



## UN Plan of Action in short

### The 6 things you need to know about the UN Plan to protect journalists and combat impunity

When a problem is global, it calls for a global response. The scale and number of attacks on journalists and media workers around the world, combined with failures to investigate and prosecute crimes against them, have each contributed to the unacceptably high level of personal risk that journalists and others continue to face simply for exercising their right to free expression.

### In response, the United Nations has developed an approach called the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity

The plan is very comprehensive, and definitely worth a close read – but to get you started, we've pulled together six things everyone should know about it, as well as snapshots of the climate for media and free expression.

#### 1. What is the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity?

The plan is a set of objectives, principles and actions developed by UNESCO in consultation with other UN bodies, inter-governmental organizations, NGOs, professional associations and UNESCO's member states. It was endorsed by the UN Chief Executives Board on 12 April 2012, intended to directly address the problem of journalists' safety and the problem of impunity.

#### 2. What is it supposed to achieve?

The plan is designed to uphold the fundamental right of freedom of expression, which ensures that citizens are well informed and able to actively participate in society. It aims to do this by creating a free and safe environment for journalists and media workers, including social media producers, in two ways: by building partnerships among all stakeholders to introduce and harmonize mechanisms designed to reduce the danger -- both in conflict and non-conflict situations -- and by strengthening the legal mechanisms available nationally, regionally and globally, that support the right to freedom of expression and information, and supporting governments with their implementation.

#### 3. Who is involved in implementing the plan?

The problem exists at many levels, and so too must the solution. The plan is designed to include all stakeholders. It incorporates roles for governments, non-governmental organizations, academics, the media, and others working at global, regional, national and local levels, and its success will depend on the full participation of all.

#### 4. What are some of the planned actions?

The UN Plan includes a set of actions that are further developed in its implementation strategy, updated on a regular basis. It includes, among others, the following actions:

- Raising awareness among citizens about the consequences when journalists have their right to free expression curtailed.
- Helping governments develop and implement laws to safeguard journalists and deal with the problem of impunity.
- Providing training courses for journalists.
- Establishing real-time emergency response mechanisms.





- Strengthening the safety of journalists in conflict zones.
- Sensitizing member states, journalists, media owners, policy makers, news organizations, editors and journalists on the growing dangers and emerging threats to media professionals and non-state actors.
- Promoting good working conditions for journalists, including freelance journalists.

#### **5. Where will the plan be implemented?**

In its initial phase, the plan was mainly implemented in Iraq, Nepal, Pakistan and South Sudan. However, initiatives to promote the safety of journalists are taking place worldwide sponsored by the UN Plan's partners, and also with the support of other UN agencies, particularly UNESCO. A targeted effort is being made at the regional level in Latin America with a special focus on Brazil, Honduras and Mexico. In 2013, UNESCO launched pilot assessments based on the Journalists' Safety Indicators in Guatemala, Honduras and Pakistan. In the Arab States, UNESCO is supporting Tunisia's efforts to build capacity among security forces on the issues of human rights, freedom of expression and safety of journalists. Also, some Palestine organizations are receiving funds to improve journalists' safety. In Africa, the UN Plan's partners are promoting a more secure environment for journalists in countries such as Nigeria, where UNESCO provided support to local organizations on the monitoring of journalists' safety during the 2015 election period.

#### **6. How can we use the UN Plan and contribute to its implementation?**

- Use it to put pressure on governments to prosecute journalists' killings.
- Use it to support your awareness-raising communications and advocacy activities.
- Check out the implementation strategy and join international efforts to make it work.
- Promote multi-stakeholder consultative processes in your country to adapt the UN Plan to your local needs. UNESCO has published guidelines to help you with this process.
- Subscribe to the UNESCO Newsletter on the Safety of Journalists to follow the UN Plan's implementation and developments.
- Apply UNESCO's Journalists' Safety Indicators to assess the situation for journalists in your country. Create a baseline and then follow-up to establish trends. There are guidelines to help you with the Indicators.
- Follow the proceedings of the UN Inter-Agency meetings on the UN Plan (Paris in 2011, Vienna in 2012, and Strasbourg in 2014).

#### **For more information, consult:**

- [UN Plan of Action webpage](#)
- [UN Plan of Action](#)
- [UN Inter-Agency meetings on the safety of journalists](#)
- [UN Plan of Action Newsletter](#)
- [Guidebook: Operationalizing the UN Plan at the country level](#) (PDF)
- [UNESCO's Journalists' Safety Indicators](#)

#### **Sources:**

African Freedom of Expression Exchange (AFEX), Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), Freedom Forum, Freedom House, Human Rights Watch, Index of Censorship, International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), International Media Support (IMS), International Press Institute (IPI), Iraqi Civil Society Solidarity Initiative (ICSSI), Journalism Freedom Observatory (JFO) in Iraq, Pakistan Press Foundation (PPF), Reporters Without Borders (RSF), UNESCO

