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رسالة مؤرخة 15 تموز/يوليه 2022 موجهة إلى رئيس مجلس الأمن من الممثلة الدائمة لأيرلندا لدى الأمم المتحدة

في 24 أيار/مايو 2022، عقدت أيرلندا اجتماعا بصيغة آريا بعنوان "حماية الصحفيين"، في قاعة المجلس الاقتصادي والاجتماعي في مقر الأمم المتحدة. وخلال الجلسة، استمعنا إلى العديد من مقدمي الإحاطات الإعلامية، وأعضاء مجلس الأمن، ورئيس مجموعة الأصدقاء المعنية بحماية الصحفيين. وتلقينا أيضا بيانات خطية من الدول الأعضاء والدول المراقبة ومن منظمة الأمم المتحدة للتربية والعلم والثقافة لإضافتها إلى مجموعة من بيانات الاجتماع (انظر المرفق)⁽¹⁾.

وأرجو ممتنا تعميم هذه الرسالة ومرفقها باعتبارهما وثيقة من وثائق مجلس الأمن.

(توقيع) جيرالدين بيرن ناسون
الممثلة الدائمة لأيرلندا لدى الأمم المتحدة

(1) تُعَمَّم باللغة التي قُدمت بها فقط.



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الممثلة الدائمة لأيرلندا لدى الأمم المتحدة

United Nations Security Council
Arria-formula meeting on the Protection of Journalists
organised by the Permanent Mission of Ireland to the United Nations
ECOSOC Chamber,
United Nations Headquarters, New York
May 24, 2022
Compilation of Statements

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Statement of Irene Khan, Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression

Security Council Arria-formula meeting on the protection of journalists

May 24, 2022

(CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY)

Ambassador Byrne, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you for this opportunity to brief the members of the UN Security Council.

Killing journalists to silence them is the most egregious form of censorship. Shireen Abu Akhleh was one of 40 journalists killed in Palestine over the last decade. Last year Afghanistan topped the list of countries where journalists were killed. Since the beginning of this year, thirty-six journalists and other media workers have been killed worldwide, nine of them in Ukraine. Yesterday in a meeting with a group of Ukrainian journalists, one of them said to me she felt that her jacket marked “press”, far from protecting her, made her a target.

Whether in conflict or non-conflict situations in almost nine out of ten cases the perpetrators are never brought to justice. The failure of States to investigate, prosecute and punish crimes against journalists is not only a denial of justice, but an encouragement to perpetuate the cycle of violence.

At the root of the problem lies a deeper crisis of press freedom. From imprisonment to abductions, from electronic surveillance to online violence, especially against women journalists, journalism is under attack. Criminal laws against sedition, libel, terrorism and “fake news” are used in many countries to punish and silence journalists.

In a number of countries, independent media is effectively non-existent because of tight State control. In some countries, including some liberal democracies, we see a visible backsliding on media independence, freedom and pluralism.

Measures to control online disinformation and hate speech are being used to restrict legitimate journalism, on the one hand, while on the other hand, incitement to violence and hatred are allowed to proliferate online.

Press freedom is being chilled even where journalists are not being killed.

Professional, ethical, independent journalism is a public good, a pillar of democracy and a tool of accountability. By collecting and sharing reliable information, journalists fulfil society’s right to know as well as individuals’ right to freedom of expression. Good press coverage can provide early warning of conflict, expose atrocities during conflict and contribute to building public understanding of peace and reconciliation processes.

International human rights and humanitarian law provide ample protection to journalists. The problem is not one of gaps in international law but of the lack of political will and compliance by States. That requires the international system to reinforce its monitoring, reporting, support to Member States and where necessary and appropriate, enforcement to ensure compliance.

Allow me to highlight a few specific recommendations:

First and foremost, UN SC must unequivocally reaffirm its call to all States – and indeed all parties to a conflict – to uphold their international human rights and humanitarian law obligation to protect journalists and ensure their safety.

Secondly, the SC must strengthen the fight against impunity. It must call on States to investigate fully, promptly and independently all attacks against journalists

in line with international standards. The International Criminal Court (ICC) must intervene when the national system fails, but in situations where the ICC is not an appropriate remedy and yet impunity is rampant, the UN must consider other measures, such as establishing an independent international investigative mechanism, enhancing the capacity of existing United Nations human rights mechanisms, using targeted sanctions and strengthening national capacity, including of legal, judicial and civil society organizations.

Thirdly, both States and the international community must invest in free, independent, pluralistic and diverse media through a range of measures. Furthermore, UN missions must prioritize support to strengthen press freedom and safety of journalists as an integral part of the sustainable development agenda. The SG's Global Digital Compact must include a commitment by all stakeholders – including internet intermediaries – to respect press freedom and safety of journalists.

All this is not a tall order, it is a small price to pay for peace, security, democracy and human rights.

Statement to UN Security Council Arria-formula meeting

The Protection of Journalists

Jon Williams

Thank you Chair, and thank you Special Rapporteur Khan for your leadership on this issue.

On June 6th 2004, a young Irish cameraman was gunned down in Saudi Arabia. Simon Cumbers' love of reporting had taken him from Navan and the River Boyne in Co. Meath to the Amazonian rain forests, the African deserts, and the Arctic Circle. Simon and his colleague, Frank Gardner – the BBC's Security Correspondent – were shot by an Al Qaeda gunman in the Saudi capital Riyadh. Frank was hit by six bullets, leaving him with partial paralysis in his legs. Simon was killed. He was 36 years old.

On March 14th this year, another Irish cameraman was killed. Pierre Zakrzewski had covered conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria for Fox News. He died when his car was hit by Russian shelling outside Kyiv in Ukraine. In the words of the priest at his funeral in Dublin, "truth-telling is a work of love, and love always comes at a price, and what a terrible price."

It is the privilege of my life to serve on the board of the Committee to Protect Journalists. CPJ staff independently investigate and verify the circumstances behind every death of a journalist.

In the eighteen years between Simon's murder and that of Pierre, 903 other journalists were killed, bringing us the news. Over 900 families mourning husbands, wives, mothers, fathers, sons & daughters. In the three months since Pierre's death, another six journalists have been killed, including, tragically, Shireen Abu Akleh, fatally shot in the head while covering an Israeli army operation in the West Bank town of Jenin.

Since 1992, CPJ has confirmed at least 19 journalists have been killed on the job in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. None of their families has seen justice. Around the world, in more than 80% of cases, the killers of journalists get away with murder. Impunity cannot prevail.

At least seven journalists have been killed covering the war in Ukraine, and CPJ is investigating the deaths of another six to determine whether they were work-related. Scores more have faced shelling, shooting and detention as they try to shine a light on what is going on in Ukraine. Russian journalists have been detained and threatened during Moscow's crackdown on independent Russian media. Many have fled the country.

For as long as journalists have been seeking the truth, there have been those determined to silence them. Murder is the ultimate form of censorship. But it's not only drug cartels and terrorists who target journalists. Around the world, too often those in power also try to silence reporters by putting them in jail. Last year closed with a record number of journalists imprisoned. China, which arrested several journalists for their coverage of the pandemic, was the world's worst jailer for the second year in a row.

