

27/04/2007



World Press Freedom Day

DRAFT PROGRAM
Press Freedom, Safety of Journalists and Impunity
3 - 4 May 2007
International Conference Hall
Medellin, Colombia

May 3, 2006

2:30 p.m.

Address by Abdul Waheed Khan, Assistant Director-General for Communication and Information, UNESCO

2:40 p.m.

Address by Jesús Abad Colorado, independent journalist and photographer

2:50 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Keynote speeches: Press Freedom, Safety of Journalists and Impunity: General Trends and Main Challenges

Violence against media professionals is one of the greatest threats to freedom of expression and press freedom. Over the past ten years, no less than 1000 journalists and media staff have been killed while working. Most of these were not accidental deaths but targeted killings. Although international journalists seize the media spotlight, 90% of casualties were local journalists in the own country doing their everyday work. The majority of crimes committed against journalists and other media professionals remain uninvestigated and unpunished. As long as this pervasive culture of impunity exists, journalists will remain easy targets. The escalation of violence against journalists is a telling, if tragic, testimony to the importance and power of the press to modern democracies.

Keynote Speakers:

Rafael Molina, President, InterAmerican Press Association

Aidan White, Secretary-General, International Federation of Journalists, IFJ

4:00 p.m.

Coffee Break

4:15 p.m. – 6:15 p.m.

Session 1: Addressing the rising challenges to the safety of journalists and media workers

Being a journalist has never been more dangerous. According to press freedom organizations, 2006 was the bloodiest year on record with over 150 murders and unexplained deaths of journalists and media workers. The numbers this year are not slowing down – 50 media professionals have been killed thus far in 2007. While Iraq is once again the deadliest hotspot, it is important to note that media professionals are being killed at an alarmingly high rate in non-conflict areas. In fact, of the 1000 media deaths that the International News Safety Institute has charted over the past ten years, the majority of these media professionals died in circumstances other than armed conflict. This fact, more than anything, speaks to the challenging work that lies ahead for all of us concerned with press freedom. The fact that many journalists are targeted in non-conflict areas only reinforces the need to address the safety of journalists and strengthen our efforts to combat impunity. What are the risks media professionals are nowadays exposed to and what can journalists and the institutions they work for do to improve the current situation?

Introduction & Moderator:

Joe Thloloe, Chair, South African National Editors Forum

Panelists :

Omar Faruk Osman, Secretary-General, NUSOJ, Somalia

Daoud Kuttub, Director, AmmanNet, Jordan

Ricardo Uceda, Director, Instituto Prensa y Sociedad, Peru

Lasse Ellegaard, Editor, J/P Politiken Hus, Denmark

Alejandro Santos, Director, Revista Semana, Colombia

8:00 p.m

Dinner hosted by the Cano Foundation

May 4, 2007

9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Session 2: The status of journalists and media workers in dangerous conflict

In conflict zones, the leading cause of death for media personnel is not cross-fire, indiscriminate attacks or “collateral damage,” as one might suspect. Despite their status as civilians under international humanitarian law, media personnel are primarily killed as deliberate targets. Local journalists are the overwhelming majority of victims – according to the Committee to Protect Journalists, local journalists comprise 85% of media casualties in conflict zones. Last year alone there were 69 media professionals killed in Iraq. Over 170 media professionals have been killed in Iraq since the conflict began in April 2003. Never in recorded history has there been such a large-scale killing of journalists. However, an independent, accurate and professional coverage is especially important under these circumstances. The protection of media professionals offered by international humanitarian law is not respected. What actions can be taken in order to assure more safety for journalists and media staff in armed conflict?

Introduction and Moderator:

William Orme, Policy Advisor, Independent Media Development, Democratic Governance Group, UNDP

Panelists:

Antonella Notari, Spokesperson, ICRC Geneva
Alvaro Sierra, opinion page Editor, El Tiempo, Colombia
Alexandre Balguy-Gallois, Legal Advisor, Reporters Without Borders, RSF
Darío Ramírez, Director en México, ARTICLE 19
Jesper Højberg, Executive Director, International Media Support, IMS
Gloria Moreno, Director, Media para la Paz

11:00 a.m.

