



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

# Journalists' Safety Indicators: International Level

Based on the UNESCO's Media Development Indicators

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UNESCO

Division of Freedom of Expression and Media Development  
Communication and Information Sector

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information>

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## **Journalists' Safety Indicators at the International Level**

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## Introduction

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These indicators can serve as a means of assessing progress against the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity<sup>1</sup> at the regional and international levels, as distinct from the national. They are tailored to the relevant features at these levels and to the international actors which are active there. The focus is thus on journalists' safety issues at the level of international institutions operating with a regional or global remit. In these indicators, the reference to "the international level" may be interpreted as global or regional, as appropriate.

As with the indicators for journalists' safety at the national level, the emphasis in these international level indicators is on safety, relating to physical and psychological security, and the related problem of impunity that protects those who attack journalists from being punished. Throughout this document, the term "safety of journalists" or "journalists' safety issues" generally includes the issue of impunity even if not explicitly stated. While the state of press freedom (or its absence) has a major bearing on whether journalists can operate professionally and without fear, these indicators do not set out to deal with the whole range of issues affecting press freedom.

The indicators here are an analytic tool covering a range of possible factors at international and global levels that can impact on the safety of journalists. They are not prescriptive, but designed to identify potentially salient aspects of journalists' safety and to track any changes in these over time. Generally, the indicators will take cognisance of the situation over the previous 12-month period.

The indicators allow for assessment of the actions of the various actors and institutions concerned at international level, whether regional or global. These actors have been grouped into three major categories whose actions can directly impact upon journalists' safety: (i) UN organisations (ii) other intergovernmental bodies and (iii) non-governmental bodies that operate at international levels.

For each actor, the **context and main issues** are briefly outlined.

Under each section, a range of **key indicators** are given; each of these has a set of sub-indicators to flesh out what the 'headline' indicator looks like in concrete terms.

Various **means of verification** are suggested for the indicators, sometimes combined with data sources.

For each category, a guide to (additional) **data sources** available at an international level is

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<sup>1</sup> See <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/freedom-of-expression/safety-of-journalists/un-plan-of-action/>

offered; this guidance is not exhaustive but offers pointers towards available online and offline sources. The sources mentioned here do not directly cover human sources, which can be elaborated by the researchers who wish to use this instrument.

In many cases the means of verification and the data sources are combined in the form of activities at international level. These might be multilateral and bilateral meetings; support for international policy and legislative development, advice on institutional design and programmes at the international level; international conferences, seminars, training courses and workshops; international media development programmes and projects; international reports, research studies and publications; international campaigns and information materials; international resolutions, decisions, declarations and other public statements; innovative activities online and any other type of action that has a bearing on the safety indicator. Interviews with key actors and press reports can also serve as both a means of verification and as a data source.

For each actor, i.e. UN organisations, regional intergovernmental bodies and international NGOs, three broad indicators are identified: **monitoring** actions, **promotion** and **co-ordination**. Monitoring refers to the collection of information, while the publishing and other use of information is included under promotion activities.

## **A. UN organisations promote journalists' safety issues at the international level**

### *Context & Main Issues*

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In 2012, the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity was endorsed by the chief executives of all component UN bodies. An implementation strategy was agreed for 2013-2014 which listed activities that include those by the UN system at global level.

In order for the Plan of Action to be fulfilled, it will be necessary for the UN system comprising its agencies, funds and programmes to mobilise and provide effective support to UN Member States, and to professional and media organisations and civil society, in order to foster journalists' safety. Alongside this, the UN and its agencies should promote the normative view that free expression standards include safety of journalists and measures against impunity. The effectiveness of these actions is premised upon effective monitoring of safety issues. The categories of indicators set out below are organised around these functions, and cover UN activities at the international level.

### *Key Indicators*

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#### **1. UN system at global level monitors journalists' safety**

- i. UN system organisations collect and analyse comprehensive information about the safety of journalists worldwide and impunity, including from Member States.
- ii. Information on UN measures that ensure awareness-raising about journalists' safety is available to the UN General Assembly and Security Council, UNESCO, the Human Rights Council and other relevant institutions and organisations.
- iii. UN Plan of Action is monitored, reported on, and reviewed by UN bodies.
- iv. Good practices related to journalists' safety are disseminated internally and externally by the UN system.

