists and the impunity of perpetrators of crimes against them. In light of this, in March 2010, the Intergovernmental Council of the IPDC[5] called on the Director-General of UNESCO "to consult with Member States on the feasibility of convening an inter-agency meeting of all relevant UN agencies, funds and programmes in order to design a joint UN strategy on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue to Impunity." On the basis of the responses received following this consultation, the UNESCO Director-General decided to organize a *UN Inter-Agency Meeting on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity* in September 2011. The conclusions drawn from this meeting will be articulated in a Plan of Action, which will formulate a **comprehensive, coherent, and action-oriented UN-wide approach to the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity.**

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[4] Lauren Wolfe, 'The Silencing Crime: Sexual Violence Against Journalists'. Committee to Protect Journalists: 2011,
[5] 27th IPDC Decision on the Safety of Journalist and the Issue of Impunity. Available at
http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/pdf/ipdc2010_safety_decision_final.pdf

2. Justification

2.1. This Plan of Action is needed to uphold the fundamental right of freedom of expression and, in so doing, to ensure that citizens are well informed and actively participate in society at large. The United Nations agencies, funds and programmes are collectively well-placed to address this issue. They possess long-established platforms through which to voice concerns and propose solutions and a vital network of partner organizations and UN offices in the field. In addition, as intergovernmental organizations they can encourage Member State cooperation and sharing of best practices, as well as exercise "quiet diplomacy" with Member States when necessary.

3. Principles

The proposed Action plan is based on the following principles:

3.1. Joint action in the spirit of enhancing system-wide efficiency and coherenc*e;*

3.2. Building on the strengths of different agencies to foster synergies and to avoid duplication;

3.3. A results-based approach, prioritizing actions and interventions for maximum impact;

3.4. A human rights-based approach;

3.5. A gender-sensitive approach;

3.6. A disability-sensitive approach;

3.7. Incorporation of the safety of journalists and the struggle against impunity into the United Nation's broader developmental objectives;

3.8. Implementation of the principles of the February 2005 *Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness* (ownership, alignment, harmonisation, results and mutual accountability);

3.9. Strategic partnerships beyond the UN system, harnessing the initiatives of various international, regional and local organizations dedicated to the safety of journalists and media workers;

3.10. A context-sensitive, multi-disciplinary approach to the root causes of threats to journalists and impunity;

3.11. Robust mechanisms (indicators) for monitoring and evaluating the impact of interventions and strategies reflecting the UN's core values.

4. Objective

4.1. Working toward the creation of a free and safe environment for journalists and media workers in both conflict and non-conflict situations, with a view to strengthening peace, democracy and development worldwide.

5. **Proposed Actions**

Strengthening UN Mechanisms

5.1. Identify the role of UN agencies, funds and programmes in combating impunity surrounding attacks against journalists and its wider causes with a view toward establishing focal points in order to strengthen the specific contribution of each relevant UN actor by creating effective forms of intervention to achieve the goals set out in the Plan of Action beginning with regular inter-agency meetings, for example;

5.2. In order to enhance UN system-wide coherence, establish a coordinated inter-agency mechanism for follow-up and evaluating matters of concern on the issue of the safety of journalists and impunity, including regular reviews of progress at the national and international level and continuing to address the issue by supporting a joint message on the occasion of World Press Freedom Day on the situation of media freedom around the world, for example;

5.3. Incorporate the issues of the safety of journalists and of the impunity of attacks against them into UN strategies at country level. This would mean, for example, encouraging the inclusion of an indicator on the safety of journalists based on the UNESCO Media Development Indicators in country analysis and taking the findings into consideration in programming;

5.4. More generally, promote the inclusion of freedom of expression and media development goals, in particular the safety of journalists and impunity, within the wider UN development agenda;

5.5. Work toward strengthening the office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, as well as the mandate and resources of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression, and of the Special Rapporteurs on Extra-judicial Summary or Arbitrary Executions, Violence Against Women and Torture.

Cooperating with Member States

5.6. Assist Member States to develop legislation and mechanisms guaranteeing freedom of expression and information, including, for example, requirements that States effectively investigate and prosecute crimes against freedom of expression;

5.7. Assist Member States to fully implement existing international rules and principles, as well as to improve, where needed, national legislation on safeguarding journalists, media professionals and associated personnel in conflict and non-conflict situations;

5.8. Encourage Member States to take an active role in the prevention of attacks against journalists, and take prompt action in response to attacks by establishing national emergency mechanisms, which different stakeholders can adopt, for example;

5.9. Encourage Member States to comply fully with UNESCO General Conference *Resolution 29*[6]*,* entitled 'Condemnation of Violence against Journalists,' which calls upon Member States to adopt the principle that there should be no statute of limitations on persons guilty of crimes against freedom of expression;

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[6] Adopted by the UNESCO's General Conference on 12 November 1997.

to refine and promote legislation in this field and to ensure that defamation becomes a civil, not a criminal action;

5.10. Encourage Member States to comply with the IPDC's Decisions on *the Safety of Journalists   and the Issue of Impunity*, and submit information on the actions taken to prevent impunity for killings of journalists, and on the status of the judicial inquiries conducted on each of the killings condemned by UNESCO;

5.11. Encourage Member States to explore ways of broadening the scope of Security Council Resolution 1738, to include the promotion of the safety of journalists and the fight against impunity in non-conflict situations as well.