Embolded autocrats have a growing intolerance of independent reporting. Nowhere is that truer than in Afghanistan. Hundreds of journalists have been forced to flee since the Taliban seized the capital, Kabul, in August last year. Many news outlets have closed. Journalists have been detained and imprisoned. And now, from Sunday, women TV reporters and presenters have had to cover their faces, on air. This from those who deprived girls from going to school. And I'm proud to be part of a global campaign to demand the Taliban #freeherface.

Over the past two years, disinformation has become the poison in the bloodstream of our societies - undermining trust and destabilising democracy. It has never been harder to separate fact from falsehood, truth from lies. Wild conspiracy theories posted online, have helped drive polarisation, deception & fear, with journalists attacked as “liars” and “traitors” for simply reporting the truth. But just as vaccines have offered us the hope of ending the pandemic, fact-based journalism has been the antidote to the ‘infodemic’ of conspiracy theories and hoaxes.

Journalists provided life-saving information during Covid. They’ve exposed the horrors of war in Ukraine. Journalists hold the powerful to account and give voice to those with none. Journalism is the lifeblood of democracy. Without it, democracy becomes something else. Press freedom is your freedom.

Two years ago, the Newseum in Washington DC closed its doors. But its Journalists Memorial lives on, online. It honours 2,344 journalists killed doing their job. Among them, Simon Cumbers, killed in Saudi Arabia, as well as Veronica Guerin, shot dead at traffic lights on the outskirts of Dublin in 1996, Martin O’Hagan, murdered in Northern Ireland in 2001 and Lyra McKee, killed in Derry, three years ago. Soon a fifth Irish name will be added to the Memorial – that of Pierre Zakrzewski. All lost their lives because they believed the truth mattered. It still does. And it’s worth fighting for. Now more than ever.

**Statement by Abderrahim Foukara,
Bureau Chief of Aljazeera in the Americas**

Madam President, the Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations,
Representatives of member states,
Journalist colleagues,

My name is Abderrahim Foukara. I am the Bureau Chief Of Aljazeera in the Americas based in Washington DC, obviously the capital of the United States which many journalists consider a beacon on the hill for press freedom.

[I shall deliver my remarks in English but will also include quotes in Arabic, the language used by Shireen Abu Akleh to reach hundreds of millions of viewers in the Middle East and North Africa region and well beyond]

I am very grateful to the permanent mission of Ireland for this Arria formula opportunity to brief the Security Council membership on how the killing of Shireen Abu Akleh and many other journalists around the world is viewed by Aljazeera and other news outlets.

Al-Jazeera's position is crystal-clear: Shireen Abu Akleh's life matters. And so does a transparent and independent investigation of her killing and of the serious violation of her funeral by the Israeli security forces.

There are other Crystal-clear issues for Aljazeera Network:

1. Shireen Abu Akleh was killed by an Israeli bullet and in cold blood while she was doing her job.
2. The Network has the evidence and the witnesses to support that position.
3. Aljazeera is considering all possible legal options to make sure justice is done so that Shireen's killing does not end up swept under the carpet of impunity.
4. The responsibility for Shireen's killing must be investigated going as high as may be required up the chain of command in the Israeli army or any other security apparatus which may have been involved.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Impunity continues to be the coin of the realm when it comes to the killings of many journalists in various parts of the world. The killing of Shireen Abu Akleh is a horrifying reminder of the barbaric punishment which has too often been meted out to journalists. Mexico, Ukraine and Afghanistan are among such horrifying cases but they are only the tip of the iceberg of crimes against journalists while the perpetrators of those crimes continue to enjoy impunity.

The tragic killing of Shireen Abu Akleh has turned a fresh spotlight on the Security Council's responsibility to protect civilians, including journalists.

We do not need to be reminded that Shireen Abu Akleh was a journalist. But a reminder is in order that the United Nations Security Council passed resolution 2222 In May of 2015 in which it reaffirmed its previous resolutions [1265 \(1999\)](#), [1296 \(2000\)](#), [1674 \(2006\)](#) and [1894 \(2009\)](#) on the protection of civilians in armed conflict and its resolution [1738 \(2006\)](#) on the protection of journalists, media professionals and associated personnel in armed conflicts as well as other relevant resolutions and presidential statements. That is a direct quote from Resolution 2222.

In the name of journalists worldwide, Aljazeera calls on the Security Council to shoulder its responsibility to protect journalists and help bring an end to impunity for their killers and for the violators of their safety and freedom to report.

It is worth reiterating what the Secretary General of the United Nations Antonio Guterres told the annual conference on World Press Freedom Day recently held in Uruguay: without press freedom, he said, there is no freedom.

Aljazeera appeals to each and everyone of you in this Council to keep the responsibility to protect journalists front and center on your radar of attention and action.

I know there are people, including in this Council, who may see journalists as part of the problem not the solution in today's world. Be that as it may, no journalist deserves the punishment meted out to Shireen Abu Akleh while she was performing her duty as a reporter.

For the record, Shireen's professionalism was not hard to detect in her work. To give you an example, she was a Palestinian Christian and a US citizen but she did not let her religious or national affiliation bleed into the prism of her reporting. Make no mistake, she called the Israeli occupation spade a spade but she didn't let her ego become the story or even part of the story even though she knew millions of viewers admired and respected her journalism. Until the Israeli bullet made her the story, that is.

I knew Shireen first hand when she was seconded to Aljazeera's Washington DC office to help with the coverage of US elections several years ago. But allow me to include the opinions of two Aljazeera colleagues who worked with her closely for l'ombrer periods of time. Waleed Matar is a broadcast engineer. This is what he emailed me in Arabic:

عملت مع شيرين ابو عاقلة لعدة

سنوات طويلة كمهندس بث خارجي في مدينة القدس والضفة الغربية والداخل الفلسطيني ، كانت شيرين على الصعيد المهني ، صحافية فذة تمتاز بالمهنية العالية واعداد التقارير. هدفها الاول ايصال الحقيقة للعالم وايصال المعاناة التي يعيشها الشعب الفلسطيني من حصار واجتياحات واعتقالات ودمار ، وعندما كنا نقوم بتغطية الاحداث الساخنة في المدن الفلسطينية مثل مدينة القدس والحدود مع قطاع غزة كانت تحرص دائماً على سلامتنا وسلامة الطاقم الذي يعمل معها .

