

# **INTERNATIONAL CONSORTIUM OF INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISTS**

## **BACKGROUND GUIDE**

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## LETTERS FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

### The Chairperson

Greetings delegates,

I take immense pleasure and honour in welcoming you all to the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists.

I am Navaj Kunal Anand, and I will be chairing ICIJ, at JYC'22. I am a 10<sup>th</sup> grade student, with keen interests in history and its conjecture with politics, debating, fine arts and MUNs. Since 6<sup>th</sup> grade, these interests have resulted in my journey through the field of Model United Nations. Taking my journalist traits and the intriguing modern political and co-operate scandals, we set up the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists.

This year at JYC, ICIJ would be based upon the concealed scandals of “the perfect world” with the agenda standing as the embodiment of the situation of cross border journalism. The committee would be set in a continued crisis notion, wherein the journalists would have to maintain the ethos and morality yet seek the very root cause of the agenda. Journalists must adopt the tagline of the committee “The Kaboom. The investigation. The reveal.” and serve in the best of press work.

Looking forward to experiencing the truest face of journalism, in the preponderance ethics and ethos whilst dodging across the crisis overthrown ever after.

Bonne Chance,

Sincères amitiés

Navaj Kunal Anand

Chairperson

International Consortium of Investigative Journalists

## The Vice-Chairperson

Greetings delegates,

My name is Guhika Sachdev, and I am currently a 9th grade student at the Jodhamal Public School. I have a keen interest in Mathematics and Physics. I also indulge in activities like debating and munning while in school. My interests include listening to Music, singing and travelling. I am also a social worker and I've helped Jammuites during the Pandemic.

It gives me great pleasure to welcome all of you to this meeting of the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists. Established in 1997. As our representatives, it is therefore your responsibility to collectively continue to uphold the fourth pillar of democracy - unbiased media, rooted in transparency. In furtherance of this role, our Consortium has previously played a critical role in exposing smuggling, tax evasion, money laundering and other transnational crime - with one of our most notable contributions being The Panama Papers.

The pen truly is mightier than the sword - and so as delegates of this Consortium, we must unite and march forward with renewed vigour, using these tools towards progressive social change. In this day and age, with freedom of speech and expression under threat at each turn, rising crime and corruption, radicalism and information overload on social media, and an environment of distrust and uncertainty all around, it becomes even more vital for us to be harbingers of truth - while ensuring the safety and integrity of our journalists. In this endeavour, we hope you bring your best selves forward at the upcoming meeting and we look forward to fruitful discussion that further pushes us towards our vision.

The Executive Board is here to guide and moderate you throughout and is excited for an eventful three days.

Regards,

Guhika Sachdev

Vice-Chairperson

International Consortium of Investigative Journalists

## The Chief Advisor

Greetings delegates

I, Aanya Anand, welcome each one of you to the International Consortium of Investigative Journalism at JYC 2022.

Talking about myself first I am a student of class 12th and I'm studying commerce. I personally, am very fond of events which involve public speaking, a creative element and events that keep your mentally engaged.

Every journalist has a voice that echoes when it is correctly user. Every independent thought in a journalists mind when spoken about and voiced out in the open can being in a revolution like never before.

We promise to bring you an experience that you should cherish forever. There will be pressure, heated debates, multiple thoughts yet a common conclusion to lead to the end of heated debates. We look forward to having you all in our committees and look forward to hearing your views and seeing your problem-solving skills at this commute which shall constantly be making your mind think with each crisis that comes your way.

"To see a world in a grain of sand and a heaven in a wildflower, hold infinity in the palm of your hand and eternity in an hour."

May the force be with you!

Aanya Anand

Chief advisor

International Consortium of Investigative Journalists

## The Rapporteur

Greetings Delegates,

I am Aadya Sambyal, and I will be serving as the rapporteur for this committee. I study in 10<sup>th</sup> grade and my primary interests include criminology, history, philosophy, reading, fine arts and debating. My first MUN committee was IPC and therefore, journalism will always be venerated in my eyes. I was very nervous, but I pulled through and managed to bag a special mention. It was the best. Even now, I always look for journalism in any MUN I participate. I fell in love with MUNs because they give you the chance to be heard and are a paradigm of diplomacy and skills. When you know how to speak, at the right time and at the right place, you can make a big difference in the world. ICIJ is truly one of a kind, and to call yourself an investigative journalist is a tremendous honour as well as responsibility.

The International Consortium of Investigative Journalists will put the delegates in situations where spontaneity and vigour will come in handy. Uncovering simple truths amongst the layers and labyrinth of convoluted stories is never easy, but we will reach there. We will divulge the deep dark sea of secrets, corruption and controversies and forfend the integrity of the journalists of the world. The delegates need to be well versed in their knowledge, think critically and come up with their own arguments and structure. Your voice will matter the most here, so you must use it wisely. Please do not base your argument solely on the background guide, it only encourages you to explore further to gain advantage.

I will be looking forward to three days of productive, flexible, brainstorming debates and deliberations as a part of this committee. I eagerly await a positive, productive and symbiotic interaction with you all.

*Veritas nunquam perit. Veritatem quaerite, quamvis vetus vel sepulta sit. Adhuc erit ibi. Est ad vos ut instar is sicco.*

Signing in,

Aadya Sambyal

Rapporteur

International Consortium of Investigative Journalists  
(ICIJ)

## **ABOUT INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM**

Investigative Journalism means the unveiling of matters that are concealed either deliberately by someone in a position of power, or accidentally, behind a chaotic mass of facts and circumstances - and the analysis and exposure of all relevant facts to the public. In this way investigative journalism crucially contributes to freedom of expression and media development,

News reporters who investigate stories about political dishonesty, violence, or commercial corruption would say that "the pen is mightier than the sword" as playwright Edward Bulwer-Lytton wrote in 1839. In other words, the investigative journalism definition is the diligent news reporting engaged in when reporters gather evidence for stories about corruption and violence, often hidden from the public eye to effect policy changes that benefit the public. Investigative journalists write in-depth news reports about a single topic or subject, sometimes taking months or even years to record interviews, dig into public records, and seek answers to difficult questions, thereby exposing corruption and civic malfeasance.

