



International
Federation
of Journalists

Abdelkrim BOUMELHA
President

Elisabeth Villela da COSTA
General Secretary/Chief Executive

IFJ STATEMENT TO THE HRC PANEL DISCUSSION ON THE SAFETY OF JOURNALISTS – Geneva 11 June 2014

Thank you Chair,

The International Federation of Journalists wishes to commend the attention of the Council to the safety of Journalists.

We also acknowledge the support and leadership of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and long may that continue.

Today's discussion is both timely and relevant, in view of the continuing safety crisis in journalism. In particular, we urge the Council to give urgent consideration to the situation of journalists in the Central African Republic. Three journalists have been killed there in recent weeks and many more are under threat.

The report we are discussing today reminds us of the impressive body of international law which provides tools to ensure effective protection of journalists.

The challenge has been the lack of political will to implement these legal provisions.

We share the report's finding that the political commitment requires full accountability for violence targeting journalists at all levels, local, national, regional and international.

However, we believe that this cannot happen unless there is a more pro-active approach, a new spirit of constructive cooperation among Member States of the United Nations and a new sense of shared responsibility to protect journalists who serve the public good in our societies.



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Press freedom is a corollary of the freedom of expression which, according to the UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, is considered a 'meta-right', i.e. the right on which the realisation of many other rights depends.

With the UN Action Plan on the safety of journalists now rolled out and following this Council's Resolution 21/12 and the establishment of a UN Day against impunity for crime targeting journalists, we urge Member States to put their collective weight behind these initiatives.

Both this Council and the Universal Periodic Review mechanism offer opportunities for joint action to promote the protection of journalists.

We strongly encourage this Council's members to consider intervening through the Human Rights Committee to ensure governments of countries where journalists are killed, arbitrary arrested and detained are held to account and stop these violations of their international obligations.

Through the Universal Periodic Review mechanism, we appeal on the Council to make the respect for and enforcement of journalists' rights a key benchmark in upholding human rights around the world.

Thank you Mr. Chair

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