



**DRAFT**

**UNESCO Plan on Safety of Journalists  
and Combating Impunity**

**BACKGROUND:**

1. UNESCO is the United Nations specialized agency with a mandate to defend freedom of expression and press freedom, which has meant that the Organization has had a long-standing commitment to foster the safety of journalists.
2. Over the years UNESCO implemented comprehensive strategy aiming at protection and promotion of safety of journalists and fighting impunity of perpetrators of crimes against journalists. This work was based on the following decision of Member States:
  - a. Resolution 29 adopted by the 29<sup>th</sup> UNESCO General Conference in 1997
  - b. Decision on the Safety of Journalists adopted at the 26th session of the Intergovernmental Council of the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) in March 2008
3. Work in this area is carried out primarily within the Sector for Communication and Information. The Communication and Information Division for Freedom of Expression and Media Development executes the work through the section for Freedom of Expression, Advisors for Communication and Information in Field Offices, and the Secretariat of the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC). The Director General provides overall leadership, particularly through monitoring, reporting and public activities based on the decisions of the General Conference and the Intergovernmental Council of the IPDC. The Director-General also prepares a report on *The Safety of Journalists and the Danger of Impunity* on a two-year basis, including information of judicial follow-up voluntarily sent by the Member States. Moreover, UNESCO's External Relations and Information Sector play an important role in disseminating information.
4. This document presents a Plan of the work in this area. It will also inform the development of the 37/C4 and 37/C5
5. UNESCO supports Member States on issues related to the promotion of the safety of journalists and combating impunity. UNESCO, in cooperation with other organizations, produces a regularly updated practical safety guides in multiple languages and supports safety trainings courses and workshops for journalists and media workers. Awareness-raising and sensitization campaigns are often carried out involving international, regional and local associations. Furthermore, UNESCO is part of the information sharing network which monitors freedom of expression worldwide and issues alerts to its members when there is an attack on journalists and media workers.

6. UNESCO's current activities on the safety of journalists and combating impunity are guided by the six-year Medium Term Strategy (2008-2013) and the biennial programming document, 36/C5. In the current Medium Term Strategy, the issue is addressed in the Strategic Programme Objective 13, which states that *"special attention will be paid to the protection of the press freedom and the rights and safety of media and information professionals, especially within the framework of alert monitoring networks for the protection of freedom of expression"*.
7. This strategy is further elaborated in the current biennial document, 36 C/5 Biennial Sectoral Priority 1 in promoting freedom of expression and information and the relevant Main Line of Action 1 in promoting an enabling environment for freedom of expression in order to foster development, democracy, and dialogue for a culture of peace and non-violence further call on to the Organization *"to continue its efforts to fight impunity for crimes committed against media professionals, including through the IPDC. Strong collaboration with other agencies and programmes within the UN family will aim to ensure that existing conventions in this regard are respected, and capacity-building will be furthered in this area, in particular through the inclusion of safety modules in journalism training curricula"*.
8. This Main Line Action is formulated to achieve the Expected Result 1 affirming *"Freedom of expression, freedom of information and freedom of the press more broadly promoted and integrated into policies in Member States, related internationally recognized legal, safety, ethical and professional standards respected, and the safety of media professionals enhanced, and the combat against impunity strengthened"*.
9. Within the framework of the UNESCO Medium Term Strategy (C4) and the 36 C5 document, UNESCO works on the following five areas related to safety of journalists and the issue of impunity. These actions are relevant to the *UN Plan of Action on Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity* which provided a framework to harmonize cooperation especially amongst the various agencies within the UN system, in order to produce a comprehensive, coherent, and action-oriented UN-wide approach to the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity. The UN Plan was endorsed by the UN Chief Executive Board in April 2012.

## **ACTIONS:**

### **1. Cooperating with Member States**

- 1.1. Assistance to fully implement existing international rules and principles and to develop appropriate legislation and institutional arrangements to create a safe environment for journalists.
- 1.2. Promotion of good practices among Member States to promote the safety of journalists and to combat the impunity.
- 1.3. Establishing preventive mechanisms and policies with a gender-based approach.

## **2. Work within UN System**

- 2.1. Contributing information relevant to UNESCO Mandate in the framework of the *Universal Periodic Review*, a process which is led by the UN Human Rights Council to survey the state of human rights around the world.
- 2.2. Implementation of the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity at a global and national level in cooperation with UN Country Teams.
- 2.3. Establishment and reinforcement of UN Coordination mechanism on the safety of journalist including the relevant UN HRC Special Procedures.

## **3. Partnering with other organizations and institutions**

- 3.1. Collaboration with other intergovernmental organizations, institutions, relevant professional and civil society organizations
- 3.2. Promotion of training on safety issues, including developing handbooks and guidelines for journalists and the media industry.
- 3.3. Development of a specific journalism on safety training in *UNESCO Model Curricula for Journalism Education* and cooperation with professional associations in promoting journalists safety issues.

## **4. Raising Awareness in cooperation with all stakeholders**

- 4.1. Sensitization of stakeholders through international conferences and thematic debates, participating in international campaigns, conducting surveys and publishing their results.
- 4.2. Celebration of World Press Freedom Day (3 May) and ensuring high visibility of the event.
- 4.3. Dissemination of the Director-General Report on The Safety of Journalists and the Danger of Impunity, including information on DG's condemnations of killing of journalists worldwide, on the judicial inquiries and actions taken by Member States to bring perpetrators of crimes against journalists to justice.
- 4.4. Building awareness in relation to the International Day Against Impunity (23 November) and the International Anti-Corruption Day (2 December).
- 4.5. Promoting a gender-perspective on the work on the safety of journalists, including safety of women journalists.
- 4.6. Enhancing existing information exchange mechanisms in collaboration with professional association on journalists safety issues.

## **5. Preventing attacks against journalists**

- 5.1. Creating and international supporting alert mechanisms for journalists in danger.