



Beyond the Arab Spring: New Road Map for Journalists

**Regional meeting of the International Federation of Journalists
in the Arab World and the Middle East,
Casablanca 28-30 October 2014**

Recommendations

Preamble

WE, representatives of 18 journalists' unions in the Arab World and the Middle East, gathered in Casablanca at the regional meeting of the International Federation of Journalists.;

Taking account of the state of play in the media sector more than three years after the start of the Arab Spring including; the suffering of journalists working in countries facing conflicts and civil wars; that most countries are dragging their feet to adopt legislation guaranteeing safe and stable media environment including decriminalisation of press offences and adoption of new laws on the right to information and protection of sources. Discussing key issues including journalists' right to work in a safe environment that protects their lives, their freedom and dignity, their right to organise as trade-unions, to bargain collectively and to promote gender equality in the media sector, as well as establishing regional mechanisms to foster media freedom and independence,

Remembering with sadness over 150 of our male and female journalist colleagues, brutally killed by States and armed groups while performing their work, in the past three years in Syria, Iraq, Palestine, Yemen, Somalia, Egypt and Tunisia, as well as the many more who have died in other regions of the world as a result of assassinations and wars.

Sending an urgent call to States and organisations in the region that detain journalists in countries such as Syria, Iraq, Iran, Egypt and Libya and Palestinian journalists detained in Israeli prisons, to free them and allow them to return safely to their families and colleagues.

Stand in solidarity with more than 15 Iranian journalists in jail and call on the Iranian authorities to reopen the offices of the Association of Iranian Journalists closed since 2009.

Welcome the announcement by Egypt's president, in response to a request made publicly by IFJ ExCom member Moaiad Al Lamy at the FAJ 50 year jubilee in Cairo, that he will exercise his constitutional power to pardon the Al Jazeera journalists in jail, once their appeal is over.



Recalling the right of journalists to create independent unions that defend their interests and bargain on their behalf with employers in the framework of collective agreements and social dialogue, and that this right is guaranteed in agreements and treaties signed by States in the region.

Renew our commitment to continue the struggle towards achieving equality in the media sector, including fairness in union representation, equal pay, equal employment opportunities and professional development and the fight against intimidation and gender-based discrimination.

Salute those countries that have adopted Constitutions guaranteeing freedom of expression and of the media as a fundamental right for Arab peoples and pillars of democratic societies

Call for the solidarity of all trade union movements, national bodies and human rights and freedom of expression organizations to put pressure on governments in the region to take their responsibilities in supporting the establishment of independent mechanisms to protect media freedoms and strengthen the independence of the press.

Concluded the following:

Professional safety campaign and the fight against impunity for journalists' killers,

We recommend:

The IFJ:

1. To continue to support the outstanding efforts and work the safety trainers are doing in the Arab world and Middle East, intensifying professional safety training, especially in countries that are still dangerous areas for journalists, in addition to spreading a culture of safety in the media.
2. To continue to develop and update training contents to fit with new and renewed risks facing journalists, including investigative reporters, and digital safety.
3. To provide support and assistance to unions, particularly in countries facing crises and wars (such as Iraq, including the region of Iraqi Kurdistan, Palestine, and Yemen), in their quest to make media employers and owners take their responsibilities in protecting their journalists by providing safety equipment, health and life insurance, and access to dedicated safety training.
4. To provide technical support to union and safety trainers to help them develop safety programs and national campaigns.



5. To continue to support unions and pressure governments to fulfill their responsibilities in opening independent judicial investigation into the killings of journalists and bringing killers to justice.
6. To continue co-operating with the national human rights commission to ensure that governments open independent investigations into the attacks on journalists and to fight impunity.
7. To help unions based in countries where journalists are killed, where justice is not provided and where the State is directly involved in the killing of journalists - as in the case of the killing of nineteen Palestinian journalists by Israeli occupation forces during the recent aggression on Gaza - and guide them to pursue these cases through international justice mechanisms.
8. To call on the IFJ to work at expanding the safety training of trainers programme to include more countries in the region.

Journalists' unions:

1. To take more responsibilities, and provide more support to the work of the safety trainers, including the allocation of financial and human resources to enable them to perform their duties and training that can save lives of journalists at risk.
2. To include the right of journalists to obtain safety training and equipment in collective agreements and employment contracts with all employers including State-owned enterprises.
3. To follow with national governments and judiciary bodies the course of investigations into attacks targeting journalists and demand the publication of detailed reports on the results of investigations carried out.
4. To lobby for the establishment of a special national investigative body in charge of investigating the targeting and the killing of journalists.

Building trade-union capacity: Collective agreements and the right to trade-union organising

The meeting endorsed the IFJ's trade union capacity building programme. It called on unions to give priority to building their members capacity to defend and improve their working conditions through negotiations, political lobbying and community campaigns.

The IFJ

1. To assist in resourcing and organising its unions in the region to defend and consolidate their members' professional and social rights.
2. To give priority in its projects to the training needs of unions' activists related to collective bargaining and the building of their campaigning power and to the drafting of model collective agreements to define minimum conditions.



3. To launch an information campaign to raise awareness of International labour standards, UN / ILO conventions and other international agreements ratified by countries within the region that protect labour and social rights.
4. To compile and analyse cases in which international labour standards are not properly applied and develop a strategy to work with the ILO on these issues.
5. To encourage member unions to share experiences and improve their links and, most importantly, join and support by every mean possible any sister union engaged in defending its members' working conditions.
6. To unite staff and freelance members by encouraging unions to take inspiration from the increasing number of IFJ affiliates that are now organising freelance workers within their own structures, with positive results, to shape union organisation to meet new employment conditions – and build a single united voice to speak for all.
7. To increase cooperation and involvement of its unions with the regional labour movement through its relationship with the international trade union movement and the Global Union Federations and to seek support globally and at regional levels for the campaigns of its unions in the Arab region.