Amjad Al-Malki a current Executive Producer with Aljazeera also emailed me his testimonial in Arabic:

زاملتها في فترة الانتفاضة الثانية كمراسل صحفي في الأراضي المحتلة .كانت على الدوام شجاعة هادئة مقدامة والابتسام لا تفارقها رغم عظم المخاطر

- زاملتها و عملت معها عن قرب في قناة الجزيرة سواء في الميدان أو في غرفة الأخبار .شيرين إنسانة ؟؟؟؟ بكل ما تحمل الكلمة من معنى .مقبلة على الحياة دائماً وسببا للبهجة والسرور لمن حولها
- لم أسمع في يوم من الأيام شكوى من شيرين أو على شيرين طوال سنين عملها في الجزيرة ؟؟؟؟
- شيرين كانت تدرس الصحافة التلفزيونية في كلية الإعلام في جامعة بيرزيت، أهم جامعة فلسطينية ؟؟؟؟ وهي نموذج للصحفي المحترف لأجيال من الشباب والشابات

On a personal level, each one of you here may have a relative or an offspring who may now or in the future be a journalist. If you do, I hope you never have to go through pain similar to that experienced by the families of Shireen and other journalists slain in Palestine and elsewhere in the world. You have an opportunity, indeed a responsibility to avert that by protecting civilians everywhere, including journalists. That is your scared responsibility because the lives of Shireen Abu Akleh and all other civilians, matter, regardless of their religious, national, ethnic or any other affiliation.

I thank you all and cede the floor.

Remarks from Washington-based Agence France-Presse correspondent

Joshua Melvin to UNSC

May 24, 2022

Honorable Security Council members.

Thank you for having me here today to speak on the very important issue of the safety of journalists doing the essential work of reporting from conflict zones.

Everyone I work with at Agence France-Presse is painfully aware of the risks our jobs entail, having lost colleagues Shah Marai and Nabil Hasan Al-Quaety in recent years.

Marai was AFP's chief photographer in Afghanistan and was among 25 people killed, including eight other journalists, in a bomb attack in April 2018.

Quaety, a video journalist and photographer who regularly contributed to AFP, was shot in his car after leaving his home in Yemen in June 2020.

These losses continue to happen in our profession with awful regularity.

As someone who has just returned from a dangerous place where my life was at risk, I also want to offer my sincerest condolences over Shireen Abu Akleh's death. It was a loss for journalism on a very important subject, but it was a deeper loss for the people who loved and relied on her.

In addition to the risk of being killed, my colleagues have faced arrest, violence, expulsion, harassment and general threat of harm for doing their jobs.

All of those risks are confronting journalists daily as they cover the war in Ukraine, where I've just returned from after about a month on assignment.

At least seven journalists have been killed while doing their work since Russia invaded in February.

In this conflict foreign media are not under the protection of an embed with American or European troops, we are largely responsible for our own safety.

AFP and other international outlets offer layers of safety precautions for their teams, including protective gear, security advisers as well as communications and tracking technology.

But those things manage risk, they don't eliminate it.

And those safety precautions are not available to every journalist in the field — especially for Ukrainian local or freelance reporters. I'm going to come back to this subject later, as I would like to relay some requests to you Security Council members, for help from my Ukrainian colleagues.

There is a very simple and crucial reason why reporters are in harm's way in Ukraine. Two wars are being fought there even as we speak — one for Ukraine's sovereign territory and the other for the narrative of what's happening and why.

Let me explain what I mean by that.

Nearly two months ago my colleagues were horrified when they came upon what at first appeared to be three bodies on Yablunska Street in the Kyiv suburb of Bucha.

They soon realized those three corpses were among at least 20, all in civilian clothes, that were left along a few hundred-meter stretch of that road.

Despite the fear that fighting could resume around them at any time, my colleagues accurately and carefully documented what they saw and sent those images and details out into the world.

At least one of those images, a man killed and laying next to a blue bicycle, was shown to the Security Council at a meeting in April.

The family of that man, Volodymyr Brovchenko, later told us that he had gone out, despite the risks, because he needed to return that bike to whomever he had borrowed it from.

Not long after that, his family learned he'd been killed and was laying on Yablunska.

A neighbor was himself shot and wounded while trying to pull 68-yearold Brovchenko from where he lay dead on the side of the road.

His body ended up staying there for weeks.

That town and those slain people have now become symbols of the war crimes accusations against Russia.

Russia's defense ministry said shortly after the first pictures and video emerged from Bucha that its forces did not kill civilians there.

Photos and video of corpses in the town's streets were "another production of the Kyiv regime for the Western media", the ministry added.

So I'll ask you...what if there were no journalists there to document Bucha?

Our teams and the other media outlets that reported on Bucha and other places like it put their safety at risk just being in Kyiv at that point.

The city was genuinely threatened by Russian invasion and my colleagues were warned that they could be trapped if the capital was encircled.

But they stayed and they did their work.

Going forward, the bombardment that is now the main thrust of fighting in Ukraine will be among the biggest risks for civilians and journalists. Just this week one of my colleagues captured video of shell fire exploding just up the road as he drove in eastern Ukraine — later in the clip you can hear the jet-like whine of shells steaking past as he shelters in a ditch.

While reporting in Ukraine, the threat of missiles, rockets, mortars and artillery was the most unnerving part of working in any area.

It can feel totally indiscriminate — on more than one occasion we found cemeteries pocked with craters from shelling and littered with shattered headstones. Graves obviously aren't a key military objective for either side. The shells fall where they fall.

However, going into areas under shelling is a necessary part of our work both to understand the current state of the fighting and to document the impact on civilians.

The people that remain behind have their reasons for doing so — some choose to stay and some simply can't leave.

We met Zhonna in the southeastern town of Orikhiv, where — despite the distant thump of artillery and the black smoke rising from the agricultural coop burning after a strike — she was reporting for work. She's a social worker and she allowed us to tag along as pedaled off on a bicycle.

Zhonna was going to visit a woman who in the truest sense of the word relies on her to pick up her pension, run errands and even help her wash her legs. The woman had hip surgery and cannot bend to wash her own legs and has no family in the area to help her.

If she evacuates, she leaves behind the mobility aides in her home. For her, it's impossible to imagine leaving. But the war gets closer all the time. The neighbor's house was ruined and sat empty after being hit by bombardment.

"I will not survive without someone's help, I need to be taken care of every day," the woman told us.

Zhanna, standing nearby, added: "You asked why we don't leave? This is why."

Without reporters on the ground there, no one knows about the risks and sacrifices people like her are living with.

Which is why I want to pass to you a message from my Ukrainian colleagues who need your help to protect themselves.

They need flak jackets and helmets – especially for freelancers, fixers and drivers who may not have their own.

They need hostile environment and emergency medical training, but also training on how to protect themselves if taken captive. They need life and health insurance because even those who have local insurance are unlikely to be covered in the case of war-related injuries.

Council members, you can protect or even save the lives of people doing essential work.

Thank you.



Arria formula meeting on the Protection of Civilians

24 May 2022

Statement by Ambassador Byrne Nason

Colleagues,

The legendary war correspondent, Marie Colvin – who was killed on assignment in Homs in 2012 – said that the role of the media is shining a light on, and I quote, “humanity in extremis, pushed to the unendurable”. Throughout modern history, journalists have risked their lives to capture the realities of conflict and communicate the horrors of war.

Journalists and media workers are quite simply indispensable to our work in the Security Council. Peace and security, freedom of expression and a free and independent press are inextricably linked.

Our efforts to uphold democracy, to monitor human rights abuses, and to identify emerging conflicts would be a fraction of what they are without the information we receive from journalists. The fact is we need journalists to shine a light on the truth.