### **Investigative Journalism Resources**

Investigative journalists use a variety of resources to learn more about the topic they are investigating. Reporters will use information from interviews, public records, legal and tax reports, and other federal resources.

Journalists use standard undercover work when there isn't enough information in databases or when sources aren't willing to come forward. Usually, a combination of these different methods is used to build a strong case.

It's important to note that an investigative reporter doesn't acquire sensitive material just to publish it. Instead, they use the information to write and publish a coherent and fact-based article or book.

### **Functions of Investigative Journalism**

- To watch the watchers and expose wrongdoing and hypocrisy.
- Investigative journalism should call the powerful to account and expose corruption. It is important in any democracy. It has nothing to do with prying

into the private lives of celebrities – that’s a separate matter. Journalists may need some subterfuge to carry it out, but this is not the same as hacking into the telephones of celebrities to get gossip.

- It’s supposed to give the public a ‘heads up’ about certain people who are not obeying the law. They are usually getting financially rewarded to the detriment of taxpayers. Private Eye has pages of them and rarely do the national papers do any work on these stories.
- Investigative Journalism can hold individuals and institutions accountable in the way that elections every five years or AGMs do not. Its purpose should be to uncover that which others might wish to remain hidden.
- Its function is to reveal the truth, to root out facts many people often want to keep hidden, to re-establish fairness, to shine light in dark places. Good investigative journalism is journalism’s strongest suit.
- Investigative journalism firstly diverts resources and expertise into unmasking potential abuses of power and/or developments that stand to significantly impact on the life of a proportion of society, or at the very least creates a system of monitoring powerful interests that may check abuses of power with such outcomes. This is an extension of the liberal democratic ideal of limiting power and influence, as an informal check on the illegal or questionable activities of resourced actors. Secondly, it should also draw attention to passive shortcomings in public policy that affect the public. This is a guardianship role, where laws, regulations, and the operation of significant public and private bodies are scrutinised for effectiveness and for their fulfilment of the public good.
- Investigative journalism provides truth about people from government and other entities such as corporations who attempt to keep their often-illegal activities secret. Its purpose is exposing such actions so that those involved can be held accountable.

## PRINCIPLES OF AN INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALIST

Investigative journalism projects often take a reporter or a team of reporters several months or even years to complete.

- Move outside your comfort zone. Good reporters aren't afraid to cover a wide variety of subjects, and to do so requires hard work and a willingness to learn. "You need to get out of your comfort zone. You need to move into areas that you naturally do not understand, because the learning curve is fast when you do that, and you are in a position, as an outsider, to look at what's going on differently."
- Leave opinion out. Leave opinion out of stories. Always separate emotional issues from the facts. Failing to separate opinion from fact costs you credibility with the public.
- Avoid taking political sides. Journalists should avoid taking political sides. Be careful to not show partiality to any one news network, giving interviews to news organisations on both ends of the political spectrum. You are a journalist and citizen without a political agenda.
- "All good work is done in defiance of management". This guiding principle does not permit the breaking of laws or rules, but instead encourages reporters to go their own way and carry out an investigation as they see fit.

## ABOUT ICIJ

The International Consortium of Investigative Journalists, Inc. (ICIJ), is an independent global network of 280 investigative journalists and over 140 media organisations spanning more than 100 countries. It is based in Washington, D.C. with personnel in Australia, France, Spain, Hungary, Serbia, Belgium and Ireland.

**Mission:** To show people how the world really works through stories that rock the world; forcing positive change.

**Vision:** We expose wrongdoing so the world can make it right.

The ICIJ was launched in 1997 by American journalist Charles Lewis as an initiative of the Centre for Public Integrity, with the aim of exposing crime and corruption that transcended national boundaries. In 2017, it became a fully independent organisation and was later granted 501 non-profit statuses. The ICIJ investigates a broad range of matters concerning "cross-border crime, corruption, and the accountability of power." The ICIJ has exposed smuggling and tax evasion by multinational tobacco companies (2000), "by organised crime syndicates; investigated private military cartels, asbestos companies, and climate change lobbyists; and broke new ground by publicising details of Iraq and Afghanistan war contracts."

ICIJ has directed the largest cross-border reporting initiatives in history, convincing reporters across the globe to set aside traditional rivalries to uncover corruption, abuses of power and grave harms inflicted on the world's most vulnerable people. ICIJ has directed the largest cross-border reporting initiatives in history, convincing reporters across the globe to set aside traditional rivalries to uncover corruption, abuses of power and grave harms inflicted on the world's most vulnerable people.

ICIJ represents a new departure for journalism, persuading the biggest and the smallest media organisations in the world to work together to do the watchdog journalism they used to do alone. collaborated with more than 140 newspapers, television and radio stations, and online media outlets, including The

Washington Post, Le Monde, the BBC, El Pais, The Guardian, the Asahi Shinbun, the Canadian Broadcasting Corp., the Australian Broadcasting Corp., along with small, regional non-profit journalism organisations in Europe, North America, Africa, Asia and Latin America.

ICIJ has shined a light on the deadly effects of agrochemicals in the sugarcane fields of Latin America, on the brutal confinement of immigrants in detention centres in the United States and the failure of the World Bank to protect people living in the path of large development projects in Asia, to reveal how Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities were subjected to surveillance and mass internment without charge in the Xinjiang region of China.

ICIJ's Offshore Leaks, Panama Papers, Paradise Papers, Pandora Papers and FinCEN Files investigations were the biggest cross-border journalism projects ever. They revealed secrets of the rich and powerful and involved separate teams of hundreds of reporters spread across 80 countries, working in more than 30 languages and combing through more than 25 million documents.

The work of ICIJ has shaken the establishment and led to public protests, multiple arrests, sweeping legal reform and official inquiries in more than 70 countries, and to the resignations of the leaders of Pakistan, Iceland and Malta after allegations of corruption. ICIJ helped bring about the Corporate Transparency Act in the United States, hailed as the biggest anti-corruption measure since the Patriot Act of 2001. ICIJ has also been credited for helping bring more than 130 countries together to sign a worldwide minimum tax rate as a measure to stop giant corporations avoiding their responsibilities.