## **2. UN system promotes at the global level the normative view that free expression standards include safety of journalists and measures against impunity**

- i. UN system organisations promote relevant normative standards at the global level, including the provision that those standards which exist offline should also apply online.
- ii. UN system organisations at global level integrate journalists' safety into areas where they work such as the rule of law, environmental protection, sustainable development, combating crime and drugs, and the post-2015 Development Agenda, and make this publicly known.
- iii. UN Special Rapporteurs integrate safety into their work wherever appropriate and UN organisations amplify this as appropriate.
- iv. UNESCO encourages comprehensive responses from States to the UNESCO Director-General's requests for information on judicial follow-ups to killings of journalists.
- v. UN system organisations use their global presence to promote awareness of, and compliance with, United Nations Security Council resolution 1738, which reminds States that deliberate attacks on journalists, as civilians, in zones of conflict, may constitute a war crime; and human rights instruments related to journalists' safety and the issue of impunity; and that States have obligations to prosecute those responsible for serious violations of international humanitarian law.
- vi. UN system at global level takes cognisance of the fact that women journalists may be subject to specific sexual harassment and gender-based violence.
- vii. Information on journalists' safety and impunity is published by UN organisations at global level, and integrated into relevant reports such as the UNDP Human Development Report, the Universal Periodic Review, and reports at UNESCO's IPDC Council sessions and UNESCO's General Conference.
- viii. UN system at global level has an outreach strategy reflecting the issue of journalists' safety and makes statements about killings of or attacks on journalists, or other major safety concerns, whenever appropriate.
- ix. Information materials relevant to safety issues are available in multiple languages and circulated internationally.
- x. UN bodies are in dialogue with internet and telecoms companies about normative standards with regard to privacy and data protection

### 3. UN system establishes effective international co-ordination mechanisms

- i. UN system organisations have focal points for work on the safety of journalists.
- ii. UN system organisations engage in complementary and co-ordinated activity in regard to the safety of journalists (including with the relevant Special Rapporteurs).
- iii. UN system organisations have, or fundraise, specific budgets for their safety activities at global level.
- iv. UN system organisations co-ordinate regularly with other international organisations, governmental and non-governmental, active in the field of journalists' safety.
- v. There is a rapid response mechanism amongst relevant UN bodies that assists journalists who have been attacked or are under threat.
- vi. UN system at global level co-operates with Member States to advance safety issues.

#### *Means of verification and data sources*

- Regular UN inter-agency meetings that focus on journalists' safety in context of the UN Plan of Action are held and their findings are made known publicly
- The UN seeks and collates reports from regional inter-governmental organisations (such as the AU, OAS, Council of Europe, OSCE, etc.) regarding those organisations' input to and engagement with the goals of the UN Plan of Action.
- Evidence of inter-agency co-operation and information sharing, including existence of a focal point on journalists' safety within each UN agency and evidence of communication between them National strategies that acknowledge global-level UN input or support
- UN global activities involving Member States
- UNESCO Director-General's biennial Reports on the Safety of Journalists and the danger of Impunity, delivered to the IPDC (International Programme for the Development of Communication) Intergovernmental Council
- Public evidence to, and reports by, UN Inter-Agency meetings related to the UN Action Plan on the Safety of Journalists
- Work that sets normative standards (such as General Comment 34 on Article 19 of the ICCPR adopted July 2011<sup>2</sup>)
- UN Secretary-General's annual report to the UNSC on deaths of civilians in conflict zones, and its sub-section on killings of journalists
- Other reports to UN General Assembly and Security Council, UNESCO and other UN bodies; standard-setting documents and proposals
- UN agendas, policy papers, reports, minutes of meetings, statements, events, awards
- Specific references in UN documents to the status of women journalists and the importance of eliminating all forms of discriminatory treatment
- Statements by UN officials condemning attacks on journalists

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<sup>2</sup> General Comment 34 on Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights  
<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrc/docs/CCPR-C-GC-34.doc>

- Reports by UN Women, UNDP, ILO, OCHA, OCHCR, UNODC, UNESCO
- Special Rapporteurs reports
- UN Plan of Action Implementation Strategy

## **B. International and regional intergovernmental organisations promote journalists' safety issues at the international level**

### *Context & Main Issues*

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The UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity also envisages a role at the international level for regional intergovernmental organisations (IGOs). Relevant regional bodies include the African Union Commission, Pan African Parliament, African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, Organisation of American States, Council of Europe and European Court of Human Rights, European Union, OSCE, ASEAN, Arab League, Community of Democracies etc., and the indicators below are to map their involvement in promoting the safety of journalists through promotion of normative views, monitoring of journalists' safety, and establishing effective co-ordination mechanisms.

