

# IPDC DECISION ON THE SAFETY OF JOURNALISTS

## AND THE ISSUE OF IMPUNITY

28<sup>th</sup> IPDC Council session, 22-23 March 2012

The Intergovernmental Council of IPDC,

1. **Having discussed** the report contained in document CI-12 CONF.202/4 on the killings of journalists and media workers condemned by the Director-General of UNESCO;
2. **Deeply concerned** by the increased frequency of acts of violence against journalists, media professionals and associated personnel in many parts of the world, including in countries which are not considered as conflict areas;
3. **Recalling** Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that “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”,
4. **Recalling** UNESCO Resolution 29 “Condemnation of Violence Against Journalists” adopted by the UNESCO General Conference at its 29th session on 12 November 1997, which called on Member States to remove any statute of limitations on crimes against persons when such crimes are "perpetrated to prevent the exercise of freedom of information and expression or when their purpose is the obstruction of justice" and which urged governments to "refine legislation to make it possible to prosecute and sentence those who instigate the assassination of persons exercising the right to freedom of expression" ;
5. **Recalling** Resolution 1738 adopted by the UN Security Council at its 5613<sup>th</sup> Meeting on 23 December 2006 in which the Security Council:
  - “**condemn[ed]** intentional attacks against journalists, media professionals and associated personnel, as such, in situations of armed conflict, and called upon all parties to put an end to such practices”;
  - “**drew attention** to “the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, in particular the Third Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949 on the treatment of prisoners of war, and the

Additional Protocols of 8 June 1977, in particular article 79 of the Additional Protocol I regarding the protection of journalists engaged in dangerous professional missions in areas of armed conflict”;

- “***emphasiz[ed]*** the responsibility of States to comply with the relevant obligations under international law to end impunity and to prosecute those responsible for serious violations of international humanitarian law”;
- “***request[ed]*** the Secretary-General to include as a sub-item in his next reports on the protection of civilians in armed conflict the issue of the safety and security of journalists, media professionals and associated personnel”;

6. **Underlining** the importance for journalists, media personnel and media organizations to uphold the principles of neutrality, impartiality and humanity in their professional activities;
7. **Commending** the progress of the work of the UN agencies and other stakeholders involved in the preparation of the draft UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity;
8. **Requests** the Director-General to prepare, in consultation with Member States and other relevant and representative actors, a UNESCO Work Plan on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, and to present it to the Executive Board at its 191<sup>st</sup> Session.
9. **Requests** the Director-General of UNESCO to provide to the Intergovernmental Council of the IPDC, on a two-year basis at its biennial session, an analytical report on the Director-General’s condemnations of the killings of journalists, media workers and social media producers who generate a significant amount of public-interest journalism who are killed in the line of duty or targeted for murder because of their journalistic activities. This report should be the result of analysis and comparison of information from a broad and diverse range of sources for the sake of ensuring objectivity, including updated information provided by the relevant Member States on a voluntary basis on the killing of journalists, and non-responses, and be made widely available.
10. **Also requests** the Director-General to make available on UNESCO’s website, upon request of the Member States concerned, information officially provided for killings of journalists condemned by the Organization.

**11. Requests** all Member States concerned by the Director-General's condemnations of the killings of journalists:

- (a) to comply with the relevant obligations under international law to end impunity and to prosecute those responsible for violations, where actions have not been taken;
- (b) to inform the Director-General of UNESCO, on a voluntary basis, of the actions taken to prevent the impunity of the perpetrators and to notify her of the status of the judicial inquiries conducted on each of the killings of journalists, media workers and social media producers who generate a significant amount of public-interest journalism condemned by UNESCO.

**12. Invites** the Bureau of the Intergovernmental Council of the IPDC to give priority to projects that support local capacity building in the safety and protection of journalists and media workers.