In 2021, ICIJ was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize for reporting that made it harder for arms dealers and people smugglers to launder their profits. ICIJ retains a network of trusted journalists, which has grown by invitation to 280 of the best investigative reporters from more than 100 countries and territories.

ICIJ trains hundreds of reporters each year, many from poorer countries. ICIJ also contributes to conferences and events, passing on tips and techniques, and makes its technology free for other journalists to use.

ICIJ provides a layer of security to journalists and media outlets in an era when press freedoms are under attack. Stories suppressed in one country can appear in another. Journalists under threat know they are never alone.

*About the ICIJ.* (n.d.). Retrieved 9 18, 2022, from The Center for Public Integrity: <http://www.icij.org/about>

## **AGENDA**

**Journalistic safety on and off field with special emphasis on the increasing number of journalistic deaths**

### **IMPORTANCE OF MEDIA AND JOURNALISTS**

Freedom of Freedom of expression is a fundamental element of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and is widely seen as underpinning other democratic freedoms such as the right to form political parties, the right to share political ideas, the right to scrutinise the actions of public officials etc. In this sense, it also supports good governance and democratic accountability. For this reason, media are considered to require special protections to enable them to operate freely. Therefore, journalists need to be free and safe to provide the content that is carried on media platforms as this content represents an exercise of the public expression of our collective rights.

But who are journalists?

In a world of increasingly omnipresent digital content it is important to understand that the term journalist is now wide-ranging and includes not just those media workers formally organised in a professional body or employed by a media organisation. As the UN Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression stated in his 2012 report:

“Journalists are individuals who observe and describe events, document and analyse events, statements, policies, and any propositions that can affect society, with the purpose of systematising such information and gathering of facts and analyses to inform sectors of society or society as a whole.”

UNESCO's International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) used the following formulation in its Decision of 23 March 2012:

“Journalists, media workers and social media producers who generate a significant amount of public-interest journalism”.

In November 2014 at the 29th session of the IPDC Council, this was reformulated as

“Journalists, media workers and social media producers, who engage in journalistic activities”.

Alongside freedom of expression, the right to life and to the integrity and security of persons are fundamental human rights that are recognised and guaranteed by international conventions and instruments. Such rights clearly apply to everyone. But they are important to the practice of journalism for three core reasons:

- Unless journalists are safe and secure they cannot be expected to carry out their professional duties that enable the media to provide the public platform for the exchange of ideas, opinions and information.
- Unpunished killings and violence lead to self-censorship –journalists come to believe that it is simply too dangerous to cover certain topics.

The safety of journalists is therefore an important human rights issue and one that is also central to the realisation of freedom of expression more broadly.

Most journalists who are killed are not famous international reporters - of the deaths reported, around 95 percent were local journalists or freelancers rather than foreign reporters. Many attacks are perpetrated by police and security personnel, militia as well as non-state actors, such as organised crime groups.

Threats to journalists do not just involve killings but also cover non-lethal attacks and threats of harm to the individual, their sources and their families, and safety from accidents. Journalistic safety can therefore be broadly categorised into the following,

	Safety of Journalists		
Bodily/Physical Safety	Mental Safety	Financial Safety	Social Safety
Safety from any bodily damage or loss of life	Safety from mental distress and trauma	Financial security from lawsuits, medical expenses, etc.	Social security from being ostracized, attacked, threats to their family and friends, from a loss of reputation, etc.

## **THREATS TO THE SAFETY OF JOURNALISTS AND RISKS FACED BY THEM**

### **Killings of Journalists**

According to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) nearly 50 per cent of those whose death was confirmed to be related to their work as journalist were murdered, while 36 per cent were caught in the crossfire and 14 per cent killed while on dangerous assignment. According to the NGO, political groups were the most likely source of violence (36 per cent) in these killings, followed by military officials (22 per cent) and unknown sources (20 per cent).

As the reliance on freelance journalists by news organisations is increasing, a rising proportion of journalists killed have been freelance. UNESCO's study, World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development Global Report 2017/2018, has found that over the past five years, 113 freelance journalists were killed, representing 21 per cent of the total. Freelance journalists are particularly vulnerable, often working alone on stories, in dangerous environments, and without the same level of assistance and protection as staff-journalists.

In 2018, Washington Post journalist and U.S. resident Jamal Khashoggi was ambushed, suffocated, and dismembered by agents of the Saudi government.

On May 11, 2022, Palestinian-American Al Jazeera journalist Shireen Abu Akleh was shot in the head and killed while covering a raid by the Israel Defense Forces on the Jenin refugee camp in the West Bank. Separate

investigations by the Associated Press, Bellingcat, The New York Times, and the Washington Post all independently concluded that fire from an IDF unit was the most likely cause of Akleh's death. CNN suggested that Akleh's death was a targeted killing by the IDF.

## Terrorism

Terrorism represents a direct and growing threat for journalists, which has taken the form of kidnappings, executions threats or hacking. At the end of the 1970s, the general policy of welcoming journalists into areas of guerrillas control changed. In the past as well, organisations such as the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, the Red Brigades in Italy, the Shining Path in Peru and the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) in Algeria targeted journalists, considering them as the auxiliaries of the powers they were combating, and thus as enemies.

According to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), 40% of the journalists murdered in 2015 were killed by groups claiming adherence to radical Islam. International press correspondents are considered potential hostages, or sacrificial lambs, whose execution is dramatised to serve terrorist propaganda. This happened to James Foley, Steven Sotloff (United States) and Kenji Goto (Japan), who were beheaded by Daesh.

Trauma and the emotional impact of witnessing terrorism is also an issue for journalists, as they may experience anxiety, insomnia, irritation and physical problems such as fatigue or headaches. It can also lead to post-traumatic stress disorder, which can cause incapacitating feelings of horror, fear and despair. According to the Eyewitness Media Hub of 2015, 40% of the journalists who were interviewed admitted that viewing video testimonies had had negative effects on their personal life.

## Imprisonment or detainment to curb free speech

According to data compiled by the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), the imprisonment of journalists on charges relating to anti-state activities, criminal defamation, blasphemy, retaliation or on no charge at all, has reportedly continued to rise.

