

**Security Council**

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Letter dated 19 May 2022 from the Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the pleasure to inform you that Ireland will organize an Arria-formula meeting on the theme “Protection of journalists”, to be held on 24 May 2022. The meeting will take place in the Economic and Social Council Chamber at 4.30 p.m.

In order to guide the discussions on this topic, Ireland has prepared a concept note. The concept note is contained in the annex to the present letter (see annex).

I would be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Geraldine **Byrne Nason**
Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations



Annex to the letter dated 19 May 2022 from the Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Concept note for the Arria-formula meeting on the theme “Protection of journalists”, to be held on 24 May 2022

Introduction

1. A free media is fundamental to creating societies that are democratic and free. Journalists and media workers play a critical role in ensuring transparency and accountability on the part of those in power, often at great personal risk. Media freedom and the safety of journalists remain under threat around the world, including in situations on the agenda of the Security Council.
2. On 11 May 2022, the Al-Jazeera reporter Shireen Abu Akleh was killed in Jenin, in the occupied Palestinian territory. United Nations human rights experts have said that Ms. Abu Akleh’s killing is “a continuation of the high rate of attacks against media workers, particularly Palestinian journalists”.¹
3. The Taliban takeover of Afghanistan has been a dangerous time for journalists. The Afghan Ariana News anchor Mina Kairi was killed on 3 June 2021. The Reuters photojournalist Danish Saddiqui was killed on 16 July 2021. Since August 2021, there has been a crackdown on the free press. Hundreds of journalists and media workers have been forced to leave the country entirely.
4. The ongoing war in Ukraine has placed journalists at grave risk. Journalists face arrest, attacks and threats in Russia and Ukraine. The Committee to Protect Journalists has confirmed that at least seven journalists – Brent Renaud, Maks Levin, Mantas Kvedaravičius, Oksana Baulina, Oleksandra Kuvshynova, Pierre Zakrzewski, Yevhenii Sakun – have died while covering the war. Several journalists from Russia, Ukraine, Denmark and the United Kingdom have been injured, and some Ukrainian journalists have been reported as missing, possibly abducted.
5. These are just three examples of situations on the agenda of the Security Council where journalists face unacceptable threats and attacks for doing their important work. There are many others, including Myanmar, Somalia and Mali. On World Press Freedom Day (3 May 2022), Secretary-General António Guterres said that “threats to journalists and media workers are growing by the day”.² Women journalists are often targeted and can be disproportionately subjected to sexual and gender-based discrimination and violence for their work. We are also seeing an increase in online harassment, surveillance and threats.
6. While States have the primary responsibility to ensure the safety of journalists and prevent impunity, the Security Council should consider how best it can promote and ensure accountability efforts for crimes committed against journalists, media professionals and associated personnel in situations on its agenda.
7. In its resolution [2222 \(2015\)](#), the Security Council condemns all violations and abuses committed against journalists. It affirms that a free media constitutes one of the essential foundations of a democratic society and can contribute to the protection of civilians. It recalls that journalists engaged in dangerous professional missions in

¹ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, “UN experts condemn journalist killing amid rising West Bank violence”, 13 May 2022. Available at www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/05/un-experts-condemn-journalist-killing-amid-rising-west-bank-violence.

² United Nations, “António Guterres (Secretary-General) on World Press Freedom Day”, video, 3 May 2022. Available at <https://media.un.org/en/asset/k1r/k1rk07jo52>.

areas of armed conflict shall be considered as civilians and respected and protected as such.

8. This meeting is an opportunity for Member States to take stock of the protection of journalists in situations on the agenda of the Security Council and to discuss the implementation of resolution [2222 \(2015\)](#).

Objectives and focus of the meeting

9. Member States are encouraged to consider the following points in their statements:

- How can the Security Council assist States in addressing the prevalent impunity for crimes against journalists and make appropriate use of relevant accountability mechanisms?
- How can the Security Council and United Nations missions in the field, including peacekeeping missions, work to help to assure the safety of journalists in fragile and conflict situations and help to facilitate their freedom of movement?

Meeting programme

10. The Chair/moderator will be Geraldine Byrne Nason, Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations. The briefers will be:

- Irene Khan, Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression
- Jon Williams, Managing Director of News and Current Affairs at RTÉ, Ireland's national public service media organization, and member of the Board of Directors of the Committee to Protect Journalists
- Abderrahim Foukara, Al-Jazeera Network Bureau Chief for the Americas
- Joshua Melvin, Washington-based correspondent for Agence France-Presse

11. The Arria-formula meeting will be open for participation by members of the Security Council. The Group of Friends for the Protection of Journalists will also be invited to deliver a statement. Non-Council members who wish to submit statements in writing are invited to email them to pmun.events@dfa.ie by 6 p.m. on 24 May. All statements will be included in a written compilation.

12. The meeting will be in a hybrid format, with in-person participation for Member States and the possibility of participation via videoconferencing for briefers. Interpretation services will be available (until 6 p.m.).