Yet, today, the very journalists we speak about are being harassed online and offline, are being arbitrarily detained, spied upon, attacked, and, even as we have heard, murdered.

Colleagues,

In the early hours of 11 May, Palestinian-American journalist Shireen Abu Akleh was killed while on assignment in Jenin in the occupied Palestinian territory. She was a hero to aspiring journalists, an exemplary reporter in the field. We send our condolences to her family and to her colleagues, including those who join us today.

At the time of her killing, Shireen was on duty in a blue press vest. A symbol which denotes civilian status. A symbol that demonstrates to parties to conflict that journalists are not a target. Ireland’s Foreign Minister Simon Coveney has called for an independent investigation into her killing and for the perpetrators to be held to account. That call needs to be answered without delay.

Shireen’s shocking and untimely death has once again drawn the world’s attention to the dangers faced by journalists and media workers daily. It should also be a rallying call for all of us to say that the targeting or the silencing of independent journalists anywhere is simply unacceptable.

Over the last three decades, over 1500 journalists, a staggering number, have lost their lives as they were reporting the truth. And in the last year, we’ve seen, we have heard, chilling stories and images from the frontlines of crises they face daily.

In Afghanistan, the Taliban’s takeover has decimated the hard-fought space for a free press. Hundreds of journalists have fled the country. Many of those who remain are

in hiding, fearful of beatings, arbitrary arrest, or worse. Women journalists have been singled out, targeted and discriminated against. Hunted down. We cannot accept this.

As Russia continues to wage its brutal war of aggression in Ukraine, we have seen journalists targeted for simply doing their job, and killed in indiscriminate attacks. This includes Irish cameraman, referred to by Jon earlier, Pierre Zakrzewski and his Ukrainian colleague, Oleksandra Kuvshynova, both of whom were killed on 14 March when their vehicle came under fire. Others have been blacklisted. Their crime? Their determination to reject mistruths and to instead report the reality of this unjustified war.

Journalists have long been the international community's early-warning system. Drawing attention to emerging conflicts, human rights abuses and atrocity crimes, including genocide. Many are human rights defenders. In return for bearing witness, journalists have been detained or expelled on arbitrary grounds from increasingly totalitarian countries.

Just last month in Mali, Radio France International and France 24 were suspended following reporting on human rights violations.

Last week, The Economist reporter Tom Gardner was expelled from Ethiopia, this follows the ousting of Irish journalist Simon Marks of the New York Times, and numerous reports of arrests of Ethiopian journalists.

Since the February 2021 coup in Myanmar, the operating licenses of independent news outlets have been banned and journalists have been arbitrarily detained with worrying reports of torture and abuse.

In Somalia last November, the Radio Mogadishu journalist known as Adiaziz Afrika was hunted down and murdered by Al Shabaab. This was not an isolated incident. Somalia is considered to be the most dangerous country in Africa for reporters.

These examples are just a snapshot of the dangers journalism faces in situations on our Security Council agenda. They are part of wider trends of attacks against freedom of expression and media worldwide.

The expansion of the online space and technology has been integral for receiving real-time information about conflict, broadening our abilities to react rapidly, verifying crimes. But it has also increased avenues for harassment, surveillance through powerful software, and targeted abuse and attacks.

Women journalists face particular dangers as they carry out their work. They are targeted with misogynistic hate speech and often with sexual and gender-based violence. Journalists from minority backgrounds face disproportionate levels of abuse.

We often discuss the protection of civilians in conflict in the Council. And to be clear – as Resolutions 2222 and 1738 – journalists, media professionals and associated personnel in conflict zones are civilians. They must be protected and respected as such. Yet impunity is rampant. That will persist if we do not act.

This Council must seek to ensure the protection of civilians and compliance with obligations to do so under international law. Many peacekeeping missions are mandated to protect civilians. This is an active responsibility. We must take it seriously. We must do more.

We call on our fellow members of the Security Council to take heed, take heed, of what we heard from our briefers today and to uphold Resolutions 1738 and 2222, to protect journalists and media professionals working in armed conflict, to secure accountability for crimes against them, and to ensure a free and independent press.

When UN Missions report to this Council, they should report on the protection of journalists. The UN could also explore assessments of protection mechanisms for journalists, and support monitoring of attacks on press freedom and freedom of expression. This includes taking online threats seriously, and addressing them swiftly.

Make no mistake. Journalists are integral to upholding human rights. Journalists are integral to the pursuit of justice and truth. Journalists are integral to sustainable peace. It is high time that the Security Council treated them as such.

UNSC Arria meeting on Protection of Journalists

24 May 2022

Statement by India

Thank you, Madam Chair. I thank briefers for their remarks.

The importance of media in conflict as well as non-conflict situations is well established. From ensuring access to reliable information to influencing opinion of the people and parties to the conflict, media's power in shaping international peace and security has been critical in the digital age. Consequently, both the responsibility of journalists engaged in "conflict journalism" as well as their safety and security while reporting have steadily gained international spotlight.

At the outset, allow me to mention that we strongly condemn all physical violence as much as threats of violence against journalists and media professionals in situation of armed conflicts. We pay tribute to all journalists who have lost their lives in such situations and call for holding the perpetrators of attacks against journalists accountable. It is the obligation of all States and parties in armed conflicts to comply fully with international law governing protection of civilians, especially journalists who are not in combat roles.

Madam President,

In India, our Constitution and laws guarantee not only the right to freedom of expression but also the right to information. We have adhered to and fully supported the Geneva Conventions that establish international legal standards for humanitarian treatment in war. We are committed to the protection of the rights of all our citizens, including journalists, as stipulated in the international instruments to which we are a party.

While we need to pay the highest attention to protect civilians in conflict and enable journalists to play their role, we also need to ensure that journalists working in situations of armed conflict take appropriate precautions. Journalists need to function within the relevant domestic laws of the countries they are operating in; seek access in a legal manner; maintain strict neutrality in conduct and not become a party to the conflict.

For their part, national Governments must put in place robust mechanisms for protecting journalists and their equipment, especially when they have provided information about their whereabouts and coordinates in advance. Also, they must resist imposing arbitrary restrictions unless there is a critical need to do so.

In situations of conflict and instability, women are particularly vulnerable. An example closer home is Afghanistan, where restrictions on women in general, but also women journalists, is a cause for concern. The international community must pay attention to the unfolding situation there.

The threat posed by terrorism to free media and to the working of journalists cannot be ignored either. There have been several barbaric examples of killing of journalists by terrorists in our neighborhood. The brutal assassination and beheadings of journalists are meant to instill fear among the public and scuttle the work of free media. It is a fact that terrorists are using the Internet and social media as key tools to recruit combatants and obtain financing. It is therefore imperative for us to reaffirm our commitment to a "zero tolerance" approach to terrorism in its all forms and manifestations. There can be no exception or justification for any act of terrorism, regardless of motivation, and wherever, whenever and by whoever it is committed. It is equally incumbent on journalists not to play up such terrorist propaganda that in turn may incite violence among innocent citizens.