Reporters Without Borders (RSF)—which tracks the imprisonment of citizen journalists, Netizens and media contributors, along with professional journalists—reported that 348 journalists were detained in 2016 on a range of

charges, an increase of six per cent on 2015 figures. 2016 reportedly saw the proportion of women journalists detained more than double, with nearly half of those detained located in the Asia-Pacific region. The Western Europe and North America region has the highest number of journalists imprisoned, holding 34 percent of imprisoned journalists worldwide with 73 journalists imprisoned in Turkey in 2017.

### **Kidnapping or the taking of journalists as hostages**

Journalists and media workers are highly vulnerable to kidnappings because they often work in dangerous locations, seek access to adversaries involved in conflicts, and may have to rely on shadowy contacts and sources in carrying out their work.

The capture and detention of journalists in conflict zones by combatants has long been an unwelcome consequence of pursuing stories during wars and conflicts. These detentions sometimes result in assaults on journalists, but the journalists are typically released within a relatively short time. In recent decades, however, there has been an increase in the number of journalists kidnapped for exploitation as hostages or for ransom. These are highly worrisome because these kidnappings sometimes continue for years, result in the deliberate killings of journalists, and tend to halt – or at the very least hinder – on-the-ground coverage of regions where they occur by reducing the willingness and ability of news organisations to send reporters to the areas.

Western journalists, however, are not the only kidnap targets, though they tend to get higher international media coverage. Hundreds of others from around the world have been held, attacked, taken hostage, and killed in the Middle East, Latin America, and Asia. In 2014 alone, 119 professional journalists and eight citizen journalists were kidnapped (up from 87 in 2013), according to Reporters Sans Frontières, an organisation that tracks abuses against journalists. Ukraine, Libya, Syria, Iraq, and Mexico were the locations for most of the abductions and 90 per cent involved domestic reporters while only 10 per cent involved foreign reporters.

You can read more about the kidnapping of journalists [here](#).

## Death threats and intimidation of journalists

The Media Institute of Southern Africa has documented incidents of intimidation such as the torching of vehicles, physical assault and death threats. In parts of the Arab region, journalists and prominent writers have reportedly suffered death threats, been severely beaten and had travel restrictions imposed upon them. In the Asia Pacific region, the Southeast Asian Press Alliance has noted that in some insecure contexts, physical insecurity is reportedly so tenuous that some journalists have chosen to arm themselves.

## Exile

Every year, dozens of journalists are forced to leave their homes under threat of imprisonment, torture, violence, or even death, because their work has angered the powerful. Investigative journalists and independent publications have always been a thorn in the side of those in power. For centuries corrupt governments have used censorship and random arrests to silence truth tellers. But in recent years the crackdown on independent media has gotten a whole lot worse. In countries like Turkey, Belarus, and Azerbaijan where the state controls most of the media, scores of journalists have been jailed, many publications shut down, and reporters forced to flee their countries to escape threats to their safety.

Instances of journalists in exile can be found [here](#).

## Cybersecurity & Restriction on Free Speech Online

OHCHR, United Nations human rights mechanisms, and civil society organisations have noted that journalists continued to face attacks online during the reporting period. Journalists are subjected to death threats, threats of physical violence, including sexual assault, threats of violence against family members, harassment, hate speech, trolling, doxing, and smear campaigns. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) noted that factors heightening the risk of online attacks include the gender of the journalist and whether the journalist reports on sensitive or polarising topics, such as COVID-19, elections and protests. It further reported that journalists had increased their online presence during the COVID-19 pandemic and that the pandemic had led to an increase in various types of online attacks.

In 2019 and 2020, the non-governmental organisation Article 19 recorded 588 attacks against journalists in one country, with the vast majority of them, at least 532, occurring in the digital space. Women journalists are especially affected by attacks in the online sphere. A recent study commissioned by UNESCO on global trends in online violence against women journalists revealed the alarmingly high rate of online attacks against women journalists. Altogether 73 per cent of the more than 900 women journalists surveyed reported experiencing online violence. Other forms of discrimination, such as racism, homophobia and religious bigotry, intersect with sexism and misogyny, which leads to significantly higher rates of online violence against women journalists from minorities or marginalised communities. Reporting on gender issues, politics and elections, including far-right extremist networks, entailed a higher probability of online violence. Reported forms of attacks included threats of sexual assault and physical violence, harassment, misrepresentation, threats to damage professional and personal reputations, hacking and surveillance.

The criminal prosecution of journalists for expressions offline and online continued to raise concern. Several civil society organisations noted the prevalence of the practice. In their communications and reports, some United Nations human rights mechanisms identified situations in which legislation restrictive of freedom of expression, such as hate speech legislation, counter-terrorism laws, laws criminalising the dissemination of so-called false news, as well as certain provisions under criminal law, are applied excessively broadly or misused against critical commentary and reporting. Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, journalists have been arrested and prosecuted for sharing critical information on countries' responses to the crisis. The Special Rapporteur on the right to freedom of opinion and expression reported that at least 34 journalists had been arrested on charges related to "fake news" in 2020 alone. Some of those journalists were charged for expressing their views online.

According to some Human Rights Council special procedure mandate holders, as well as to civil society organisations and academic sources, journalists are also frequently victims of so-called strategic lawsuits against public participation. Such lawsuits are often initiated by corporate actors and political figures to silence critical and investigative journalism. Various legal avenues under domestic law are used, including criminal or civil defamation provisions, tax procedures and hate speech restrictions, to retaliate against certain kinds of reporting. As the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders noted, these forms of frivolous lawsuits lead to personal,

emotional and repetitional costs, and have financial and social consequences for the affected journalist, which may push them into disengaging from critical reporting.

### The problem of impunity

There is a continuing trend of impunity for crimes against journalists, with over 90% of cases of killings of journalists unresolved. The Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, Edison Lanza considers impunity as a key obstacle to ensuring journalists' safety. Frank La Rue, UNESCO's former Assistant Director-General for Communication and Information considers that its "root cause has to be attributed to lack of political will to pursue investigations, including for fear of reprisals from criminal networks in addition to inadequate legal frameworks, a weak judicial system, lack of resources allocated to law enforcement, negligence, and corruption".

