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联合国教育、  
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## Safety of Journalists

60 minutes today focuses on “Press freedom, safety of journalists, and impunity”. Violence against media professionals is on the rise and constitutes one of the greatest threats to freedom of expression and freedom of the press. This is an issue of global concern, as reflected in the United Nations Security Council Resolution strongly condemning attacks on journalists in conflict situations that was adopted last year.

Attacks on journalists are becoming a near daily occurrence. Over the past ten years, according to the International News Safety Institute (INSI), more than 1000 media professionals have been killed in the line of duty, most of them victims of targeted killing. Only very few cases are investigated. Impunity stands in the way of justice in more than 90% of these investigations, and as long as this pervasive culture of impunity persists, journalists will remain easy targets.

Our effort to promote journalist safety begins with UNESCO's constitutional mandate to “the free flow of ideas by word and image” and freedom of expression as a fundamental human right. Freedom of expression and media freedom are crucial rights for protecting and realizing other human rights.

### Vulnerability of local journalists

Local reporters run the greatest risk of becoming victims of violence. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), 85 % of all journalists killed were not foreign correspondents working in war zones, but local journalists.

They were typically killed in their offices, during their commutes, or in their homes. Nearly all had the hallmarks of premeditation including “careful planning, groups of assailants, and gangland style executions.” Local reporters are at a further disadvantage as they are not usually given safety training or provided with safety equipment. International reporters should not be the only ones prepared for trouble.



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### Criminal organizations, corruption and investigative journalism

The measures taken by different governments in order to control – directly or indirectly – the media differ in motivations yet present the same threat to the democratic process. CPJ confirms investigative reporters are singled out. Almost one-quarter of all journalists killed over the past 15 years covered political

topics, one fifth aimed at exposing corruption. Every government has responsibility to maintaining a free press. It is vital to stress the importance of free access to information and press freedom in the struggle against corruption and for the promotion of good governance.

### Status of journalists and war correspondents in cases of conflict

In times of violent conflict, accurate information is particularly vital, but more dangerous to obtain. For example, close to media professionals have been killed since

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the beginning of the Iraq war, which is the deadliest conflict for the media since the Second World War. Recent conflicts in Lebanon and Somalia have shown that journalists working in conflict zones are targeted, despite the fact that attacks against journalists are illegal under international humanitarian law, which protects civilian persons and property, as long as they are not making an effective contribution to military action. According to CPJ, journalists working in war zones (especially local reporters) are usually not killed by an errant bullet, they are usually murdered; crossfire in combat is only the second-leading cause of death.

In the absence of an iron-clad guaranty of protection in a war zone, media institutions that hire and send reporters into danger must assume some responsibility as well. This would include training, providing safety equipment, and assuming liability in the event of injury or death, regardless if they are salaried or freelance, local or international journalists. Embedding reporters in military units does not constitute protection. Instead, military forces must be informed about the rights of journalists in areas of conflict.

## UNESCO in action

UNESCO has supported the initiatives of professional organizations to promote safety for local and international news reporters:

- A Practical Guide for Journalists working in conflict zones was published in 1998 in cooperation with *Reporters sans Frontières*. Regularly updated, the guide is available in English, French, Spanish, Arabic, and Russian.
- Support has been provided to the International Federation of Journalists to provide risk awareness training to journalists

working in dangerous conditions.

- UNESCO supports the Media in Danger program of the World Association of Newspapers.
- UNESCO has also supported national initiatives such as the Centre for Solidarity with Colombian Journalists in Bogotá and a series of trainings on safety through the Foundation Antonio Narinho.
- UNESCO has co-authored a U.N. Charter for the Safety of Journalists Working in War Zones or Dangerous Areas; it includes a commitment by the media, public authorities and journalists to systematically seek ways to reduce the risks involved.
- UNESCO is one of the founders of the International News Safety Institute, a global network to counter attacks on media professionals.
- UNESCO put safety first when it celebrated World Press Freedom Day in Medellín, Colombia, in 2007. The **Medellin Declaration on “Securing the Safety of Journalists and Combating Impunity”** urges states to comply with Resolution 29 adopted by UNESCO’s General Conference in 1997 regarding impunity of crimes against journalists and Resolution 1738 of the United Nations’ General Assembly, regarding the status of journalists.

### To Find Out More

Link : [http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=2493&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=2493&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)  
<http://www.newssafety.com/>

Contact : [s.coudray@unesco.org](mailto:s.coudray@unesco.org)