

Actions to Improve the Safety and Security of Journalists, Media Staff and Associated Personnel in Situations of Armed Conflict

The Security Council,

Reiterating its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security and respect for human rights and, in this context, the need to promote and ensure respect for freedom of expression and opinion and the principles and rules of international humanitarian law,

Underlining the need to protect the right of all citizens to reliable information and the right of journalists to provide it without fearing for their security,

Reaffirming its resolutions 1296 (2000), of 19 April 2000, and 1265 (1999), of 17 September 1999, on protection of civilians in armed conflict, and resolution 1460 (2003), of 30 January 2003, on children and armed conflict, and 1502 (2003), on safety and protection of humanitarian workers, as well as other relevant resolutions,

Recalling Article 79 of the Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 regarding the protection of journalists in armed conflict;

Reaffirming the obligation of all civilians and media staff to observe and respect the laws of the country in which they are operating, in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations,

Underlining the core values of free expression as set out in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as well as the importance of the right of journalists to report freely in the service of the public interest,

Recalling UNESCO resolution 29 “Condemnation of Violence Against Journalists” adopted by the UNESCO General Conference on 12 November 1997 which called on 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,"

Underlining the importance for journalists, media personnel and media organisations to uphold the principles of neutrality, impartiality and humanity in their professional activities,

Emphasizing that there are existing prohibitions under international law against attacks knowingly and intentionally directed against personnel involved in the legitimate

professional activity of newsgathering in situations of armed conflicts which constitute war crimes,

Recalling the need for States to end impunity for such criminal acts,

Aware that the protection of journalists and media personnel and appropriately accredited associated personnel is a concern in situations of armed conflict and otherwise,

Gravely concerned at the increasing evidence of acts of violence in many parts of the world against journalists and media staff and associated personnel, in particular deliberate attacks, which are in violation of international humanitarian law, as well as other international law that may be applicable,

1. *Expresses its strong condemnation* of all forms of violence, including, inter alia, murder, intimidation, armed robbery, abduction, hostage-taking, kidnapping, harassment and illegal arrest and detention to which those participating in media activities are increasingly exposed, as well as attacks on media organisations and acts of destruction and looting of their property;
2. *Urges* States to ensure that crimes against journalists, media staff and associated personnel do not remain unpunished;
3. *Decides* that, where such crimes multiply, remain unpunished and develop into a pattern of violation of international humanitarian law, the Security Council should consider referring such cases to the International Criminal Court;
4. *Urges* all States to sign and ratify the Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions, and *calls on* those States that have ratified the Protocol to further strengthen measures to safeguard journalists in areas of armed conflict;
5. *Reaffirms* also the obligation of all parties involved in an armed conflict to comply fully with the rules and principles of international law applicable to them related to the protection of journalists, media personnel and associated personnel, in particular international humanitarian law and human rights law;
6. *Urges* all responsible authorities to respect the professional independence and rights of journalists, media staff and associated personnel, to properly investigate all violations of their rights, and to promote their safety, security and freedom of movement;
7. *Expresses its determination* to take appropriate steps in order to ensure the safety and security of journalists, media staff and associated personnel, including, inter alia, by:
 - a) *Requesting* the Secretary-General to recommend that States examine the provisions of Geneva Conventions and other Conventions,

particularly related to prevention of attacks of people engaged in humanitarian operations, and to extend such protection provided therein to journalists, media staff and associated personnel and to have the establishment of such attacks as crimes punishable by law and the prosecution or extradition of offenders, in future as well;

- b) *Encouraging* the Secretary-General, in accordance with his prerogatives under the Charter of the United Nations, to bring to the attention of the Security Council situations in which the exercise of journalistic inquiry and media activity is denied as a consequence of violence directed against journalists, media staff and associated personnel;
8. *Requests* the Secretary-General to address in all his country-specific situation reports, the issue of the safety and security of journalists, media staff and associated personnel including specific acts of violence against such personnel, remedial actions taken to prevent similar incidents and actions taken to identify and hold accountable those who commit such acts, and to explore and propose additional ways and means to enhance the safety and security of such personnel.

***Prepared by
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