



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

**IPDC THE INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME
FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNICATION**

**Concept note for IPDC debate, 27 March: “After Charlie: strengthening the safety of
journalists”** (16 March 2015, Room IX)

Summary:

UNESCO’s International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) can provide a platform to take forward the discussion on journalists’ safety. This would be during the IPDC’s Bureau meeting on 27 March. The Bureau of 8 member states, elected by a Council of 39 member states, meets annually. Its proceedings are open to all member states as observers.

There are two parts to the debate: a panel of experts will provide perspectives; followed by Member States who wish to make statements.

The main purpose is to assist IPDC’s Bureau in its deliberations about the niche and priorities of the Programme.

Background:

Individual meetings by the IPDC chair with seven ambassadors in late January revealed strong interest by Member States in further discussions about UNESCO’s role in the safety of journalists.

Existing work by IPDC in the area covers:

- Reporting on safety and impunity (the Director General’s report to IPDC Council);
- Developing collective responses (the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity was conceived by Member States in IPDC);
- Monitoring (the Journalists’ Safety Indicators came from IPDC)
- Capacity-building (many IPDC projects have supported training of journalists, as well as training of other actors such as security forces in Tunisia, and judicial actors in Mexico. In this regard, efforts have also been made to develop a specialized journalism syllabus on ‘Safety and journalism’ as part of a *Compendium of New Syllabi* for journalism educators).

Current context:

In the 2015 context, UNESCO and IPDC can make a positive difference by:

- Reinforcing the recent, and unprecedented, consensus against those individual actors who see killing as an appropriate response to an exercise of freedom of expression to which they object.
- Highlighting that killings of journalists can happen anywhere, while also underlining that global solidarity is especially needed with existing situations where attacks and impunity are high and where journalists have little if any protection.
- Emphasising that, in a global world, to stop journalists being killed anywhere, it is necessary to stop the attacks everywhere. There should be no space for “precedents” and copycat killings; instead journalists need to be protected, and perpetrators of attacks must be brought to justice.
- Sharing experiences and building practical responses will give concrete effect to the basic norm that violence against journalism cannot be permitted.

Specific focus:

The discussion can focus very practically on the key ingredients for the safety of journalists:

1. Providing official protection – the obligations of a state; what providing protection entails; how to mitigate the impact on journalists and their work.
2. Media institutions and protection – the roles of editors and media owners, newsroom policies.
3. Self-protection - empowering journalists through safety training, including digital safety training, and exploring how the safety of journalists and ethical journalistic practice are intertwined.
4. Strategies to deal with trauma experienced by survivors of attacks and their colleagues.
5. Combatting impunity for attacks – how to strengthen capacities and raise awareness (including about the coverage of impunity)
6. Conducting research and monitoring mechanisms – whether the Journalism Safety Indicators can help promote unity, establish priorities and catalyse practical programmes on the points above.

Outcomes:

The event can deepen understanding of Member States and other actors, and be recorded in audio and video formats for non-attendees to access via the IPDC website. Most immediately, it can assist the IPDC bureau in regard to strategizing the kinds of journalism safety projects to consider going ahead.

Format:

The debate will take place 10.00am to 11.30 am. .

Protection role of the state: Mr Carlos Cortés, independent expert on protection mechanisms.

Carlos Cortés received his law degree from Los Andes University (Bogota, Colombia). He was the Director of the Foundation for the Freedom of the Press (FLIP), and has worked as a journalist at Semana and La Silla Vacía in Colombia. He completed his Master Studies in ‘Communications and Media Governance’ at the London School of Economics. Currently, he advises the Program on Independent Journalism of the Open Society Foundations on issues related to freedom of expression, media law and protection of journalists. He is also a researcher on internet policy issues at the Center for Freedom of Expression of Palermo University, Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Protection role of media industry: M. Yves Bigot, Director-General of TV5Monde

Mr Bigot spent his entire career in the media world and music as a reporter, presenter, director, programmer, producer for television, radio and print media. Having held senior management positions in record companies, he has also served as director of programs at France 2 and then Deputy Director General in charge of antenna and programs at France 4, and at RTBF and ARTE Belgium. Since December 2012, he has been the Director-General of TV5 Monde. He is the author of numerous books.

Protection role of journalism associations: Mr Monir Zaarour, International Federation of Journalists; expert on safety training.

Mr Zaarour has a master degree in International Conflict Analysis. Since 2006, he has been working for the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) as the IFJ Co-coordinator for the Arab World and the Middle East (AWME). His work includes supporting journalists unions and their members. He is responsible for designing and planning IFJ programmes and projects in the region and supervising their implementations. The main focus of these programmes are safety of journalists and fighting impunity, trade union rights including gender equality in the media and journalists social and professional rights, press freedom and media independence and ethics and self-regulations.

Protection role of civil society initiatives: Ms Dinah Kituyi, psychologist, expert on journalists and trauma.

Ms Kituyi is CEO of Dial a Counsellor. She holds a Master’s Degree in counselling studies, and worked for 11 years in a Human Rights Organisation (Independent Medico Legal Unit) as a programme Officer – Psychologist treating victims of torture, and training counsellors in this

area. She has worked with various media houses in Kenya, Ethiopia, Somalia, Burundi, South Sudan, Uganda and Rwanda. Ms Kituyi has also trained and supported judges in Kenya and the Officers of the Director of Public Prosecutions and in 2007/8 provided counselling services to victims of post-election violence in Kenya.