



Forum: 4th, Special Political and Decolonization

Issue: Taking measures to ensure the safety of journalists

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Introduction to the Issue:

The multilateral forum IPDC (*The International Programme for The Development of Communication*) finds that “*at least 827 journalists were killed in the last 10 years*”. The ability to carry out journalistic work, and through that express ones right to communicate information, is one which is infringed by this statistic. The infringement of this right is one which has been stressed repetitively throughout the UN’s history, and which importance is emphasized directly in *UDHR article 19* which states:

“Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.”

Journalism plays a detrimental role in the political landscape of the world, shaping the global agenda through the type, and quantity of attention that it confers an issue or topic. It is of much importance that journalists are facilitated with an enabling environment to pursue their work without undue interference. However, this objective has proven a difficult one to achieve, due to several potential issues. Government interference and restrictions are often observed to varying degrees; journalists in some cases being subject to heavy state-monitoring.

Equally the safety of journalists, and journalism, needs to be reevaluated in an era of digitalization. The concept of confidentiality of sources has been threatened in a time where intelligence agencies are able to access third party intermediary data stores via technologically advanced tools, to gain otherwise confidential information. The issue of privacy is essential to allow society to benefit from investigative journalism, therefore it is important to consider the involvement of state-authorities in journalism.

As illustrated by figures in the *IPDC’s report*¹ from 2016, it can be concluded that journalists are confronted with fatal dangers in conflict-torn environments. It can also be concluded that there has been an increase in the number of casualties among journalists since the last monitored period, with the average annual death-toll in the period: 2006-2011 being 67, and the average annual death-toll in the period: 2012-2015 being 106.

¹ UNESCO Director-General’s Report on the Safety of Journalists and the Danger of Impunity (2016)

- <http://en.unesco.org/dg-report>



The UN's role itself is often disputed between member-states. There seems to be a shared consensus to the ideals of media protection, however the conditions under which they apply are sharply disagreed upon, leaving it to be an often returned to issue within the UN.

Key-terms:

Censorship: *The suppression or prohibition of any parts of media outlets which are considered obscene, politically unacceptable, or a threat to security.*

Journalist: A person whom is engaged in the act of *journalism* which has been defined by the *American Press Institute* as “gathering, assessing, creating, and presenting news and information”

(<https://www.americanpressinstitute.org/journalism-essentials/what-is-journalism/>)

Embedded Journalist: An embedded journalist refers to a journalist whom has been placed with a military unit to provide media coverage of military action amidst *an area of conflict* or in a *war-zone*. The practice of Embedded Journalism is one which is employed in efforts to grant journalists close access to high risk zones, in the process of achieving this it poses questions about “*the media-military relationship*” For more information read: *The “Grunt Truth” of Embedded Journalism: The New Media/Military Relationship*, Kylie Tuosto, *Stanford Journal of International Relations*.

Impunity: As defined by *oxford dictionaries*: “*Exemption from punishment or freedom from the injurious consequences of an action*”. Impunity is often referred to within the context of the lack of convictions in relation to the killing of journalists. Emboldening the perpetrators of the crime.

The Press: The Press is a collective term for media outlets, broadly entailing everything from newspapers to more modern types of news-broadcasting.

International Legal Framework: Commonly known as International law, a legal framework consisting of regulations which all countries must abide by.



Deadliest Countries:

According to the CPJ (Committee to Protect Journalists), the deadliest countries for journalists are:

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| 1) Iraq | 2) Syria | 3) Philippines |
| 4) Somalia | 5) Pakistan | 6) Algeria |
| 7) Russia | 8) Colombia | 9) Mexico |

The CPJ website has a public data-base of journalists killed since 1992, the tool allows for interactive viewing and the ability to categorize the data into different groupings.

The CPJ as an organisation, is a non-profit NGO based out of New York pursuing the advancement of journalist's safety.

- www.CPJ.org

UN Involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events:

- *Protocols Additional To The Geneva Conventions Of 12. August 1949. (1.3.94).*
- *UN Security Council Resolution 1738. (2006).*
- *The safety of journalists and the issue of impunity; A/RES/68/163. (21.2.14).*
- *Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development; A/HRC/33/L.6. (26.9.16)*

Sources for further research:



- The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) www.cpj.org
- UNESCO: <http://en.unesco.org/themes/safety-journalists>
- *The “Grunt Truth” of Embedded Journalism: The New Media/Military Relations*, Kylie Tuosto, *Stanford Journal of International Relations*:
https://web.stanford.edu/group/sjir/pdf/journalism_real_final_v2.pdf
- <https://www.law.kuleuven.be/jura/art/45n3/verschingel.html>
- Reporters Without Borders: <https://rsf.org/en>
- *Safeguarding Speech, A Shield for Journalists Under Threat* – Jean-Francois Julliard. (*Harvard International Review*, Vol. 32, No. 3, Fall 2010)
- Council of Europe: <http://www.coe.int/en/web/media-freedom>
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