Coffee Break

11:15 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Session 3: Criminal organisations, corruption and investigative journalism

In many countries journalists do not have the independence needed to uncover corruption and misuse of power, to denounce offences committed against human rights and to facilitate an open dialogue between state and civil society. Investigative journalism many times compromises the security of the journalist. The measures taken by different governments to control the media, directly or indirectly, undermine democratic processes and participatory citizenship. Free access to information and press freedom are vital for the fight against corruption and for the promotion of a government responsive to civil society. What are the means to be taken in order to strengthen the safety conditions for investigative journalism?

Introduction and Moderator:

Marta Erquicia, Programme Coordinator, Transparency International Latinoamérica y el Caribe

Panelists:

Marcelo Beraba, President, Association of Investigative Journalism, ABRAJI, Brazil
Kavi Chongkittavorn, Executive Editor, The Nation, Thailand

Kristian Hölge, Regional Legal Advisor, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes, UNODC
Olena Prytula, Editor-in-chief, Ukrayinska Pravda, Ukraina
Glenda Gloria, Managing Editor of Newsbreak, Philippines

1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. Lunch hosted by El Colombiano

2:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. Session 4: Impunity

The majority of crimes committed against journalists and other media professionals remain uninvestigated and unpunished. According to the International News Safety Institute, the killers of media personnel were not identified in two-thirds of cases and were never prosecuted in nine out of ten cases. Impunity for crimes against journalists continues to undermine our fundamental freedoms. The reasons for impunity are diverse. Sometimes authorities lack the political will to investigate the case, sometimes they deliberately seek to hide the truth by not allowing investigation into the matter. In 1997, the General Conference of UNESCO adopted a resolution condemning violence against journalism. Did this resolution affect change? What additional measures can be taken in order to address the problem of impunity?

Introduction and Moderator:

Julio E. Muñoz, Executive Director, InterAmerican Press Association, IAPA

Panelists:

Ignacio Alvarez, OAS Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression
Raghu Mainali, President of the Community Radio Association, Nepal
Ilya Krieger, Senior Editor of the Department of Politics and Media, Novaya Gazeta, Moscow
Walid Al-Saqqaf, Former Publisher & Editor in Chief, Yemen Times

4:30 p.m. Coffee Break

4:45 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. Session 5: Actions to promote the safety of journalists

It is a fact that the safety of journalists is intimately tied to press freedom. Being a journalist now has never been more dangerous. The toll of journalists killed while working has risen continually. The questions remain: Which actions can be taken in order to reverse this trend? What can journalists and media institutions do to improve their own safety? What is the role of press freedom organizations and UNESCO in combating impunity and securing the safety of journalists?

Introduction and Moderator:

Catherine Gicheru, News Editor, The Nation, Kenya

Panelists:

Joel Simon, Director, Committee to Protect Journalists, CPJ
Gonzalo Marroquin, Chairman, Committee on Freedom of the Press and Information, IAPA
Geoffrey Nyarota, former Editor of the Daily News, Zimbabwe
Carlos Cortés Castillo, Fundación para la Libertad de Prensa (FLIP)

6:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. Final Declaration

Mogens Schmidt, Deputy, Assistant Director-General for Communication and Information, UNESCO

6:30 p.m. – 7.00 p.m. Closing ceremony

6:30 p.m. National Anthem
6:35 p.m. Remarks by Sergio Fajardo Valderrama, Mayor of Medellín
6:40 p.m. Remarks by Aníbal Gaviria, Governor of Antioquia
6:45 p.m. Remarks and presentation of medal in honor of Guillermo Cano by Maria del Rosario Guerra de la Espriella, Minister of Communication
6:50 p.m. Remarks by Abdul Waheed Khan, Assistant Director-General for Communication and Information, UNESCO
7:00 p.m. Remarks by H.E. Alvaro Uribe Vélez, President of the Republic of Colombia

7:30 p.m. Private reception offered by the Mayoralty of Medellin