The impunity for the killers of and perpetrators of violence against journalists serves to fuel a cycle of killings. It serves to intimidate the broader citizenry and undermines public confidence in the rule of law. It is widely accepted that the safety of journalists will never be resolved if impunity is not addressed.

### Threats to female and other minority journalists

Around the globe, women journalists and female media workers face offline and online attacks putting their safety at risk – these attacks can range from violence, stigmatisation, sexist hate speech, trolling, physical assault, rape to even murder. In addition to being targeted since their work as journalists, they are also the targets of gender-based violence.

Studies have shown that female journalists are targeted online significantly more than their male colleagues, and that the threats they face are highly sexualised, focused on their physical features, ethnicity, or cultural background, rather than on the content of their work. As a result, these threats tend to silence women journalists' voices and to deplete freedom of speech by interrupting valuable investigative journalist work. They also distort the media landscape by threatening diversity and perpetuating inequalities both in newsrooms and in societies.

## **EFFORTS TOWARDS THE SAFETY OF JOURNALISTS**

To read more beyond what is mentioned below, click [here](#)

### **International efforts by the United Nations**

To view the list of key UN and international documents governing and protecting journalistic safety, click [here](#)

- *Security Council & General Assembly* - Since the previous report of the Secretary-General on the safety of journalists was issued, the Security Council and the General Assembly have addressed the safety of journalists in relation to a number of situations. In particular, the Security Council reiterated that there was an urgent and imperative need to hold accountable all those responsible for violations of international humanitarian law and for violations and abuses of human rights, among them the right to freedom of expression, including against journalists and other media professionals and associated personnel.

The General Assembly (GA) and UN Human Rights Council (HRC) have condemned unequivocally the attacks and violence against journalists and the prevailing impunity for those attacks. Amongst other things, resolutions 69/185 (2014) and 27/5 (2014) on the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity call on States to do their utmost to prevent attacks and violence against journalists, create a safe and enabling environment for them to carry out their work, publicly condemn attacks, and combat impunity for the attacks, including through establishing specialised investigative and prosecutorial mechanisms. In its resolution 2222, the UN Security Council calls for greater protection for journalists in armed conflict situations in particular. UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/68/163 also established 2 November as a dedicated day in the global calendar in recognition of the issue – the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists. The resolutions have also mandated safety reports by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the UN Secretary-general.

In its resolution 75/176 on the right to privacy in the digital age, the General Assembly noted with deep concern that, in many countries, persons and organisations engaged in promoting and defending human rights and fundamental freedoms, journalists and other media workers could frequently face threats and harassment and suffer insecurity, as well as unlawful or arbitrary interference with their right to privacy, as a result of their activities.

- *Human Rights Council* - OHCHR has drafted reports to the Human Rights Council and General Assembly (A/HRC/24/23, A/69/268 and A/70/290, including a summary report of a Human Rights Council panel discussion on the safety of journalists (A/HRC/27/35) on the issue of safety of journalists, contributing to furthering awareness and understanding of the applicable international human rights law regime and ways to implement it. The next UN Secretary-General report on the safety of journalists will be presented to the General Assembly's 72nd session in September 2017. UNESCO provides substantive contributions to these reports. The High Commissioner has also undertaken advocacy and awareness-raising through public statements and bilateral correspondence. OHCHR field presences have engaged with national authorities and civil society on the issue. OHCHR has further supported monitoring and reporting of violations against journalists, including in public reports on the human rights situations in multiple countries. Judicial monitoring is one area through which OHCHR has identified areas for strengthening implementation of national laws that need to be strengthened, particularly with regard to due process guarantees.

OHCHR has played a lead role in the development of the methodology and data collection methods for the SDG Indicator 16.10.1. As custodian agency for the Indicator, OHCHR is working in collaboration with UNESCO, ILO and other partners at the international, regional and national levels. In addition, OHCHR has been providing technical advice through various field presences to national authorities on how to enhance the safety of journalists and accountability for violations against journalists. Training sessions have been organised by OHCHR for government officials, the judiciary, and journalists on international human rights law norms and standards, corresponding national laws and, more specifically, journalists' rights to freedom of expression and opinion. Some of these training activities included a session on security and safety for human rights defenders.

OHCHR also provides support to the UN human rights system: treaty bodies, relevant special procedure mandate holders (especially Special Rapporteurs on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, and on the situation of human rights defenders) and the Universal Periodic Review, through which issues of safety of journalists are being increasingly raised with States. Special Rapporteurs can send communications to States and non-state entities to bring alleged violations or abuses to their attention.

- *Other UN bodies* - In September 2020, the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the country's Council for Audio-visual Media and Communications jointly hosted a round table on the emergence of new media. The Office also continued to advocate for the decriminalisation of press offenses and for the establishment of a more protective legislative framework for journalists in accordance with international human rights law.

On the topic of capacity-building, in 2019, OHCHR assessed the mechanism for the protection of human rights defenders and journalists in Mexico, which included the issue of the safety of journalists online.<sup>102</sup> Following the assessment, the mechanism initiated with the support of Ireland a process to strengthen its capacity to counter digital attacks.<sup>103</sup> From December 2020 to September 2021, OHCHR Organised , with UN-Women and in partnership with UNESCO, a 12-session training series entitled “Enhanced protection of women journalists and advance women’s human rights in the context of shrinking democratic space in Asia”. The aim of the series was to enhance the capacity of women journalists and media workers to investigate and report on gender-related issues, identify issues concerning the narrowing of democratic space and its impact on women journalists, and enhance self-protection assessments, including in the area of online and digital security. In December 2020, ahead of the elections in Chad and Niger, OHCHR held workshops for journalists, among them workshops on online freedom of expression.

OHCHR and UNESCO continued to provide support to the monitoring unit of the Tunisian national union for journalists, the aim of which is to develop a national database on cases of violations of the safety of

journalists based on quantitative and qualitative indicators. During the reporting period, the monitoring unit continued to record restrictions on media websites and threats to and attacks on journalists in the digital space. It also monitored cases in which Internet content was blocked or filtered, and prosecutions of journalists exercising their freedom of expression online. In particular, the monitoring unit developed national indicators of impunity for crimes and offenses committed against journalists and made them publicly available on a monthly basis.