Lastly, Member States need to work together and extend cooperation to each other on institution-building and capacity-building for protection of journalists within their respective jurisdiction. In this regard, we take note of the framework provided by the Security Council resolutions 1738 (of 2006) and 2222 (of 2015) for the strengthening of the protection of journalists.

Madam President,

Silencing journalists is akin to silencing the voice of democracy. The story of India's thriving democracy is one that is written and shaped by India's free and fearless journalists. In this spirit, we reiterate our commitment to the protection of all journalists and stand ready in extending our cooperation to all relevant stakeholders.

I thank you.

Remarks at the United Nations Security Council Arrria-formula Meeting on The Protection of Journalists

**Statement by Ambassador Lisa Carty U.S. Representative to ECOSOC
New York, New York May 24, 2022**

AS DELIVERED

Thank you, Madam President and thank you to our briefers for sharing such meaningful and deeply personal insights this afternoon.

The United States remains deeply concerned over the targeted harassment of journalists in many places around the world, including Belarus, Iraq, Mexico, Burma, Russia, and the Philippines. A free and independent media is essential to democracy and plays a crucial role in the free exchange of information and ideas, combatting corruption, and making government more accountable and transparent.

We mourn the heart-wrenching loss of Palestinian-American journalist Shireen Abu Akleh on May 11. Shireen was a widely respected veteran reporter whose work was followed closely by those who care about the region, and she is truly mourned by all who knew her. We strongly condemn her killing as we do the killing of all journalists worldwide. And, we continue to call for a thorough and impartial investigation into Shireen's death. We expect full accountability for those found responsible upon the conclusion of an investigation.

We were also deeply disturbed by the violence that took place during her funeral procession. All families deserve to bury their loved ones in a dignified and unimpeded manner.

We also note the chilling reports that at least seven journalists have been killed while covering Russia's unprovoked and unwarranted war against Ukraine. Reportedly, at least 21 more journalists have been unjustly detained within the areas of Ukraine controlled by Russia, many of whose fate is unknown. These figures may only be the tip of the iceberg and they highlight Russia's fear of truthful reporting of its war.

We also note that Women in journalism are disproportionately impacted by threats and attacks, which are more often gendered and sexualized than threats against their male counterparts and increasingly take place online. A "one size fits all" approach may risk under-addressing the gendered and intersectional forms of abuse on women in media. The U.S. urges UN efforts to address journalists' safety and take into account the unique context and characteristics of risk that may be tied to individuals' identities.

The United States condemns all threats, harassment, and violence against journalists and media workers. No members of the press should be threatened or physically attacked by anyone for any reason, or arrested or detained, simply for doing their job. No journalists should face harassment, intimidation, or violence for doing their job. Journalists' voices are essential to a fully functioning, free society. We share the commitment to promote accountability for crimes against journalists and media workers, as expressed in our co-sponsorship of this session's Third Committee General Assembly resolution on "The Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity".

Currently, the UN's creation of a network of focal points for addressing the safety of journalists does not appear to have been sufficient or effective. While a "single, strategic, and harmonized approach", as proposed in the 2012 UN Plan of Action is still lacking, we note that fifteen resolutions have been adopted by the principal UN Charter-based bodies since this plan was created, including UNSC Resolution 2222. Recent tragedies only highlight that we must now prioritize the effective implementation of these resolutions and enhance attention to this in the Security Council and across the UN system.

Thank you Madam Chair.

PROTECTION DES JOURNALISTES

INTERVENTION DE MME DIARRA DIME-LABILLE, CONSEILLERE
JURIDIQUE DE LA FRANCE AUPRÈS DES NATIONS UNIES

AU CONSEIL DE SECURITE, REUNION EN FORMAT ARRIA

New York, le 24 mai 2022

Merci beaucoup Madame la Présidente.

Permettez-moi de vous féliciter ainsi que l'Irlande pour l'organisation de cette réunion. Je tenais également à remercier tous les intervenants pour leurs remarques et témoignages éclairants. Nous rendons spécialement hommage au travail remarquable de la Rapporteuse spéciale.

Madame la Présidente,

La France exprime sa vive préoccupation face aux restrictions croissantes constatées dans le monde à la liberté de la presse, à l'augmentation des atteintes à la sécurité des journalistes, ainsi qu'à la multiplication des manipulations de l'information, spécialement dans les situations de conflits. Il est consternant que depuis le début de l'année 2022, 28 journalistes et professionnels des médias aient été tués dans l'exercice de leurs fonctions, dont 7 en Ukraine, et que 477 soient actuellement emprisonnés, comme le rapporte Reporters sans frontières.

Nous sommes aussi vivement préoccupés par le harcèlement, les atteintes et les violences qui ciblent les femmes journalistes, tant hors ligne qu'en ligne.

La protection des journalistes est une priorité absolue. Nous réitérons nos préoccupations sur les atteintes à la sécurité des journalistes et professionnels des médias qui couvrent la guerre en Ukraine, mais également face aux restrictions croissantes à la liberté de la presse en Biélorussie et en Russie, en Afghanistan, en Birmanie et au Mali, pour ne citer que ceux-là.

La mort tragique de Shireen Abu Akleh, alors qu'elle couvrait une opération des forces de sécurité israéliennes en Cisjordanie, est par ailleurs profondément choquante.

Madame la Présidente,

Alors que les restrictions et menaces se multiplient, la France réaffirme son engagement constant en faveur de la liberté de la presse, de la liberté d'expression et de la protection des journalistes et de l'accès à une information fiable et de qualité, y compris encore une fois dans les contextes de conflits armés. Premièrement, nous appelons à la pleine mise en œuvre de la résolution 2222 de 2015 sur la protection des civils dans les conflits, adoptée à l'initiative de la France.

Nous rappelons aussi l'obligation qui incombe aux forces armées de protéger les journalistes conformément au droit international humanitaire. Nous appelons en outre à la mise en œuvre des résolutions de l'Assemblée générale et du Conseil des droits de l'Homme sur la sécurité des journalistes. Nous poursuivrons par ailleurs nos efforts aux côtés de nos partenaires, pour inclure dans les mandats des missions de l'ONU les mécanismes pertinents de protection des droits de l'Homme.

Deuxièmement, la France agit aussi très concrètement pour permettre à des journalistes menacés de poursuivre leur mission. Elle a ainsi évacué et accordé accueil et protection à un grand nombre de journalistes d'Afghanistan menacés à raison de leur activité.

Troisièmement, la France mène des actions concrètes pour garantir l'accès à une information fiable et de qualité. Nous avons ainsi lancé en 2019 le Partenariat

information et démocratie, avec Reporters sans frontières, soutenu à ce jour par 45 Etats qui s'engagent maintenant à nos côtés pour défendre un accès libre à une information fiable, notamment à l'ère numérique. Nous appelons tous les Etats à rejoindre ce Partenariat.

Madame la Présidente,

Soyez persuadée que la France poursuivra ses efforts pour garantir la protection des journalistes et la liberté de la presse à travers le monde.

Je vous remercie.

