

PRESS safety



REUTERS/ Adrees Latif

Reuters' caption: « Kenji Nagai of AFP tries to take photographs as he lies injured after police and military officials fired upon and then charged at protesters in Yangon, Myanmar. Nagai, 50, a Japanese video journalist, was shot by soldiers as they fired to disperse the crowd. Nagai later died of his injuries ». 27 September 2007.



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
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REUTERS/Radu Sigheti

Reuters' caption: « A journalist with his mouth taped takes part in a silent protest in Nairobi. Hundreds of journalists marched in the Kenyan capital protesting against the controversial clause in a media law that would require editors to reveal their sources if asked to do so in court. » 15 August 2007.



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UNESCO is the only United Nations agency with a mandate to defend freedom of expression and press freedom. Article 1 of its Constitution requires the Organization to "further universal respect for justice, for the rule of law and for the human rights and fundamental freedoms which are affirmed for the peoples of the world, without distinction of race, sex, language or religion, by the Charter of the United Nations." To realize this purpose the Organization is required to "collaborate in the work of advancing the mutual knowledge and understanding of peoples, through all means of mass communication and to that end recommend such international agreements as may be necessary to promote the free flow of ideas by word and image..."

PRESS safety

UNESCO's mandate comprises promoting the "free flow of information by word and by image." It is a mandate built upon respect for freedom of expression - a fundamental human right, enshrined in article 19 in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, whose 60th anniversary we are celebrating this year. Freedom of expression is not just a right on its own; it is a crucial right for protecting and daily realizing other human rights.

Information is the life-blood that propels all political systems based on the premise that an informed citizenry is a full partner in good governance, sustainable development, peace and justice. We pay solemn tribute to the men and women who have died, been injured or imprisoned in pursuit of the truth and the desire to make that truth widely known.

The killing of a journalist is the worst form of censorship, and the chilling effect this has within the journalistic community is undeniable. But even lesser forms of attacking the media, by harassing, beating or



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imprisoning journalists, can have a significant and negative impact on freedom of expression.

In the past decade more than 1000 media professionals were killed in the line of duty. Most of them were targeted, and their murders occurred while they were working in their communities, not in a war zone.

A sad fact is that these murders result in few prosecutions, let alone legitimate investigations. Indeed, impunity stands in the way of justice in more than ninety percent of these cases, and as long as this pervasive culture of impunity exists, journalists will remain easy targets, and freedom of expression will be a casualty in this ongoing battle over the fundamental right to access information.

Within the overall UN system, UNESCO has worked in partnership with non-governmental organizations to construct a culture of safety within the press.



REUTERS/ Ali Jasim

Reuters' caption: « A photographer takes pictures of a car explosion in front of a school which was scheduled to be used as a voting centre in Baghdad. Hours earlier in the same area, a car bomb exploded next to a police station, killing four Iraqi civilians ». 28 January 2005.

MORE THAN
1000
journalists killed
between 1945-1997

60 journalists
killed for their work
in 2007

PRESS
safety
JOURNALISTS
MORE THAN EVER
IN DANGER

Impunity **95%**
of crimes against journalists
are not resolved

MORE THAN
685 Journalists
killed on duty
between 1992-2008



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