In 2019, the Executive Board of UNESCO invited the Director-General of UNESCO to prioritise activities to address the specific threats to the safety of women journalists, both online and offline, as well as new and emerging threats to the safety of journalists. UNESCO also implemented projects to promote the digital safety of journalists and to provide support to journalists to improve the way in which they cope with challenges in the digital sphere. It enhanced its capacity-building activities on these issues through the development of a massive open online course on ways to report on issues related to Internet and technology, in partnership with the Knight Centre for Journalism in the Americas of the University of Texas. UNESCO held several webinars and issued guidelines on the role of judicial operators in the protection and promotion of the rights to freedom of expression, access to information and privacy in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic.

UNESCO scaled up its activities to promote the safety of women journalists. It did so by, among other things, launching a major research project on online violence against women journalists. In partnership with the International Women's Media Foundation and the Knight Centre, UNESCO developed a training module on the safety of women journalists. Furthermore, UNESCO developed guidelines on ways to integrate a gender-sensitive and gender-responsive approach into the safety policies and practices of media organisations. Those guidelines also covered digital safety. UNESCO continued to raise awareness, including by launching a campaign on International Women's Day, 8 March 2021, to address online violence against women journalists.

### Efforts by regional organizations

- At its sixty-fifth ordinary session, held in Banjul from 21 October to 10 November 2019, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights

adopted a declaration of principles on freedom of expression and access to information in Africa. In the declaration, the Commission affirmed the importance of protecting the freedom of expression from online and offline interference and laid down that the right to express oneself through journalism must not be subject to undue legal restrictions. According to the declaration, States must guarantee the safety of journalists and other media practitioners, take measures to prevent attacks on them and take specific measures to ensure the safety of female journalists and media practitioners by addressing gender-specific safety concerns.

- In 2019, the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights published guidance on guaranteeing the freedom of expression in respect of deliberate disinformation in electoral contexts. The guidance contained a specific recommendation to the executive branch of Governments to protect journalists and social communicators from violence, and highlighted the special obligations of protection, prevention, and investigation that weigh on the state authorities in the fight against violence against journalists and social communicators.
- The European Commission launched a proposal for a recommendation on ensuring the safety of journalists in the European Union, including online. The purpose of the proposed recommendation was to set out a targeted approach to countering the most worrying recent trends regarding the safety of journalists. The Commission also launched a proposal known as the Digital Services Act, which was pending in the European Parliament at the time of drafting the present report.

### State efforts

- Several States reported on constitutional provisions and relevant laws regulating the freedom of expression of journalists, including online. Romania reported the decriminalisation of insult and defamation. Some States also reported having legal frameworks that criminalised violence online.

- Several States reported on measures to protect journalists from violence against them, including online. Serbia stated that it had established, in December 2020, a working group for the safety and protection of journalists, which is mandated to improve the efficiency of responses to attacks on journalists and to monitor the actions taken to protect their safety. In 2020, a national mechanism for the safety and defence of journalists was reportedly created in Angola at the initiative of the Angolan union of journalists and other socio-professional associations, in cooperation with United Nations agencies, the African Union and regional actors.
- Several States reported on advocacy and awareness-raising. Greece reported work on the promotion of media literacy, noting that combating gender stereotypes and sexism in the media was one of the strategic objectives of its national action plan on gender equality. As part of an ongoing project entitled “Public debate on gender”, the authorities reportedly supported actions promoting capacity-building for women candidates and media stakeholders participating in public debates in Greece.
- Some States cooperated with each other and with other stakeholders on the offline and online safety of journalists. In particular, in July 2019, at the Global Conference for Media Freedom, the Media Freedom Coalition was formed. The Coalition is a partnership of States working together to advocate for media freedom online and offline, and the safety of journalists. To date, the global pledge on media freedom, a written commitment to improve media freedom at the national level and work together at the international level, has been signed by 49 members. The pledge includes references to the threat of unlawful surveillance and manipulation.
- In December 2020, ministers of foreign affairs and other Government representatives convened at the initiative of the Netherlands on the occasion of the World Press Freedom Conference 2020. The resulting Hague commitment to increase the safety of journalists was signed by more than 50 ministers. Signatories made a number of commitments,

among them the commitment to launch independent investigations and prosecutions of all forms of online and offline crimes against journalists.

### Efforts by civil society, academia, and the media

- *A Culture of Safety (ACOS) Alliance*: It was formed in late 2015 by major news companies and journalism organisations to improve worldwide freelance protection standards.
- *Article 19*: Based in London. Article 19 monitors, researches, publishes, lobbies, campaigns, sets standards and litigates on behalf of freedom of expression wherever it is threatened. Its work includes campaigns to protect journalists from threats to their lives, families and livelihoods.
- *Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ)*: Based in New York. Founded in 1981 and managed by a board of directors of journalists, CPJ produces annual country reports, conducts international missions, and maintains its Impunity Index, among many other aggressive activities. CPJ's Journalist Assistance Program provides legal, medical, and relocation assistance to journalists at risk, along with support for families of slain and imprisoned journalists.
- *First Draft* is a non-partisan partner network of news organisations and individuals who provide practical and ethical guidance in how to find, verify and publish content sourced from the social web.
- *Global Journalist Security*: Founded in 2011, it is a Washington-based consulting firm that offers security training and advice to media workers, citizen journalists, human rights activists, and NGO staff. The group also trains security forces in developed nations as well as in emerging democracies "to meet international press freedom and human rights standards" including how to safely interact with the press.
- *Inter American Press Association (IAPA)*: Based in Miami, FL. Founded in the late 1940s; now includes 1,400 member publications from Canada

to Chile. It monitors and advocates for press freedom throughout the hemisphere; special programs include a Rapid Response Unit deployed when a journalist is killed, twice-yearly reports on press freedom issues in each country, and publication of a “Risk Map” to guide journalists working in the most dangerous countries. IAPA also operates its own separate “Impunity Project,” with detailed information on journalist murders throughout the region.