**Remarks by Counselor XING Jisheng at the UN Security Council Arrria
Formula Meeting on The Protection of Journalists**

(4:30 pm, 24 May)

Madam Chair,

Whenever major crises or disasters such as armed conflict occur, journalist are often the brave heroes. We pay tribute to those journalists who risked their own safety and ventured into the front line to report objectively and impartially. At the same time, we hope that journalist will fully respect the laws of the countries concerned and strictly abide by the code of ethics and do their best in reporting with objectivity and impartiality. It should be pointed out that the Chinese government has all along encouraged news media to perform supervision and monitoring according to law, and has always ensured the legitimate rights and interests of media professionals. At the same time, our country is one governed by law, it does not allow any violation of Chinese law regardless who the perpetrator is, or in what profession he or she is engaged.

According to the concept note of the meeting and the briefings today, journalists have been attacked or even killed in the line of duty in armed conflict. The recent death of AL-Jazeera journalist Shireen Abu Akleh while covering the Israeli Security Operations in Jenin, has once again sounded the alarm for us. Journalists should never be the target of violent attacks. China strongly condemns any act of violence against journalists during armed conflicts. We call for an impartial investigation into the attack, and holding the perpetrators accountable.

Journalists are also civilians, and protecting civilians is an obligation under international law that should be honored by all parties to conflict. International law and council resolutions on the protection of civilians apply to the protection of all civilians including journalists. Parties to the conflict should earnestly perform their duties to protect civilians and the international community should help countries concern to strengthen their capability to protect civilians. At the same time, equal treatment should be ensured in the protection of civilians to avoid favoring one group over the other. For different groups of civilians targeted protection measures can be taken, but higher standards of protection should be avoided unless international law or Council resolutions stipulate otherwise.

I thank you Madam Chair.

**Further Remarks
by Counselor XING Jisheng**

Thank you Madam Chair,

I just want to make a few remarks in response to the UK's statement. China strongly rejects and condemns disinformation by the UK regarding China. As I said, China is a country is ruled by law, no illegal activities are tolerated within China. We have a strong confidence in our own system. UK is in no position and has no right to lecture others. What they should do is to reflect on their wrongdoings since colonial times both domestically and abroad and stop interfering in other country's internal affairs.

Thank you Madam Chair.

United Nations Security Council

Arria-formula meeting on Protection of Journalists

24.05.2022

Mona Juul, Permanent Representative of Norway

I would like to thank the briefers for sharing their expertise and valuable inputs. And of course, Ireland for facilitating this important discussion.

A journalist is killed every four days in the world- just for doing their job. And according to UNESCO in nine out of ten cases, the killers go unpunished. This is abhorrent. Every attack on media workers is an attack on the fundamental right to freedom of expression.

Protecting the lives of journalists, photographers and support staff means protecting our right to information. Not least in situations of armed conflict, where public access to factual and reliable information is critical. Independent journalism is essential to counter the spread of disinformation and propaganda, which only reinforces insecurity, mistrust, and hostility – preventing a basis for dialogue and peace.

The ongoing Russian war against Ukraine has demonstrated the essential role of the press in providing information and reporting on human rights violations and abuses. Yet, the Committee to Protect Journalists has confirmed that at least seven journalists have died while covering the war in Ukraine. In many countries, journalists are under increasing attack.

In Afghanistan, we have seen widespread harassment and violence against female journalists in particular. It is important that the UN Mission in Afghanistan also monitors and reports on violations, abuses and reprisals committed against journalists, in accordance with its new mandate. This also underscores the need for accountability for gender-specific safety risks such as sexual harassment and violence as a means of intimidation and reprisals.

Norway is also concerned about Myanmar - one of the world's biggest jailers of journalists. After the coup, in order to hide its massacres of civilians and tighten its grip on the country, the military junta arrested, jailed, and tortured media workers. At least three journalists have been killed, two of them died while in custody.

Colleagues,

Journalists and media workers are civilians. Directing attacks against them is prohibited under international humanitarian law, and may amount to war crimes. And we recall the Security Council's authority to refer cases to the International Criminal Court. In relation to the tragic and completely unjustified killing of prominent Al Jazeera journalist Shireen Abu Akleh, the Security Council sent an important signal when the Council came together on a joint statement on the need for accountability.

We have the solutions, the Security Council has adopted important resolutions on the protection of journalists, including provisions about the conduct of investigations - but we must do more to implement them.

In this, national mechanisms for the prevention, protection, and prosecution of attacks against journalists are important. They must include safety training for journalists, and capacity-building among media owners, security forces and the judiciary. Accountability for violations and abuses committed against journalists is vital to prevent future attacks.

Colleagues,

There are lessons to be learned from Ukraine, Afghanistan, Myanmar, and other situations. If we are to provide timely and efficient emergency support to journalists and media workers in conflict situations, we need better cooperation and coordination between the UN, including with UNESCO, regional organizations, member states, civil society and media institutions.

Norway is committed to continue supporting these efforts.



Conseil de Sécurité

Déclaration du Gabon

A l'occasion de la réunion (Formule Arria) sur la protection des Journalistes

New-York, le 24 Mai 2022

Madame la Présidente,

1. Je vous remercie d'avoir organisé cette réflexion sur la protection des journalistes, sujet qui revêt une importance particulière notamment en temps de crise.
2. Je remercie le Rapporteur Spéciale de l'ONU pour la liberté d'expression, Mme Irene KHAN ainsi que les représentants de l'Organisation nationale des médias de service public d'Irlande, de la Chaîne Aljazeera et de l'Agence France-Presse (AFP).
3. Dans un contexte de forte progression des technologies de l'information, qui va de pair avec la démultiplication des capacités à produire et à transmettre l'information. Dans un contexte où l'information est susceptible de manipulations diverses et où la désinformation est légion, l'exercice du métier de journaliste devient de plus en plus périlleux, particulièrement dans les cas de conflits armés, comme viennent de le relever les intervenants.

Madame la Présidente,

4. Il convient de rappeler que les libertés d'opinion et d'expression sont des principes cardinaux de la démocratie. Les médias professionnels et les journalistes ont un rôle clé à jouer dans la garantie de cette liberté fondamentale. De même, les journalistes et les travailleurs sont des acteurs essentiels de la société en participant à la transparence et la responsabilité des Etats, souvent au prix de grands risques personnels en dénonçant les maux de notre société.
5. Ces dix dernières années, les attaques visant des journalistes ont augmenté de façon alarmante. Plus de 880 meurtres de journalistes ont été recensés par l'UNESCO et 90 % de ces cas n'ont pas été résolus. En 2021, 55 journalistes ont perdu la vie simplement pour avoir fait leur travail. Et depuis le début de cette année, 36 journalistes ont été tués.
6. En contexte de conflit, ces attaques sont exacerbées. Les journalistes, les professionnels des médias et le personnel associé font l'objet d'actes d'intimidation, de harcèlement, et de de violences, notamment sexuelles et sexistes, en ce qui concerne les femmes.
7. Le Gabon condamne toutes les violences commises contre les journalistes visant à restreindre leur droit à exercer leur métier. Dans les différentes mesures à envisager à cet effet, la dimension sexospécifique doit être prise en compte en veillant à ce que les femmes ne soient pas davantage ciblées en raison de leur sexe.