Partnering with Other Organizations and Institutions

5.12. Reinforce collaboration between UN agencies and other intergovernmental organizations, at both international and regional levels, and encourage the incorporation of media development programmes, in particular on the safety of journalists, into their strategies;

5.13. Strengthen partnerships between the UN and civil society organizations and professional associations dedicated to monitoring the safety of journalists and media workers at national, regional and international levels. This could include sharing up-to-date information and best practices with partner organizations;

5.14. Whereas corruption can affect all sectors of society, in line with the principles of the UN Convention against Corruption, work with journalist organisations to develop good practices on reporting on corruption and jointly participate at the International Anti-Corruption Day (9 December).

Raising Awareness

5.15. Sensitize Member States on the importance of freedom of expression and the dangers that impunity for crimes against media professionals represents for freedom and democracy;

5.16. Sensitize journalists, media owners and policy-makers on existing international instruments and conventions, as well as various existing practical guides on the safety of journalists;

5.17. Sensitize news organizations, media owners, editors and journalists on the dangers confronting their staff, particularly those faced by local journalists;

5.18. Sensitize all the above parties to the growing dangers posed by all actors and work against hostage-taking, sexual violence, kidnapping, wrongful arrest and other forms of punishment and other emerging threats to media professionals, including non-state actors;

5.19. Sensitize the general public on the importance of the safety of journalists and the fight against impunity, through promoting global awareness campaigns, such as UNESCO's World Press Freedom Day;

5.20. Encourage journalism education institutions in developing curricula, which include material relevant to the safety of journalists and impunity;

5.21. Disseminate best practices on the safety of journalists and counteracting impunity;

Fostering Safety Initiatives

5.22. Urge all stakeholders, and in particular the media industry and its professional associations, to establish general safety provisions for journalists, including but not limited to safety training courses, health care and life insurance, access to social protection and adequate remuneration for free-lance and full-time employees;

5.23. Develop accessible, real-time emergency response mechanisms for groups and media organizations, including contacting and engaging available UN resources and missions and other groups working in the field;

5.24. Strengthen provisions for the safety of journalists in conflict zones, for example by encouraging the creation of so-called 'media corridors' in close cooperation with UN staff on the ground.

6. **Follow-up Mechanisms**

6.1. Establishment of a network of focal points on issues about the safety of journalists in all relevant UN agencies, funds and programmes in order to develop effective measures to promote the safety of journalists and combat impunity, coordinate actions and exchange information and whenever possible also to publicize it.

6.2. Scheduling meetings of relevant UN agencies, funds and programmes on a regular basis, at international level and also at national level in cooperation with the UN Country Teams (UNCT), with participation of relevant professional associations, NGOs and other stakeholders.

6.3. Entrust overall coordination of UN efforts on the safety of journalists to UNESCO, in cooperation with other UN agencies, in particular with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the UN Secretariat in NY.

6.4. Present a finalised UN Plan of Action to the IPDC Council at its next session in March 2012, as well as the High Level Committee on Programmes (HLCP) and the Chief Executive Board (CEB) at their next meetings.

* The UN Plan of Action is available in the six official UNESCO languages at
http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/freedom-of-expression/safety-of-journalists/un-plan-of-action/

RESOURCES: Basic Information on Existing Safety Mechanism for Journalists

What are Journalists' Hotlines?

Killings typically happen after threats, and rapid response lines can help save lives by providing targeted journalists with advice, resources and actual protection. The fewer journalists who get killed, the more likely that positive cultural norms can develop which make the prospect of these murders unthinkable.

Some NGOs operates a 24 hours/day, 7 days/week hotline which enables journalists in trouble to call and obtain some help as soon as possible. The following are examples of existing hotlines:

- International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Assistance for Journalists on Dangerous Assignments: +41 79 217 32 85
- Reporters without Borders (RSF), SOS Presse: +33 1 4777 7414
- Front Line Defenders' Emergency Hotline for Human Rights Defenders: +353 (0) 1 21 00 489 (*Human rights defenders in need of urgent assistance can also email Front Line through a secure and encrypted channel via info@frontlinedefenders.org)

Each hotline has slightly different focus but in general they aim to provide some immediate assistance including advice on how to proceed and where to obtain more help. In the case of ICRC, the hotline will try to assist in cases of a journalist on assignment who has disappeared, captured, been arrested, or detained. ICRC will circulate the relevant information to its offices, request permission for an ICRC delegate to visit in cases of detention, and upon released can assist in the repatriation of the journalist.