- *International Federation of Journalists (IFJ)*: Based in Brussels. Launched, in its modern form, in 1952, IFJ describes itself as the world’s largest association of journalists. It monitors press freedom issues and advocates for journalists’ safety and was a founder of the International News Safety Institute.
- *International Freedom of Information Exchange (IFEX)*: Perhaps the most visible role of this Toronto-based organisation is as a source of information; it operates what it calls “the world’s most comprehensive free expression information service,” with a weekly email newsletter, a regular digest of articles related to press freedom, and “action alerts” from members around the globe. It has more than 90 member organisations in more than 50 countries. In 2011 it established November 23 as International Day to End Impunity.
- *International News Safety Institute (INSI)*: Based in Brussels. Created in 2003 as a result of an initiative by the IFJ and IPI, it describes itself as “a unique coalition of news organisations, journalist support groups and individuals exclusively dedicated to the safety of news media staff working in dangerous environments.” It conducts training, issues safety tips and manuals, and monitors journalists’ casualties of all kinds, whether violent attacks or accidents.
- *International Press Institute (IPI)*: Created in 1950, the Vienna-based IPI calls itself “a global network of editors, media executives and leading journalists.” A founder of INSI, it monitors press freedom with an annual World Press Freedom Review, conducts regular missions to countries where it is at risk, and tracks attacks on journalists.

- *Reporters Without Borders (Reporters Sans Frontières, or RSF):* Founded in 1985 and based in Paris, RSF gathers information on press freedom violations and sponsors international missions as needed. Among other activities it provides financial assistance to journalists or news organisations to help defend themselves, and to the families of imprisoned journalists, and works to improve the safety of journalists, especially in war zones. It sells insurance and lends bulletproof vests and helmets at no cost to journalists traveling to dangerous areas.
- *World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers (WAN-IFRA):* Founded in 1948 and based in Paris, WAN represents more than 18,000 publications on five continents. In addition to providing support and information on basic industry issues, WAN has a special focus on press freedom, monitoring attacks on journalists, and “conducts long-term campaigns and targeted events with the aim to raise public awareness about critical press freedom matters.”
- *Free Press Unlimited:* The Dutch media development NGO has Reporters Respond, an international emergency fund that provides direct assistance to journalists and media outlets, enabling them to resume work as quickly as possible when faced with local obstruction. The group aims to respond to requests within 24 hours. Additionally, through their Legal Defence Fund for Journalists, Free Press Unlimited provides financial support for journalists who face prosecution or imprisonment or are unable to afford legal fees.
- *Rory Peck Trust:* Based in London, The Rory Peck Trust provides practical assistance and support to freelance news gatherers and their families worldwide, to raise their profile, promote their welfare and safety, and to support their right to report freely and without fear. Programs include a Freelance Assistance Programme, Freelance Resources, and the Rory Peck Awards.
- *RISC:* Reporters Instructed in Saving Colleagues is a US-based group that offers free safety training for journalists working in conflict zones

and remote areas around the world. It provides two days of security instruction focused on crisis prevention, followed by a four-day comprehensive first aid course. The program is offered to experienced, working, freelance and local journalists. Locations vary (Sao Paulo and Sarajevo in 2018) and can be influenced based on who applies.

Other organisations that partner and work closely with the UN on the matter of journalistic safety can be found [here](#)

## RESEARCH SOURCES

- [Safety & Security Guides & Organizations](#)
- [Secretary General's Report on the Safety of Journalists & the Issue of Impunity](#)
- [UNESCO's Indicators of Journalistic Safety](#)
- [UNESCO's Research & Good Practices](#)
- [Safety of Women Journalists](#)
- [Outcome document from the UN Plan of Action](#)
- [UN Plan of Action Draft](#)

# DOCUMENTATIONS

## HOW TO WRITE COMMITTEE DIRECTIVES

Directives, in a crisis, are how you take committee action, in place of long-form resolutions.

### **Main Components:**

- Title
- Specific orders or actions that you would like to see undertaken - ensure these actions are well within the mandate and powers of your committee, and in case of an action that isn't within your committee's powers - recommend the action to the relevant committee concerned
- Signatures, with portfolios of all signatories

### **Sample Directive:**

#### **Committee Directive 1.0**

Signed: The Russian Federation, The United States of America, The Republic of India

In reaction to the current hostage situation in Afghanistan, the UN Security Council determines to undertake the following measures:

1. Direct intelligence resources to find out the exact location of these hostages and how well protected this location is;
2. Prepare plans and intelligence for two Black Hawk helicopters and a team of Navy SEALs to rescue the hostages from this location by the order of this committee;
3. In cooperation with the neighbouring Pakistan Government, secure and set up a hospital in the Balochistan province to provide emergency medical aid to the hostages once rescued;
4. Issue an order to ensure the secrecy of this mission till its completion, in order to protect the security of the mission.

## HOW TO WRITE A PRESS RELEASE

Press Releases are tools used by committees or individuals to inform the public about certain facts and developments on the issue at hand. It may be written as a result of a crisis or as an end document for a committee.

### **Main Components:**

- Header stating that it is a Press Release
- Descriptive Headline
- Information that you want the public to have such as,
  - Summary of discussion
  - Major developments or outcomes of the session
  - Unofficial voting information, if a vote was held
- Signature/s

### **Sample Press Release:**

#### **Press Release**

#### **Progress on Global Nuclear Security Has Slowed Significantly, according to 2020 NTI Index**

Washington, DC: The 2021 NTI Nuclear Security Index finds that progress on protecting nuclear materials against theft and nuclear facilities against acts of sabotage has slowed significantly over the past two years, despite ongoing, major security gaps. An alarming development at a time of growing global disorder and disruption, the decline in the rate of improvement to national regulatory structures and the global nuclear security architecture reverses a trend of substantial improvements between 2012 and 2018.

The decline suggests that without the driving force of the Nuclear Security Summits, which ended in 2016, or similar high-level international events, attention to nuclear security has waned—and it has done so at a time when terrorist capabilities and growing cyber threats contribute to a more complicated and unpredictable environment. At the same time, geopolitical tensions and events such as the COVID-19 pandemic are undermining cooperation and exposing the limits of how countries cope with cross-border threats.

Countries have continued to take steps to strengthen nuclear security regulations and support global norms, but since 2018, the number of countries improving their scores in the NTI Index has declined across all three rankings. The number of countries with worsening scores has increased since 2018 in both the theft ranking for countries without materials and the sabotage ranking. Overall, the average amount that a score improved has declined in all three rankings compared with previous years, showing that even countries that are improving are taking fewer actions.