Madame la Présidente,

8. Il est de la responsabilité des Etats de garantir le respect des conventions sur la protection des civiles et du droit international humanitaire, et de la résolution 2222 du Conseil de sécurité.

9. En période de conflit, cette protection doit être garantie par toutes les parties prenantes pour permettre au journaliste d'exercer sa mission d'information en sécurité, et en toute impartialité.

10. Le Gabon salue le lancement par l'Union africaine, en janvier 2021 avec le soutien de l'UNESCO, de la première plateforme numérique en ligne qui vise à améliorer la protection des journalistes, à lutter contre les menaces et la violence à leur endroit, ainsi qu'à favoriser les mécanismes d'alerte rapide et à renforcer la capacité de réaction sur le continent.

11. Cet outil devrait permettre de favoriser un environnement plus sûr et de veiller à ce que les informations concernant les attaques et violences à l'encontre des journalistes et des professionnels des médias soient plus documentées et que leurs auteurs soient poursuivis en justice et punis.

12. De même, le Gabon salue les efforts de l'UNESCO, dans la mise en œuvre du plan d'action des Nations Unies pour la sécurité des journalistes (UN Action Plan on the Safety of Journalists) qui soutient les États membres dans la prévention et la protection des journalistes, ainsi que dans la poursuite des crimes commis à leur encontre.

Madame la Présidente,

13. Les résolutions du Conseil de Sécurité [1738 \(2006\)](#) et [2222 \(2015\)](#) sur la protection des civils, qui condamnent les attaques contre les journalistes soulignent également l'intérêt du plaidoyer en faveur de la protection des journalistes au sein de l'Organisation des Nations Unies. Dans ce contexte, le Conseil de Sécurité devrait s'assurer que les mandats des opérations de maintien de la paix prévoient des dispositions relatives à la protection des journalistes. Il s'agit notamment d'y intégrer la prévention, la sensibilisation et le renforcement du plan d'action des Nations Unies sur la sécurité des journalistes et la question de l'impunité et les autres instruments juridiques existants.

14. Conscient du rôle important que jouent les journalistes pour garantir l'accès à une information juste et crédible, les journalistes et des travailleurs des médias devraient en tout temps et en tout lieu, en temps de paix comme en temps de guerre, bénéficier de la protection nécessaire pour exercer librement leur métier. Les journalistes ne devraient jamais être l'objet de répression et ne devraient jamais exercer leur métier dans la peur de représailles, ni être stigmatisés pour les informations qu'ils diffusent dans le respect de la déontologie.

15. Enfin, il convient de rappeler à toutes les parties à un conflit les obligations qui leur incombent en matière de respect des journalistes, de prévention des actes de violence, de sanction et de reddition des comptes.

Je vous remercie.

United Nations Security Council Arria-formula meeting

The Protection of Journalists

24 May 2022, 4:30pm

Statement by Albania

I would like to thank the Mission of Ireland for organizing this Arria Formula meeting on such an important and sensitive issue. I thank the briefers for their insightful presentations and for bringing their perspective regarding the situation of journalists in the world.

Madame Chair,

The protection of Journalists, especially those in conflict and post conflict settings, is indeed a crucial element of our common efforts to build free and resilient societies, democratic and inclusive institutions, as well as to protect and promote human rights.

We are witnessing today an increase of threats, attacks and even killings of journalists. According to UNESCO's Observatory of killed journalists, a journalist is killed every four day in the world, and in nine out of ten cases, the killers go unpunished. This year, 36 journalists were killed during the first five months of 2022.

Madame Chair,

Journalists are more unprotected and vulnerable to violence and reprisals in conflict and post-conflict settings. Referring to the Report of the Secretary General on the Protection of Civilians, 20 out of 55 journalist killings recorded in 2021 occurred in countries affected by conflict.

Today the whole world is witnessing how the Russia's unjustified aggression against Ukraine has put hundreds if not thousands of both Ukrainian and international journalists in grave danger. Many of them have been threatened by Russian troops, many of them injured and many also killed. Reports on cases of disappearance and abduction of Ukrainian journalists and hostage taking of their relatives, including in an apparent attempt to intimidate and force media workers to co-operate with the Russian side are deeply concerning.

Madame Chair,

This must stop! Journalists and media workers are civilians under international humanitarian law and cannot be legitimate targets. We call on Russia to respect the international humanitarian standards, the international humanitarian law, and international human rights law, in protecting journalists, media professionals and associated personnel in armed conflicts.

All those responsible for having ordered and/or committed acts of violence and crimes against journalists and media workers in Ukraine or elsewhere in the world must be held accountable.

Madame Chair,

We condemn the killing of Palestinian-American journalist Shireen Abu Akleh in the city of Jenin. We join other Council Members in calling for an immediate, thorough, transparent and fair and impartial investigation into her killing.

The prevailing impunity for violations and abuses committed against journalists, media professionals and associated personnel in situations of armed conflict must end. We strongly believe that ensuring accountability for crimes committed against them is a key element in preventing future attacks.

Madame Chair,

While States bear the main responsibility to provide safety for journalists and end impunity, we strongly believe that the SC can play a greater role in addressing some of the challenges related with the protection of journalists in conflict and post-conflict settings. United Nations peacekeeping and special political missions should include in their mandated reporting information on specific acts of violence against journalists, media professionals and associated personnel in situation of armed conflict.

We need to ensure better cooperation and coordination at the international level, including among the United Nations and relevant international regional and sub-regional organizations, especially in terms of risk assessment for the safety of the journalists, technical assistance and capacity-building.

We need to acknowledge the specific risks faced by women journalists, media professionals and associated personnel in conduct of their work and underline in this context the importance of considering the gender dimension of measures to address their safety in situations of armed conflict.

Madame Chair,

When journalists are deliberately targeted, these should be seen and considered not just as attacks against journalists, but as attacks against the society as whole. These kinds of attacks do intend to silence all civil society; they undermine the very idea of democracy and human rights. Journalism enriches our understanding of every conflict and help us to better understand the realities on the ground. Free, open and independent media provide access to free, verified, and impartial information. If we fall short to improve the protection of journalist, especially those in conflict and post-conflict settings, we will make it easier for state and non-state actors to fill the gaps by using disinformation and hate speech.

I thank you!

Check against delivery

Statement by representative of the Russian Federation Mr. Fedor Strzhizhovskiy at an informal Arrria-formula meeting of UNSC member states “Protection of Journalists”

24 May 2022

Mme. President,

In the concept note for this meeting, you used the phrase “free media for societies which are democratic and free”. Though it sounds good, it is hardly applicable to present-day reality of the Western world.

