

Recommendations for the HLPF and the UN General Assembly

During the High Level Political Forum, based on the partner's reports, Free Press Unlimited shared recommendations for improvement of the safety of journalists with UNESCO, the United Nations Statistical Division and the Member States part of the Group of Friends for the safety of journalists. Summarised the recommendations entail:

- Laws and regulations which are used to prevent independent journalists and media from reporting and verifying information during the pandemic should be repealed and UN member states and multilateral fora and regional organizations should keep track of and report on this.
- The focus should be on creating a positive enabling environment with laws and instruments in place for the protection of journalists. In Pakistan for example, the parliament of Sindh province adopted a new law for the protection of Journalists. Other member states should follow this example;
- Local press freedom organisations highlight the need for more cooperation between the Special Rapporteurs for Freedom of Opinion and Expression of the UN, Organisation of American States (OAS) and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), especially on the challenging circumstances that media are in as a result of the pandemic. For example, they could promote the creation of protection programs and foster donations of supplies and vaccinations to journalists and press workers;
- Media, journalists and publishers should innovate and improve their programming regarding gender equality and inclusion to ensure equal participation and foster access to information for all. The SDG agenda explicitly calls for gender equality and inclusion and the media are a neglected field to improve the situation and combat abuse of women in society. Equal representation and inclusion in the media should be prioritised;
- More advocacy efforts are needed at a national level to prevent the marginalisation of (independent) press and to defend media pluralism. UN member states should adopt the notion that journalism is a crucial public service and organise better economic enabling environments to sustain their economic independence. UN member states and federations of states should increase efforts to foster a level playing field for quality media and independent journalists related to their access to markets, tax regulations and a fair distribution of advertisement revenue. UN Member states should retract so-called foreign agent laws which prevent foreign investment in independent media;
- Currently hardly any member state reports on [SDG target 16.10](#). The Group of Friends of Safety and multilateral donors should put more resources into the monitoring of the Safety of Journalists by Civil Society organisations. Where such data is lacking, the HLPF and the UNGA should put more attention and focus on the comprehensive use of data provided by civil society organisations such as the partners of Free Press Unlimited and actively engage with all member states to do more reporting and follow up on issues related to the safety of journalists;
- We need renewed commitment of Member States to uphold their responsibility to fight impunity. All reports of Civil Society indicate a lack of capacity and commitment of judicial authorities to investigate, prosecute and punish crimes against journalists. Reports from Civil Society show it is possible to do a better job in this regard, as demonstrated by the consortium [A Safer World For The Truth](#), initiated by Free Press Unlimited, CPJ, and RSF, that investigates cold cases of murdered journalists.