



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

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Concept note

SAFETY OF JOURNALISTS AND ENDING IMPUNITY IN CONFLICT SITUATIONS

On the occasion of International Day to End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists

Thursday, 27 October 2016 from 1:15 to 2:45 PM

Conference Room 11 (tbc), UNHQ, New York

Impunity towards crimes against journalists is considered one of the main factors fueling the cycle of violent crime against the exercise of freedom of expression and human rights more broadly. UNESCO warns that impunity damages whole societies by covering up serious human rights abuses, corruption, and crime. Governments, civil society, the media, and everyone concerned with upholding the rule of law are being asked to join in the global efforts to end impunity. For the third consecutive year, a high-level meeting will be organized at UN Headquarters in New York to bring together relevant actors and call upon further action.

The United Nations General Assembly adopted [Resolution A/RES/68/163](#) at its 68th session in 2013, which proclaimed 2 November as the '***International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists***' (IDEI). The Resolution urged Member States to implement definite measures countering the present culture of impunity. It was followed by UNGA Resolution [A/RES/69/185](#) (2014) and UNGA Resolution [A/RES/70/162](#) (2015), reinforcing the commitment of the UN General Assembly to protect the safety of journalists and end Impunity.

These Resolutions adopted on three consecutive years condemn all attacks and violence against journalists and media workers. They also urge Member States to do their utmost to prevent violence against journalists and media workers, to ensure accountability, bring to justice perpetrators of crimes against journalists and media workers, and ensure that victims have access to appropriate remedies.

The Resolution A/RES/68/163 of 2013 focuses on impunity stems from the worrying situation that over the past decade more than 800 journalists have been killed for bringing news and information to the public. As this issue gains momentum, the meeting at the UN Headquarters convenes different stakeholders to pursue a better implementation of the UN Resolutions and to improve the fight against impunity, specifically in conflict situations.

On November 17 this year, the 39 Member States of UNESCO's Intergovernmental Council of the International Programme for Development of Communication (IPDC) will receive the **biennial report of the UNESCO Director-General on the Safety of Journalists and the Danger of Impunity**.

The conclusions from the ‘News Organizations Standing Up for the Safety of Media Professionals’ conference will serve as source for discussion and dialogue. Moreover, stakeholders will address implementation and how to improve the safety of journalists and end impunity worldwide for both large news organizations as well as local media.

Further to the commemoration of the IDEI on 2 November 2016, in the context of the UN General Assembly, the main deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the UN, the event shall also reflect on UN Security Council Resolution 1738, adopted in 2006 condemning attacks against journalists in conflict situations and [UN Security Council Resolution S/RES/2222](#) of 2015, which calls for greater involvement of peacekeeping and special political missions in reporting on specific acts of violence against journalists and underscores the need “to enhance the coherence and effective implementation of applicable international humanitarian law and relevant Security Council resolutions including those on protection of journalists, media professionals and associated personnel in situations of the armed conflict.”

Furthermore, linkages with sustainable development Goal 16, which recognizes the need for access to information, fundamental freedoms, reducing violence, and combatting impunity, will be discussed as well.

The meeting in New York will be linked with other events organized by UNESCO and its partners at the occasion of the IDEI around the world, such as in Tanzania, the Netherlands, Vietnam and other countries.