



Eastern Africa International Day to End Impunity Conference:

National Mechanisms for Safety of Journalists

13th - 14th November 2017

Venue: Intercontinental Hotel, Nairobi, Kenya

The Nairobi Declaration on National Mechanisms for Safety of Journalists

We, the participants at the Eastern African Conference on National Mechanisms for Safety of Journalists held in Nairobi, Kenya, 13th -14th November 2017;

Acknowledging that Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights constitutes the foundation of respect for, and protection of, all persons: “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers”;

Appreciating the existence of other international, national and regional instruments, in particular the African Charter for Human and Peoples’ Rights, and the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights (ACHPR) resolutions relating to the protection and safety of journalists;

Committed to implementation of the UN Plan of Action on Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, which provides a comprehensive, coherent, and action-oriented multistakeholder approach to addressing the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity;

Affirming that freedom of expression and access to information are fundamental freedoms that enable the rule of law and human rights, and contribute to promoting the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals, and that securing journalists’ safety and ending impunity for human rights violations are critical components to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);

Noting that all Member States of the United Nations have further recognised the importance of safety of journalists by including the issue as a global indicator to assess progress of SDG target 16.10 “Public access to information and fundamental freedoms in accordance with national legislation and international agreements”;

Concerned that in spite of the many efforts by media partners to address safety of journalists’ concerns and the many resolutions that have been passed globally, media violations have still increased at an alarming rate, especially in countries in conflict and post conflict countries;

Noting with great concern that digital and psycho-social threats are also representing a danger journalists and as such, should be condemned and in the event of peace and reconciliation after war/armed conflict, possible post- traumatic stress disorder among traumatized journalists should be addressed in order to create access to therapy;

Concerned of the increased trend in women abuse on social media such as cyber bullying and stalking, sexual harassment, surveillance hacking, trolling/stalking, defamation where the targeted gender is always women;

Recognising that the high-level normative frameworks have not yet been translated to tangible interventions in Eastern Africa that address safety of journalists comprehensively;

Acknowledging the need to strengthen the Eastern Africa Judiciary Systems and the African Courts to protect safety of journalists and end impunity;

Aware of the fact that safety of journalists is complex and no single actor/media stakeholder can handle alone all the safety of journalists' concerns in any country;

Noting concerns raised by male and female journalists about their security as evidenced by the findings of the various UNESCO Journalists Safety Indicators assessment reports for Eastern African Countries;

Aware that reporting regularly puts male and female journalists at risk in the hands of State and non-State actors including law-enforcement agents and organised criminal cartels, and cognisant of the continued impunity by perpetrators of attacks against journalists;

Further concerned that in the past eleven years (2006-2016), 930 journalists have been killed for reporting the news and bringing information to the public, which constitutes one death every four days;

Acknowledging that the United Nations Plan of Action for the Safety of Journalists affirms the critical role of journalists both as society's watchdogs and as purveyors of information and news;

Appreciating the United Nations' proclamation of 2 November as the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists;

Convinced that any practice that hinders or endangers journalists in their ability to work freely and safely undermines the promotion of a democratic culture in society and its general welfare,

Determined to ensure that the safety and protection of journalists is promoted, realised and entrenched in each country's culture, so as to enable them to fully discharge their mandate as society's watchdogs;

Convinced that the safety of journalists is therefore an important human rights issue in itself and one that is also central to the realisation of freedom of expression and human development;

Encouraged by the heightened international focus on and advocacy for journalists' safety and protection and the rising clamour for enactment of policies and institutionalisation of mechanisms to guarantee journalists' protection and safety;

Acknowledging the media in Eastern Africa faces many challenges, yet holds an important key to promoting tolerance, peaceful coexistence and democratic processes that will enable countries to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union's Agenda 2063;

Convinced that only a multistakeholder approach through the establishment of comprehensive national safety of journalists' mechanisms, creating systems of knowledge that can inform systems for prevention, protection and prosecution of perpetrators, can fully address the media violations in Eastern Africa countries;

Urging Eastern African countries to establish an effective and well-coordinated framework for preventing violence against journalists, protecting journalists in danger and prosecuting the perpetrators:

Hereby agree on the following: _

Establishment of national mechanisms for the safety of journalists in Eastern Africa countries

1. Eastern African Countries shall establish national mechanisms for the safety of journalists, taking into account the different country contexts.
2. The national mechanisms shall seek to bring together all the actors including the following:-
The three branches of government (Executive, Legislature and Judicial), Associations of Journalists and Media Workers, Lawyers associations, Civil Society/Human Rights defenders, Journalism training and research institutions, media regulatory bodies, NGOs, INGOs, relevant United Nations Agencies, Programmes and Funds, bilateral and international media development partners and other friends of the media as may be invited.

Overall regional coordination

An inclusive Eastern Africa stakeholders Committee for Safety of Journalists shall be established, bringing on board the existing mechanisms at the regional and national level.

Each country mechanisms shall nominate a focal person to the Eastern Africa stakeholders Committee for Safety of Journalists.

The role of the Eastern Africa stakeholders Committee for Safety of Journalists committee will be to coordinate, mobilise resources, share best practices, support and monitor the progress of the National Safety Mechanisms.

The Eastern Africa stakeholders Committee for Safety of Journalists will also seek partnerships, collaboration and coordination with other regional and continental coordination mechanisms such as the East African Community, the African Union and other media networks and association, with a view to strengthening the national mechanisms for safety of Journalists.

The National Mechanisms for Safety of Journalists in Eastern Africa Countries

Overall mandate:

- (i) Develop national multistakeholder coordination system bringing on board the three arms of government (Executive, Legislature and Judiciary) and all other media stakeholders with a mandate to promote and defend freedom of expression, press freedom, access to information and safety of journalists.
- (ii) Such stakeholders include but not limited to the following:- Government focal persons on safety of journalists, representatives of the Security personnel, Parliamentarians Judiciary, Associations of Journalists and Media Workers, media related Trade Unions, Lawyers associations, Civil Society/Human Rights defenders, Journalism training and research institutions, media regulatory bodies, NGOs, INGOs, relevant United Nations Agencies, Programmes and Funds, bilateral and international media development partners,
- (iii) Main objective is to comprehensively address the safety of journalists in the respective countries and in line with the national, regional and global resolutions including the resolution 29 of UNESCO General Conference 29th Session, Paris, November 1997” that invited the UNESCO DG to condemn violence against journalists in Member States.
- (iv) The multistakeholder coordination mechanism will also provide a platform for knowledge sharing and accountability. It will include dedicated units for Preventing crimes against journalists, Protecting journalists and support and follow-up mechanisms to ensure Prosecution of the Perpetrators
- (v) Coordinate with the Eastern Africa Stakeholders Committee on Safety of Journalists in mobilising adequate resources to support the national mechanism.