### *Key Indicators*

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#### **1. IGOs at international level monitor journalists' safety**

- i. IGOs collect and analyse comprehensive information about the safety of journalists and impunity worldwide or within their region, including from their Member States.
- ii. IGOs take steps to ensure that information on journalists' safety is available to the UN General Assembly and Security Council, UNESCO, the Human Rights Council and other relevant institutions and organisations.
- iii. Implementation of the UN Plan of Action is monitored by IGOs.
- iv. Good practices related to journalists' safety are disseminated internally and externally by IGOs.

#### **2. IGOs promote normative view that free expression standards include safety of journalists and measures against impunity at international level.**

- i. IGOs integrate journalists' safety into areas where they work at international level.
- ii. IGOs promote relevant normative standards at the international level, including the provision that those standards which exist offline should also apply online.
- iii. IGOs use their international presence to promote awareness of, and compliance with, United Nations Security Council resolution 1738, in zones of conflict; and human rights instruments related to journalists' safety and the issue of impunity;

and that States have obligations to prosecute those responsible for serious violations of international humanitarian law.

- iv. IGOs at international level take cognisance of the fact that women journalists may be subject to specific sexual harassment and violence.
- v. Information on journalists' safety and impunity is published by IGOs at international level, and integrated into relevant reports such as the UNDP Human Development Report and the Universal Periodic Review.
- vi. IGOs at international level have a communications strategy and make statements about killings of or attacks on journalists, or other major safety concerns, when appropriate.
- vii. Information materials relevant to safety issues are available in multiple languages and circulated internationally.
- viii. IGOs are in dialogue with internet and telecoms companies about normative standards with regard to privacy and data protection

### **3. IGOs establish effective international co-ordination mechanisms at the international level**

- i. IGOs at international level have focal points for work on the safety of journalists.
- ii. IGOs engage at international level in complementary and co-ordinated activity in regard to the safety of journalists (including with other stakeholders).
- iii. IGOs have, or fundraise for, specific budgets for their safety activities at global level.
- iv. IGOs co-ordinate effectively with other international organisations, governmental and non-governmental, active in the field of journalists' safety.
- v. IGOs have a rapid response mechanism where appropriate to assist journalists who have been attacked or are under threat.
- vi. IGOs at international level co-operate with their Member States to advance safety issues.

#### *Means of verification and data sources*

- Regional human rights treaties related to safety of journalists including the European Convention on Human Rights, American Convention on Human Rights, etc. and relevant case law from those organisations and courts
- IGO work related to normative standards
- Reports to/ debates in UN General Assembly and Security Council, UNESCO, the Human Rights Council, and other UN bodies
- IGO agendas, policy papers, reports, minutes of meetings, statements, events, awards, resolutions, decisions
- Specific references in IGO documents to the status of women journalists and the importance of eliminating all forms of discriminatory treatment
- Information on safety and impunity including trends and patterns made available by relevant IGOs
- IGOs statements and publications
- Statements by IGO officials condemning attacks on journalists



- Evidence of inter-IGO co-operation and information sharing including existence of a focal point on journalists' safety within each IGO and evidence of communication between them.
- IGO meetings that focus upon journalists' safety
- National strategies that acknowledge IGO input or support
- IGO global activities involving their Member States
- Reports by Special Rapporteurs of regional IGOs
- Decisions by the International Criminal Court
- UN Plan of Action Implementation Strategy

### **C. International Non-governmental Organisations (INGOs) promote journalists' safety issues at the international level**