Journalists Unions

1. To reinforce campaigns and work to win demands for decent working conditions through establishing collective bargaining, respect for international labour standards, editorial independence and a culture of safety in the media, and become involved in vigorous campaigning nationally and internationally.
2. To strengthen and expand social dialogue with publishers and media organisations and map workplaces where unions should seek recognition in respect of the terms and conditions of employment of employees, such as wages, hours of work, working conditions and grievance procedures, and about the rights and responsibilities of trade unions.
3. To examine union structures to effectively integrate staff, freelances, and new workers across the various categories, and to make the structural and cultural changes to accommodate this change.
4. To reach out to freelances by providing targeted services specifically in relation to collective bargaining agreements.
5. To keep gender equality high on the bargaining agenda.
6. To use web-based tools including social media to recruit, educate and mobilise journalists to the unions and for the campaigns to defend hard-won rights and working conditions, engaging with them and inspiring them to embrace the values that make unionism and solidarity an integral part of the traditions of journalism.



Resolution on Unionising Satellite TV

This regional meeting of IFJ unions in the Arab World and the Middle East

1. Noting the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention 87 (Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to organise, 1948), granting the right for workers to establish and join organisations of their own choosing and Convention 98 on the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining.
2. Equally noting the development for the last 10 years of Arab-owned satellite televisions spanning the breadth of the Arab region and beyond and the role they started playing as major media platform
3. Deploring that most of these major media do not recognise trade-unions of journalists to defend the professional and social rights of their employee and refuse to engage in collective bargaining in breach of international instruments.
4. Congratulating the National Union of Journalists in the UK and Ireland as the first union to win recognition rights to conduct collective bargaining in respect of the bargaining unit in Al Jazeera International Limited, the channel's station in London.

RESOLVES

1. To launch for unionisation for journalists in all the major pan-Arab satellite media, in particular Al Jazeera, Al Arabiya, MBC, Sky News Arabia and other channels.
2. To urge the IFJ to join the campaign within the ITUC for unionisation and enforce labour rights and ask the IFJ Administrative Committee to supervise IFJ effort.
3. To urge IFJ unions in the Arab World to carry out audits of their members employed in these media and launch a dedicated recruitment campaign with the help of the IFJ.
4. To urge IFJ to enter a dialogue with the management of these media with the view to secure professional and social rights of journalists, and if necessary take whatever action is deemed necessary to back up this effort.
5. To ask IFJ to set up an ad hoc committee made of representatives of the main unions with members working at these medias to advise on the campaign
6. To urge the IFJ secretariat to promote the work of the campaign in whatever way possible in its communications including its Arabic website.



In the framework of the gender equality campaign:

Participants to the gender equality workshop stressed the context of discrimination against women journalists because of their gender, the frustrations they face in practicing journalism and how this reflects on their performance and their career development. Issues highlighted include the inequality in wages with male colleagues, the prevalence of sexual and psychological harassment, ideological pressures and ending the traditional 'guardianship' role played by men that demeans women workers.

Participants also saluted a number of successful experiences, through which various forms of discrimination against women journalists were countered in unions and media outlets. The workshop stressed the importance of benefiting from existing expertise and experiences, and build on them to progress more quickly and efficiently. We recommend:

The IFJ:

1. To develop a handbook on successful practices in the field of gender equality in the media, in line with that developed by the IFJ on best practices in European countries. It was proposed the guide covers the southern Mediterranean region, while including examples of experiences developed in other regions.
2. Organizes an advocacy campaign to strengthen solidarity between men and women journalists, on all issues, those regarding the profession as a whole, or related to inequalities suffered by journalists because of their gender.
3. Organizes a training of trainers course in the field of gender equality.

Journalist Unions:

1. To adopt policies or action plans on gender equality that establish measurable goals on the road to achieving equality.
2. To establish gender equality boards within unions to support equality, and implement policies or action plans for gender equality, and monitor violations against journalists because of their gender.
3. To support continuous training in the area of gender equality.
4. To back a supportive working environment for women journalists in media outlets (in terms of nurseries, and flexibility in working hours) and the establishment of complaints mechanisms, either through trade union committees in media organizations or the union directly.
5. To support women journalists reaching decision making positions inside media companies.



On the establishment of a special mechanism for a Rapporteur on Media freedoms in the Arab world

Participants viewed positively all mechanisms supportive of media freedom and independence, and recommended the IFJ and its affiliates:

1. To continue consultations aimed at establishing an independent mechanism for a Rapporteur on Media Freedoms in the region, in terms of mandate, structure and funding.
2. To co-ordinate with national human rights commissions and councils in countries across the region and consult with them to identify the best ways to establish the mechanism that is effective and independent.
3. To seek advice from relevant international bodies and international expertise to support these consultations.

Finally, participants thanked the IFJ Secretariat and the SNPM for hosting the meeting and facilitating its work. Thanks extended to IFJ partners, and particularly to the Friedrich Ebert Foundation and the International Secretariat of Swedish Trade unions (LO-TCO), and to the IFJ supporters, especially the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the European Union for their support in making this meeting a success.

Casablanca, 30 October 2014