“Given the challenging backdrop for the sharp decline in progress, it is more important than ever to identify shortfalls and to call for governments, industry, and the international community to once again step up their efforts to prevent a catastrophic attack using stolen nuclear materials or an act of sabotage that could further shake global foundations,” said NTI Co-Chair and CEO Ernest J. Moniz.

The 2020 NTI Index recommends that to reverse the decline in nuclear security improvements, countries must strengthen and sustain political attention on enhancing nuclear security regulations and on building a more effective global nuclear security architecture.

The NTI Index includes nine additional high-level findings and recommendations.

1. No countries have eliminated their stocks of weapons-usable nuclear materials since 2016, and the number of countries with those materials has plateaued. Decreases in quantities of materials also are slowing. Countries with materials should revive efforts to reduce stocks of highly enriched uranium and plutonium and should focus on long-term, sustainable stewardship of materials.
2. Regulatory requirements for nuclear security are not comprehensive, with significant weaknesses in key areas such as insider threat prevention, security culture, and cybersecurity. Countries must strengthen these regimes; theft of nuclear materials or sabotage of a nuclear facility anywhere in the world would have significant implications for all countries, including potential public backlash against the use of peaceful nuclear technology, such as nuclear energy.

3. Countries do not have adequate measures in place to address the human factor of nuclear security. Countries must strengthen insider threat-prevention measures and security culture.

4. Cybersecurity regulations are slowly adapting to the growing cyber threat to nuclear facilities, but the adoption of these requirements continues to trail the urgency of the threat. Given the rapid evolution of cyber threats, countries must strengthen cybersecurity at nuclear facilities including through

- (a) integrating physical protection and cybersecurity;
- (b) protecting critical digital assets, such as systems related to physical protection, control, accounting, and safety; and
- (c) building greater awareness of cyber threats among facility personnel.

5. Despite continued actions to strengthen the global nuclear security architecture, the rate of improvement has slowed and significant gaps in the architecture remain. Countries must work to strengthen and sustain political attention on nuclear security, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the United Nations should work to achieve universalisation of key legal instruments governing nuclear security, and countries should implement their treaty obligations and participate in voluntary initiatives, among other steps.

6. Countries without nuclear materials are not sufficiently engaged in efforts to bolster the global nuclear security architecture. To address regional disparities and conflicting priorities, the IAEA should work with countries to build a stronger, more inclusive concept of nuclear security stressing that nuclear security is critical to maintaining public support for peaceful uses of nuclear technology.

7. The IAEA still lacks the political and financial support it needs to fulfill its nuclear security mission. Countries should increase support for the IAEA by contributing to its Nuclear Security Fund and supporting and participating in IAEA activities, and the IAEA should work to build awareness of those activities and of how nuclear security helps countries benefit from peaceful nuclear use.

8. With the exception of publishing regulations, countries' actions to build confidence in nuclear security through information sharing and peer review remain limited. Countries should increase transparency and confidence by publishing annual nuclear security reports, by making public declarations about their progress on nuclear security, and by participating regularly in peer reviews, among other steps.

9. More countries are interested in acquiring nuclear technology for research or energy purposes, but nine countries planning new nuclear power programs have varying levels of preparedness to take on nuclear security responsibilities. To be responsible stewards, countries considering new nuclear energy capabilities should establish legal and regulatory frameworks that address insider threat prevention, cybersecurity, security culture, physical protection, control and accounting procedures, and response capabilities.

Signed: Ernest J. Moniz, Co-Chair and Chief Executive Officer, NTI; Sam Nunn, Co-Founder, Co-Chair, and Strategic Advisor

## **HOW TO WRITE A COMMITTEE REPORT**

Most bodies report on their work. These reports include summaries of the work of the body for a given time period or session. It could be made to the public at large or for the parent organisation associated.

### **Main Components:**

- Date of meeting
- Parties to the meeting
- Decisions adopted by the body or recommended to parent/other organisations

### **Sample Report:**

#### **Report of the Committee on the Rights of the Child Tenth Meeting**

#### **Membership**

In accordance with Article 43 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Tenth Meeting of States parties to the Convention was convened on 23 February 2021 at United Nations Headquarters. The following nine members were in participation: Ms. Ghalia Mohd Bin Hamad Al-Thani; Ms. Joyce Aluoch; Ms. Yanghee Lee; Mr. David Brent Parfitt; Mr. Awich Pollar; Mr. Kamal Siddiqui; Ms. Lucy Smith; Ms. Nevena Vuckovic-Sahovic; and Mr. Jean Zermatten.

## **Decisions & Recommendations Adopted**

The Committee adopted the following decisions,

1. Relating to the rights of children without parental care, the Committee recommends that the Commission on Human Rights consider the establishment of a working group to develop guidelines for the protection and alternative care of children without parental care;
2. Relating to children in armed conflict, the Committee encourages State parties to further strengthen the protection of children from forced recruitment and involvement in armed conflict by criminalising such activities within their territories and to consider assuming extraterritorial jurisdiction when either the victim or perpetrator is a national of the State party;
3. The Committee is of the view that practical measures should be taken at all levels to protect children's right to life, survival, and development by including,
  - a) priority procedures for child victims of trafficking,
  - b) the prompt appointment of guardians,
  - c) the provision of information to children about the risks they may encounter, and
  - d) the establishment of measures to provide follow-up to children particularly at risk

These measures should be regularly evaluated to ensure their effectiveness.

4. Relating to child migrants, the following measures can be adopted for their protection,

- a) prioritised identification of a child as separated or unaccompanied immediately upon arrival at ports of entry or as soon as their presence in the country becomes known to the authorities,
- b) such identification measures must include age assessment and should not only take into account the physical appearance of the individual, but also his or her psychological maturity,
- c) the assessment must be conducted in a scientific, safe, child- and gender-sensitive and fair manner, avoiding any risk of violation of the physical integrity of the child; giving due respect to human dignity; and,
- d) in the event of remaining uncertainty, should accord the individual the benefit of the doubt such that if there is a possibility that the individual is a child, she or he should be treated as such.

“The Kaboom•The investigation• the Reveal”