#### *Context & Main Issues*

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The UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity also aims to mobilize international NGOs and professional associations as well as industry media actors to create a safer environment for journalists through work at the international level. Indicators are needed to survey how these organisations relate to the UN Plan at international level. This includes action by relevant INGOs to monitor and – where appropriate – support UN and other international profit and not for profit processes relevant to journalists' safety issues. Examples of such organisations are Article 19, CFOM, CPJ, DCMF, Freedom House, IMS, IFEX, IFJ, INSI, IREX, IWMMF, OSI, PEC, PEN International, RSF, Rory Peck Trust, and WAN-IFRA and as well as regional groups including ABU, EBU, IAPA, MISA and SEAPA,

#### *Key Indicators*

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#### **1. INGOs monitor journalists' safety at the international level**

- i. INGOs collect and analyse comprehensive information about the safety of journalists and impunity on a regional and global scale.
- ii. Information on INGO measures that ensure information on journalists' safety is available to other international bodies, including the UN General Assembly and Security Council, UNESCO, the Human Rights Council and other relevant institutions and organisations.
- iii. Implementation of UN Plan of Action is monitored, reported on and reviewed by INGOs.
- iv. Good practices related to journalists' safety are disseminated internally and externally by INGOs.

## **2. INGOs promote on an international basis the normative view that free expression standards include safety of journalists and measures against impunity**

- i. INGOs on an international basis engage effectively with state authorities and influence public debates to uphold international standards on journalists' safety and protection from violence and intimidation; and amplify the work being done by other actors at the global level.
- ii. INGOs promote relevant normative standards at international level, including the provision that those standards which exist offline should also apply online.
- iii. INGOs use their international presence to promote awareness of, and compliance with, United Nations Security Council resolution 1738, in zones of conflict, may constitute a war crime; and human rights instruments related to journalists' safety and the issue of impunity; and that States have obligations to prosecute those responsible for serious violations of international humanitarian law. INGOs at international level take cognisance of the fact that women journalists may be subject to specific sexual harassment and violence.
- iv. Information on journalists' safety and impunity is published by INGOs on an international level, and submitted to relevant international processes such as the Universal Periodic Review and other reports.
- v. INGOs at an international level have a strategy to raise awareness about safety issues and make statements about killings of or attacks on journalists, or other major safety concerns, whenever appropriate.
- vi. Information materials relevant to safety issues are available in multiple languages and circulated internationally.
- vii. INGOs are in dialogue with internet and telecoms companies about normative standards with regard to privacy and data protection.

## **3. INGOs establish effective international co-ordination mechanisms**

- i. INGOs have international focal points for work on the safety of journalists.
- ii. INGOs have, or fundraise, specific budgets for their safety activities at global level.
- iii. INGOs engage in complementary and co-ordinated activity in regard to the issues of safety of journalists.
- iv. INGOs co-ordinate regularly with regional inter-governmental organisations and UN bodies active in the field of journalists' safety.
- v. There is a rapid response mechanism amongst INGOs to assist journalists who are attacked or under threat.
- vi. INGOs co-operate with UN Member States to advance safety issues at an international level.

### *Means of verification and data sources*

- INGO work related to normative standards

- INGO reports to UN General Assembly and Security Council, UNESCO and other UN bodies
- INGO agendas, policy papers, reports, minutes of meetings, statements, events, awards
- Specific references in INGOs documents to the status of women journalists and the importance of eliminating all forms of discriminatory treatment
- Evidence of inter-INGO co-operation and information sharing including the existence of a focal point on journalists' safety within each INGO and evidence of communication between them and with regional intergovernmental groups.
- INGO and other international organisations' statements and publications
- Statements by INGO officials condemning attacks on journalists
- Regular inter- and intra-INGO meetings, as well as with regional intergovernmental groups that focus upon journalists' safety are held at an international level
- INGO international activities involving UN Member States
- UN Plan of Action Implementation Strategy
- Reports by relevant INGOs. Some examples are
  - International News Safety Institute <http://www.newssafety.org/>
  - Freedom House [www.freedomhouse.org](http://www.freedomhouse.org)
  - International Freedom of Expression eXchange – information on safety of journalists: [www.ifex.org/en/content/view/full/237/](http://www.ifex.org/en/content/view/full/237/)
  - International Research and Exchanges Board [www.irex.org/msi/index.asp](http://www.irex.org/msi/index.asp)

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