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Concern: Call to End Impunity for crimes against journalists in India

Your Excellency,

We are writing as the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), the world's largest organisation of media professionals representing over 600.000 members in more than 140 countries, to urge your government to address the issue of impunity for violence against journalists in India.

On UN International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists, the IFJ has launched its annual campaign to 'End Impunity for violence against journalists', focusing on Mexico, Russia, Yemen, Somalia and India. We are mobilising our 187 affiliates worldwide to highlight the impunity in these countries. You can view the campaign [here](#).

The IFJ's principal mandate is to promote and defend the rights of journalists, including the right to life and physical safety. In this regard, we constantly monitor violations of our members' rights around the world and we publish an annual report on journalists and media staff who are killed for no other reason than the legitimate practice of their profession.

According to the IFJ's documentation, 55 journalists and media staff were killed in India between 2010 and 2020 and in only one case was someone convicted. Jyotirmoy Dey, a journalist affiliated with *Midday* newspaper, who was killed in Powai India in June 11, 2011 got justice after seven years. An Indian court convicted and [sentenced](#) gangster Chhota Rajan and eight others to life in prison for murder and criminal conspiracy.



The IFJ's documentation shows that:

3 journalists were killed in 2010
5 in 2011
5 in 2012
10 in 2013
2 in 2014
6 in 2015
6 in 2016
6 in 2017
8 in 2018
[1](#) in 2019
3 in 2020

Most of the killings were related to journalists' news reports that exposed crime and corruption and some, including that of Gauri Lankesh in September 2017 and Shujaat Bukhari in June 2018 in Srinagar, were linked to their political beliefs.

Many of the accused involved in the killings and attacks in India are from government agencies, security forces, political parties, religious sects, student political groups, criminal gangs and local mafias among others.

We are concerned that investigating agencies are either indifferent or complicit. The result is a very poor rate of conviction.

One of the most prominent cases of impunity is the [murder](#) of K Satyaranayana, a journalist based in Andhra Pradesh. Although six suspects were arrested, they were released on bail within a month.

In several cases the investigation is slow, uneven and inconsistent. In some instances, such as the case of [Amit Topno](#) killed in 2018, the challenge begins with trying to establish the motive for the killing.

Besides the murder of journalists, the IFJ has documented 65 media rights violations including arrests, attacks, censorship harassment, misuse of law and economic pressure in India from January- October 2020.

Although police investigations are underway in many cases most of these remain inconclusive.

The end result of this inaction is that India's media remains under grave threat through intensifying harassment and intimidation both online and offline – with perpetrators brazen in the knowledge that they can elude punishment.



Together with our affiliates in India, the Indian Journalists Union (IJU) and National Union of Journalists– India (NUJ-I) we demand that your government, judiciary and law enforcement agencies undertake complete and effective investigations of all violations of journalists’ rights and bring to justice the perpetrators of crimes against journalists.

We urge your government to dispel the impression of indifference in the face of deadly assaults against journalists. There is so much more that can be done with a genuine commitment to fighting impunity. It needs to start with justice for the victims of violence.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Anthony BELLANGER'. The signature is written in a cursive style with some capital letters.

Anthony Bellanger
IFJ General Secretary