**Roadmap for Safety of Journalists in the Arab Region**

**On the Occasion of the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists and the 10th Anniversary of the UN Plan of Action for the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity**

**Tunis, Tunisia**

**2 - 4 November 2022**

**Context**

1. A decade after the creation of the UN Plan of Action for the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity for Crimes against Journalists in 2012, important progress has been made at the international level in recognizing the safety of journalists as a pre-condition for freedom of expression, democracy, environmental just transition and sustainable development. This is reflected by the adoption of resolutions and declarations by the UN Security Council, the UN General Assembly, the Human Rights Council, the UN Crime Congress, the UNESCO General Conference and by regional organizations, as well as by the dedicated indicator on the safety of journalists (SDG 16.10.1) to measure progress towards the achievement of the SDGs.
2. It is also reflected in recent declarations of freedom of the press such as the Windhoek +30 Declaration. Intensified attacks against journalists are being met with a growing commitment to monitoring, protection, prevention and prosecution mechanisms for the safety of journalists. New coalitions, involving Members States, civil society, the media and academia reflect a stronger and more coordinated response to the safety of journalists, in line with the UN Plan of Action.
3. However, despite all this progress, journalists and media workers continue to be killed or subject to high rates of detention, physical attacks, intimidation – using inter alia legal systems, harassment offline and online, including when covering protests. Women journalists are particularly exposed to online harassment. Impunity for these crimes committed remains the norm. These developments intersect with a crisis concerning the economic viability of media outlets, the covid-led disruption, and a shrinking civic space. New forms of controlling the media, and the increased role of internet platforms have led to further new challenges for freedom of expression, privacy and the safety of journalists.

**Objective of the Roadmap**

1. The purpose of the Roadmap for Safety of Journalists in the Arab Region is to create a guiding framework to further the protect women and men journalists in the region, safeguard the gains achieved and to anticipate ongoing as well as emerging dangers and risks to journalists. It is designed as a living document that is cognizance of the persisting and emerging challenges faced by women and men journalists in the Arab region a decade after the adoption of the UN Plan of Action for the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity. The current Roadmap on Safety of Journalists in the Arab Region is proposed for the endorsement of the participants of the Regional Conference in the Arab States on the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists taking place from 2 to 4 November 2022 in Tunis, Tunisia.

**Structure of the Roadmap**

1. The Roadmap will also build on the outcome of the regional consultation in the Arab States conducted on the 10th Anniversary of the UN Plan of Action for the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, a process that included national consultations, a public online survey as well as an online regional consultation.
2. The aforementioned consultations and survey will also allow the identification of the stakeholders that could lead and/or assist in the realization of goals for the next decade, especially the gaps where no action has yet been planned or stakeholder/s identified. The consultation process received responses and feedback from 19 Arab States countries. The Roadmap is structured around the three main areas of interventions of the UN Plan of Action, namely, Prevention of Crimes against Journalists, Protection of Journalists facing risks, and the Prosecution of Crimes committed against Journalists.

**Prevention of Crimes against Journalists**

1. Increase the availability of targeted capacity building programmes on topics ranging from physical safety, psychological well-being, to digital safety to legal knowledge that are adapted to the specific needs to the country.
2. Enhance awareness-raising campaigns on the safety of journalists that targets journalists, general public, media and technology companies, schools of journalism and universities, lawmakers, security forces, and judicial actors especially in conjunction with International Days such as the World Press Freedom Day (3 May) and the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists (2 November)
3. Support the review of national laws to include provisions to better protect journalists that are in line with international standards.
4. Reinforce self-regulation of the media and the practice of code of ethics in journalism among the journalists including full time and freelancers across different platforms with the view to enhance quality and professionalism as well as a way to strengthen their safety.
5. Encourage further academic research and curricula development especially on under-researched areas and emerging issues related to safety of journalists and the question of impunity.
6. Encourage capacity building for security forces to be more knowledgeable and aware of the fundamental freedom of expression and of the press while performing their duties.
7. Encourage cooperation and joint advocacy among all partners against crimes and grave violations committed against journalists in different countries.

**Protection for journalists facing risks**

1. Advocate for protection mechanisms for journalists facing risks including threats and harassments whether physical or digital threats.
2. Develop a safe and secure mechanism for journalists, especially women journalists, to report on attacks and harassments.
3. Call on media owners, publishers, media managers and editors-in-chief to respect their obligation of providing facilities, equipment and resources to support journalists facing physical, digital, psychological, or legal risks.
4. Strengthen legal training for journalists to enhance their knowledge regarding their rights in the context of national laws as well international laws.
5. Recognise the importance of a decent work agenda, as set out in SDG 8, in creating an environment in which journalists are able to operate free from corruption, poverty and fear, and to develop professional solidarity and their social and professional rights.

**Prosecution of crimes against journalists**

1. Urge national authorities to adopt a policy to combat impunity for crimes committed against journalists and to take the necessary guarantees that they do not occur.
2. Support capacity building for judges and state attorney to handle cases related to attacks on media and journalists.
3. Share legal decisions of cases related freedom of expression and safety of journalists with international network of judicial powers, academia, civil society organisations, and media organisations.
4. Share good practices and mechanisms established to improve prosecution of and trial crimes against journalists
5. Encouraging international cooperation and responding to requests for legal assistance in cases of crimes against journalists, even in the absence of bilateral international agreements, based on the principle of reciprocity, with the aim of reaching the truth by collecting the largest number of evidence and preventing impunity in the event of such Evidence, witnesses or criminals in multiple countries
6. Call for the establishment of an independent international instrument to investigate cases pertaining to crimes committed against journalists .
7. We, the undersigned, give our support to the Roadmap for Safety of Journalists in the Arab Region adopted on the occasion of the Arab Regional Conference of the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists on 2 – 4 November 2022 in Tunis, Tunisia.