



**International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists**  
**The Arusha Declaration on Strengthening National Mechanisms for Safety of Journalists and Media Workers in Eastern Africa**

**Held at Gold Crest Hotel, Arusha-Tanzania,  
 On 02 - 03 November 2018**

We, the participants gathered in Arusha, Tanzania, to observe the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists, on 2-3 November 2018;

**Acknowledging** the national, sub-regional, regional and international instruments relating to freedom of expression and safety of journalists, particularly Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 9 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights;

**Recognizing** the critical role of national, sub-regional, regional judicial and institutional frameworks in the promotion, protection and fulfillment of freedom of expression and safety of journalists, particularly the African Commission on Human and People's Rights, the African Court on Human and Peoples Rights, and the East African Court of Justice;

**Committed** to the implementation of the UN Plan of Action on safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, which aims to create a free and safe environment for journalists and media workers in conflict and non-conflict situation by providing a comprehensive, coherent and action-oriented multistakeholder approach to addressing the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity;

**Affirming** that freedom of expression, media freedom and access to information are fundamental freedoms that enable the rule of law and human rights, and that the safety of journalists is a necessary condition for the enjoyment of these rights;

**Reminded** of the essence and importance of the African Charter on Elections, Democracy and Governance as a binding instrument setting out comprehensive and clear standards for good governance;

**Further affirming** the connection between the enjoyment of fundamental human rights and the achievement of Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 16 on Peace, Justice and strong institutions;





**Recognizing** that SDG 16.10 protects “Public access to information and fundamental freedoms in accordance with national legislation and international agreements”, while 16.10.1 further requires member states and other stakeholders to monitor and report on the “Number of verified cases of killing, kidnapping, enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention and torture of journalists, associated media personnel, trade unionists and human rights advocates in the previous 12 months;

**Concerned** by the fact that despite the strengthening of the international legal framework on safety of journalists over the past five year through the adoption of more than 10 resolutions by the United Nations organizations, 1010 journalists and media workers have been killed since 2006;

**Appalled** by the fact that despite these grim statistics, only one out of 10 of these cases were brought to court but no clear monitoring and reporting system (s) on the quality of investigation, prosecution and sentencing; ;

**Noting** that according to UNESCO’s World Trends on Freedom of Expression and Media Development 2017-2018 report, attacks against, and harassment of, women journalists, particularly on online platforms, have increased;

**Re-affirming** that the fight against impunity is inseparable from the defense of fundamental freedoms such as freedom of expression, media freedom and freedom of access to information;

**Further recognizing** that these freedoms are central to the establishment of better informed, open societies, and of true knowledge societies;

**Acknowledging** that the media landscape in Eastern Africa has grown in terms of outlets in last decade but it continues to face many challenges, yet it is key to promoting tolerance, peaceful co-existence, and democratic processes that will enable Eastern African countries the Sustainable development Goals and effectively pursue the Africa Agenda 2063;

**Recalling** the commitments made during the East African Conference on Establishing National Mechanisms for Safety of Journalists held in Nairobi, Kenya, on 13-14 November 2017,

**Reaffirming** those commitments, particularly the one calling on Eastern African countries to establish national mechanisms for safety of journalists as part of an effective and well-coordinated framework for preventing violence against





journalists, protecting journalists in danger, and prosecuting perpetrators of crimes against journalists;

As participants from Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Somalia, Somaliland, Puntland, Madagascar, South Sudan, and Rwanda,

### 1. AGREE TO:

- a) Strengthen national mechanisms for safety of journalists as multi-stakeholder vehicles for addressing the safety of journalist and tackling the issue of impunity for crimes against journalists;
- b) Create and support robust monitoring, documentation and reporting systems to enable produce reports for different mechanisms such as SDG 16.10.1 reports;
- c) Pursue judicial accountability for crimes against journalists by supporting investigative or data-driven journalism that highlights crimes against journalists which have not achieved judicial closure by the justice system;
- d) Build public awareness of the work of national mechanisms through engagement of various stakeholders to ensure buy-in and stimulate discussion and actions around the issue of impunity.
- e) Deepen strategic partnership with the sub-regional bodies particularly the East African Community and its organs especially the East African Legislative Assembly and East African Court of Justice,
- f) Actively engage with and create learning and advocacy networks with regional bodies, particularly the African Court on Human and Peoples Rights and the African Commission on Human and peoples' Rights; Pan-African Parliament, African Peer Review Mechanism and the African Union Commission;
- g) Support the creation of a regional coordination committee and nurture regional solidarity networks among national mechanisms in promoting safety of journalists and fighting impunity.





## 2. WE URGE:

### 2.1 Eastern African States to:

- a) Ensure an enabling legal and institutional framework on freedom of expression and safety of journalists, particularly the safety of women journalists.
- b) Ratify the Protocol establishing the African Court of Human and People's Rights and submit declaration for recognition of the jurisdiction of the Court under Article 34(6) in order to allow their citizens access to the services of the Court and enforcement of its judgments, particularly those on freedom of expression and safety of journalists;
- c) Ratify and domesticate the African Charter on Election, Democracy and Governance;
- d) Designate government focal persons and support national mechanisms for safety of journalists;
- e) Respond to UNESCO Director General letters inquiring into the status of investigations regarding the killing of journalists;
- f) Ensure timely investigation, prosecution and redress whenever there are crimes against journalists;
- g) Adopt gender policies and create specific measures to address gender-based violence against female journalists.

### 2.2 UNESCO to:

- a) Operationalize the MOU between UNESCO and the African Court on Human and Peoples Rights;
- b) Negotiate agreements with African Union bodies such as the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights; Pan-African Parliament and the African Union Commission;
- c) Negotiate agreements with sub-regional bodies especially the East African Community Court of Justice; IGAD; COMESA, SADC; International Conference of Great Lakes Region (ICGLR);





### 2.3 REGIONAL AND SUB-REGIONAL BODIES:

- The regional and sub-regional bodies should appoint focal persons for freedom of safety of journalists to mainstream these fundamental freedoms in the work and mandate of the community.

Dated at Arusha, Tanzania this 3<sup>rd</sup> Day of November 2018.

