

Joint Statement on the occasion of the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists (IDEI) on 2 November

Issued by the Chairs of the Groups of Friends on the Safety of Journalists and members of the Groups of Friends in Paris, New York, Geneva, Vienna (OSCE) and Strasbourg (CoE) listed in the annex

On 2 November, the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists, established pursuant to UN General Assembly Resolution 68/163, we commend the work of all journalists and media workers, online as well as offline, who daily risk their lives and health in the service of the general public, upholding a free, independent, plural and diverse media, and pay tribute to those who lost their lives exercising their profession. Journalists have a crucial function in maintaining the integrity of democracy, rule of law and good governance, inter alia by uncovering economic injustices and inequalities, human rights violations and abuses, environmental crimes, corruption, the decline of political freedoms, and growing authoritarianism. Journalists play a crucial role in promoting and demanding respect for the right to exercise freedom of expression; they are also pivotal in countering misinformation, disinformation, hate speech, racism and sexism. Highlighting the importance of access to information for the general public in times of a health crisis or any other crisis, we commend independent media's indispensable role during the COVID 19 pandemic in fostering transparency and accountability, affording communities access to reliable and verified information from all relevant sources, including measures to curb the spread of the virus.

We are deeply alarmed by the significant surge in attacks against journalists and media workers covering protests. We unequivocally condemn all attacks, reprisals and violence against all journalists and media workers. These actions have included killings, torture, enforced disappearances, kidnapping, arbitrary arrest and arbitrary detention, expulsion, intimidation, threats and harassment, online and offline, including targeting their family members. Such acts often deter journalists from continuing their work or encourage self-censorship, consequently depriving society of important information. We are deeply concerned that the vast majority of crimes against journalists go unpunished as evidenced by the recently published key findings of the report of the Director-General of UNESCO on the safety of journalists and the danger of impunity. Ensuring accountability through the strengthening of the response by law enforcement agencies and the criminal justice systems is crucial, including through access to effective remedies for victims and their families.

We welcome increased cooperation and synergies between relevant Special Rapporteurs on the issue of the Safety of Journalists and in this regard we thank the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences for her report on [Combating violence against women journalists](#). We also welcome OSCE's and its Representative on Freedom of the Media's continued efforts on that matter. We are deeply concerned that women journalists are disproportionately targeted through systemic and structural gender-based violence and harassment – both online and within their work place -, threats to their family, sexual assault and rape, and murder. We must take all appropriate steps to obtain accountability for these crimes. Women are targeted for violence not only because of critical reporting

but also for speaking out as women. Online, women have become specific targets, more exposed to online attacks than their male counterparts and forced to contend with specific gender-based violence directed against them because they are women. Gender-based violence and abuse, online and offline, is often underestimated and can result in deepening existing gender-related inequalities in the public space and impact negatively on pluralism.

In light of these recurrent and increasingly serious challenges, further efforts have to be made to ensure the safety of journalists as well as access to reliable information through free, independent, plural and diverse media. This requires even closer cooperation among all stakeholders, particularly with the actors in the field of law enforcement and criminal justice, especially prosecutors and judges. Indeed, members of the judiciary have a crucial role to play in order to ensure that those responsible for actions against journalists are held accountable.

More than ever, we are determined to fight impunity and ensure accountability in these critical times.

Annex:

(List of co-signatories, members in any of the five Groups of Friends on the Safety of Journalists at UNESCO in Paris, the United Nations in New York and Geneva, the OSCE in Vienna and the CoE in Strasbourg, in alphabetical order)

Albania	Latvia
Argentina	Lebanon
Australia	Liechtenstein
Austria	Lithuania
Brazil	Luxembourg
Bulgaria	Montenegro
Canada	The Netherlands
Chile	Nigeria
Colombia	Norway
Costa Rica	Pakistan
Denmark	Paraguay
Estonia	Poland
Finland	Republic of Korea
France	Senegal
Germany	Sweden
Ghana	Switzerland
Greece	Tunisia
Japan	United Kingdom
Jordan	United States
Kenya	Uruguay