What are Journalists' Insurance and Emergency or Safety funds?

Journalists working in dangerous situations required a safety net including having insurance in the event of injury, illness or even death while on duty. This is particular pertinent to freelancers who may not have insurance coverage comparable to full-time journalists and media workers. The following are examples of existing funds and insurances specific for journalists:

Agir Ensemble pour les Droits de l'Homme created an emergency defense fund for those activists whose own human rights were in danger. This fund aims to allow for a rapid and efficient response to requests for help from human rights defenders when they are threatened or persecuted. More information available at http://www.aedh.org/agir/

Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) provides assistance to get medical care for journalists, supporting journalists forced to go into hiding or to relocate, legal funds, evacuating journalists at risk, providing support for families and imprisoned journalists. Due to the high volume of requests, CPJ is not able to respond to every request. All applicants are asked to complete CPJ's assistance request form available at http://cpj.org/campaigns/assistance/cpj_journalist_assistance_questionaire.pdf

Doha Centre for Media Freedom's Emergency Assistance provides direct support, within its means, to journalists who urgently need help, as a result of their work including medical aid and legal support. More information is available at assistance@dc4mf.org, Twitter: @DCMF_emergency, telephone: +974 6652 0553, and fax: +974 4421 3718

Frontline Club Fixers Fund is a special project to raise money for the families of media "fixers" (the people who help organize coverage logistics for the actual journalist). This fund is for those killed or injured around the world while working with the international media. More information could be obtained by contacting:
mail@frontlineclub.com

Front Line Defenders Security Grants can pay for organisational and personal provisions to improve the security and protection of a Human Rights Defender (HRD) and his or her organisation, to improve physical security of an organisation, digital security, communication security, legal fees for HRDs who are being judicially harassed, and medical fees for HRD. More information at http://www.frontlinedefenders.org/security-grants-programme

International Federation of Journalists Safety Fund provides immediate financial relief to a particular journalist and is part of the Safety Programme of IFJ. For more information please contact: ernest.sagaga@ifj.org

The PEN Emergency Fund supports persecuted writers and writers in exile – and occasionally their families – with a non-recurrent allowance to support themselves in a critical emergency. More information can be obtained at http://www.penef.org/brochure.asp.

Reporters Respond Emergency Fund provides direct assistance to journalists and media outlets, enabling them to resume work as quickly as possible when faced with local obstruction. Support is provided irrespective of the medium and the area covered by the journalist or outlet. More information is available by contacting: +31 638820516, +31 356254300 or reportersrespond@freepressunlimited.org.

Reporters without Borders (RSF) in partnership with April International Canada (formerly Escapade Travel Insurance) offers competitively-priced coverage to freelance reporters including a short term plan and an extended plan. Membership with RSF is mandatory in the purchase of this insurance. More information can be obtained by emailing: insurance@rsf.org , assurance@rsf.org

The Rory Peck Trust for Freelance Newsgatherers and their Families provides financial assistance to freelance newsgatherers worldwide, and to the families of those who have lost their lives, been seriously injured or are suffering persecution, exile or imprisonment as a result of their work. More information could be obtained by calling the Trust directly at Tel: + 44 (0) 20 3219 7860 or email: info@rorypecktrust.org.

SEEMO Emergency Fund for Media and Journalists in South East Europe provides direct assistance within 48 hours. The fund may be used for a wide variety of situations, including: temporary accommodation in a foreign country, the payment of legal fees and the facilitation of equipment. More information at http://seemo.org/sponsor/sponsoremergincy.html

Walkley Foundation's Media Safety and Solidarity Fund is supported by donations from Australian journalists and media personnel to assist colleagues in the Asia-Pacific region through times of emergency, war and hardship. More information available at http://www.walkleys.com/contact-us.

RESOURCES: Basic Texts Related to the Safety of Journalists

A list of texts, declarations, decisions, resolutions and conventions related to human rights and the safety of journalists

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

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)

Humanitarian Laws

- The Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their additional protocols

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)

- [UNESCO Work Plan on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity](#) (Draft 2012)

- [IPDC Decision on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity](#) (2008)

- [IPDC Decision on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity](#) (2010)

- [IPDC Decision on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity](#) (2012)

- [UN Plan of Action of the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity](#) (2012)

- [Human Rights Council -UN General Assembly, Resolution on the safety of Journalists](#) (2012)

- [Joint Declaration on Crimes Against Freedom of Expression by Special Rapporteurs](#) (2012)

THE UN PLAN IS A HISTORIC CHANCE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO JOURNALISTS' SAFETY AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION IN SOCIETY.

Individuals and organisations can do many things to complement the UN Plan by intensifying their voices and activities in favour of journalists' safety. The combined impact of all this action will help bring the world closer to a culture of peace in which every person is safe to speak without fear, and where no one is deprived of a chance to hear the testimony of others.

www.unesco.org/webworld/en/UN-plan-safety

UNESCO

United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

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

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