



General Assembly

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Human Rights Council

Twenty-first session

Agenda item 3

Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

Resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council*

21/12. Safety of journalists

The Human Rights Council,

Guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations,

Reaffirming the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and recalling relevant international human rights treaties, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, as well as the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the Additional Protocols thereto of 8 June 1977,

Recalling all relevant resolutions of the Commission on Human Rights and the Human Rights Council on the right to freedom of opinion and expression, in particular Council resolution 12/16 of 2 October 2009, as well as Council resolutions 13/24 of 26 March 2010 and 20/8 of 5 July 2012,

Mindful that the right to freedom of opinion and expression is a human right guaranteed to all in accordance with articles 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and that it constitutes one of the essential foundations of a democratic society and one of the basic conditions for its progress and development,

Reaffirming that everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person,

Recognizing the importance of all forms of the media, including the printed media, radio, television and the Internet, in the exercise, promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression,

* The resolutions and decisions adopted by the Human Rights Council will be contained in the report of the Council on its twenty-first session (A/HRC/21/2), chap. I.

Acknowledging the particular role played by journalists in matters of public interest, including by raising awareness of human rights,

Underlining the importance of voluntary professional principles and ethics developed and observed by the media,

Recognizing that the work of journalists often puts them at specific risk of intimidation, harassment and violence,

Acknowledging the specific risks faced by women journalists in the exercise of their work, and underlining, in this context, the importance of taking a gender-sensitive approach when considering measures to address the safety of journalists,

Taking note of the good practices of different countries aiming at the protection of journalists, as well as, inter alia, those designed for the protection of human rights defenders that can, where applicable, be relevant to the protection of journalists,

Underlining the important role of regional and subregional organizations in the safety of journalists,

Welcoming the important work of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization for the safety of journalists,

Taking note of the International Conference on Protection of Journalists in Dangerous Situations, held on 22 and 23 January 2012 in Doha,

1. *Recalls*, in the context of this resolution, the rights contained in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, in particular article 19, which states that:

1. Everyone shall have the right to hold opinions without interference;
2. Everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice;
3. The exercise of the rights provided for in paragraph 2 of this article carries with it special duties and responsibilities. It may therefore be subject to certain restrictions, but these shall only be such as are provided by law and are necessary:
 - (a) For respect of the rights or reputations of others;
 - (b) For the protection of national security or of public order (ordre public), or of public health or morals;

2. *Takes note* of the reports of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression¹ and the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions,² presented to the Human Rights Council at its twentieth session, and the interactive dialogue thereon;

3. *Expresses its concern* that violations of the right to freedom of opinion and expression continue to occur, including increased attacks against and killings of journalists and media workers, and stressing the need to ensure greater protection for all media professionals and for journalistic sources;

¹ A/HRC/20/17 and Add.1-3.

² A/HRC/20/22, Corr.1 and Add.1-4.

4. *Condemns in the strongest term* all attacks and violence against journalists, such as torture, extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances and arbitrary detention, as well as intimidation and harassment;
5. *Expresses its concern* that there is a growing threat to the safety of journalists posed by non-State actors, including terrorist groups and criminal organizations;
6. *Calls on* all parties to armed conflict to respect their obligations under international human rights law and international humanitarian law, including their obligations under the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and, where applicable, the Additional Protocols thereto of 8 June 1977, the provisions of which extend protection to journalists in situations of armed conflict, and to allow, within the framework of applicable rules and procedures, media access and coverage, as appropriate, in situations of international and non-international armed conflict;
7. *Expresses its concern* that attacks against journalists often occur with impunity, and calls upon States to ensure accountability through the conduct of impartial, speedy and effective investigations into such acts falling within their jurisdiction, and to bring to justice those responsible and to ensure that victims have access to appropriate remedies;
8. *Calls upon* States to promote a safe and enabling environment for journalists to perform their work independently and without undue interference, including by means of (a) legislative measures; (b) awareness-raising in the judiciary, law enforcement officers and military personnel, as well as journalists and civil society, regarding international human rights and humanitarian law obligations and commitments relating to the safety of journalists; (c) the monitoring and reporting of attacks against journalists; (d) publicly condemning attacks; and (e) dedicating necessary resources to investigate and prosecute such attacks;
9. *Encourages* States to put in place voluntary protection programmes for journalists, based on local needs and challenges, including protection measures that take into account the individual circumstances of the persons at risk, as well as, where applicable, the good practices in different countries;
10. *Invites* relevant special procedures of the Human Rights Council, as appropriate, in the framework of their mandates, to continue to address the relevant aspects of the safety of journalists in their work;
11. *Stresses* the need to ensure better cooperation and coordination at the international level with regard to ensuring the safety of journalists, including with regional organizations, and invites United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, other international and regional organizations, Member States and all relevant stakeholders, when applicable and in the scope of their mandates, to cooperate further in the implementation of the United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, elaborated by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and endorsed by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination;
12. *Requests* the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, in collaboration with the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, to prepare, working in consultation with States and other relevant stakeholders, a compilation of good practices in the protection of journalists, the prevention of attacks and the fight against impunity for attacks committed against journalists, and to present the compilation in a report to the Human Rights Council at its twenty-fourth session.

37th meeting
27 September 2012

[Adopted without a vote.]