I will not journey back in history to recall, for example, the NATO bombing of a TV center in Belgrade in 1999. Let me rather make a point about the situation with freedom of Media and safety of journalists in Western states today. It can be characterized in just two words: informational totalitarianism. The information war that is being waged on Russia is a clear confirmation of that. Russian journalists and Media resources know firsthand what freedom of media is in Western style. Leading Russian media were either shut down or put under sanctions in the European Union and United States. Their main goal is to exclude any nonconformity and undesirable facts that can make readers or viewers doubt the ideological Russophobic narrative that is imposed on them.

American social media act in the same spirit. For a long time already, they have blocked and suspended accounts of Russian media and journalists or subjected them to discriminatory moderation on the pretext of countering propaganda. At the same time, social media permit hatespeech against ethnic Russians, including Russian correspondents. Here is the most odious case: META corporation that owns Facebook and Instagram, allowed users in “some states” to call to violence against Russians. We believe numerous facts of threats and intimidation addressed to Russian media and correspondents in Western states were the direct consequence of this policy.

Taking into account the mass character of political censorship, we believe that online platforms undermine freedom, independence and safety of journalists and fail to comply with relevant national legislations in the area of protecting human rights. European states and the US not only refuse to curb these mass violations, but explicitly encourage them. Thereby international human rights watchdogs, whose mandates envisage monitoring of the situation with freedom of speech and measures to respond to its violations, turn a blind eye even to most blatant cases of censorship and incitement of violence against journalists by IT companies.

Colleagues, this is the freedom of media that you have. It literally borders on state censorship. Being unable to gain the upper hand in a fair competition, and unwilling to listen to alternative views, the West arbitrarily changes the rules of the game by cutting its opponents off the information space. Apparently, this is your rules-based order in action.

Mme. President,

Today many talked upon the allegedly guaranteed safety of journalists in Ukraine. Of course, we understand, that today’s Western world can either speak well of Ukraine or not speak at all. But there must be limits to this “eyewashing” after all! We remind that Ukraine had ceased to be safe for journalists, especially those opposed to Ukrainian authorities, long before our special military operation started. Alongside with attempts to tighten up on censorship, Ukrainian human rights organizations recorded repeated cases of extreme right activists blocking TV channels that the Kiev authorities did not welcome. This is what happened to Ukrainian TV channels “ZIK”,

“112 Ukraine”, “NASH”, “Inter” and “NewsOne”. There have been lots of publications about reported cases of intimidation of correspondents and putting obstacles in way of their professional activity –all this happening against total permissiveness of Ukrainian law enforcement. This is only a small portion of evidence that confirms the rightless situation of journalists who are not favored by the authorities in Kiev; and that has received corresponding assessment – including by world’s leading NGOs.

Starting from 2014, more than 20 journalists have died in Ukraine. This happened against the backdrop of an armed conflict in Donbas that the West tries to not notice. Among those cases – killings of photoreporter Andrei Stenin, cameraman Anatoly Klyan, publicist Oles Buzina, photographer Andrea Rocchelli, journalist Pavel Sheremet, correspondent Igor Kornelyuk, sound engineer Anton Voloshin and others. Unfortunately, there has been no progress in investigating those murders and most cases of violence, to say nothing of violations of freedom of media. It’s a pity that no one had enough courage to touch upon this episode during today’s Arria meeting.

In this context, we cannot fail to mention the fact that Ukraine has developed “fake factories” of unthinkable scope on its territory. Even though main consumers of their content are situated in Western states, these structures also spread disinformation among the population of Ukraine, thus posing a threat to safety and security of ordinary people.

Besides, fakes that are produced by President Zelensky’s “cyberarmy”, as he would call it, cover not only the situation in Ukraine. Today this Russophobic attack targets Russia with every aspect of its life. Tomorrow, these provocations in information space, drafted following Western playbooks, may become a global threat, including for those who order them today. A few words about the latter. We do not doubt that the activity of the so-called Disinformation Governance Board of the United States Department of Homeland Security, which was established on 27 April this year, will be aimed at destabilizing Russian media space. Of course, when and if this project kicks started. This is evidenced by the story with appointment of Nina Jankowicz, who was born in Western Ukraine, as head of this mechanism. Nina Jankowicz is well known as a leader of information campaign whitewashing neo-Nazism in Ukraine. We spoke about it in detail at the Security Council briefing yesterday.

Mme.President,

Let me say a few words about the legal dimension of ensuring safety of journalists. It goes without saying that attacks on journalists are unacceptable. International humanitarian law qualifies workers of mass media as a protected category of civilians in armed conflict.

Sometimes opinions are expressed that we need to adopt additional international legal standards in this area and revisit the status of journalists. We believe that the required legal framework is already in place. In this regard, the two priorities in this area are: first, full compliance with the norms of the IHL and second, entrance to the existing international legal mechanisms by states who take no part in them so far.

We are convinced that the task of the Security Council is to focus on issues of ensuring safety of journalists in the context of protection of civilians in armed conflict. Security Council resolutions [1738 \(2006\)](#) and [2222 \(2015\)](#) that are the Council's basic documents on this topic contribute meaningfully to ensuring safety of media workers in extreme conditions.

Thank you.

Arria Meeting on the Protection of Journalists

Tuesday 24 May, ECOSOC Chamber

Statement by the United Kingdom

An independent media is essential to a free society. Yet many journalists are paying a heavy price to protect that freedom. Many have paid the ultimate price – with their lives. This year, 36 journalists have been killed, most recently Al Jazeera reporter Shireen Abu Aqleh. The Security Council united to condemn her killing, and spoke clearly on the need for a fair and impartial investigation.

Shireen's work underscores the bravery required by journalists to shine a light on corruption and abuses of power. Journalists speak up for the voiceless by exposing the truth. But they often face intimidation and attacks simply for doing so.

For example, Russia's invasion of Ukraine is a war of aggression. But Russia has also tried to make it a war of disinformation.

Hours, days and even weeks after Russian tanks rolled onto Ukrainian soil. Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov was telling us 'there is no war'.

And a law was recently passed, which means journalists face 15 years in prison if they deviate from Putin's narrative over the Ukraine invasion.

Without a free, independent press, disinformation can win. Propaganda can win. Thankfully, journalists have shown us the truth about the war crimes being committed – and the process towards accountability has begun.

At least nine journalists and media workers have lost their lives since Russia's illegal invasion began. For example, Russian journalist Oksana Baulina, who was killed by her own country's army shelling Kyiv, while reporting on the damage caused by that very shelling. And Ukrainian journalist Vira Hyrych who was killed by a Russian air strike in Kyiv, during the Secretary-General's visit.

We are all indebted to them.

With disinformation rising exponentially, the UK continues to champion media freedom to enable access to independent and factual information.

Three years ago – with Canada – we launched the Media Freedom Coalition to advocate for journalists, and to help news outlets not just survive, but thrive. As a Coalition, we have spoken out on dozens of occasions, condemning repression in China, Myanmar and Egypt, to name just a few.

We have supported UNESCO in establishing the Global Media Defence Fund, which in the past three years has supported more than 3000 journalists, almost 500 lawyers and over 120 civil society organisations, allowing them to push back against those who threaten individual journalists. Through the Fund's Crisis Response Mechanism, UNESCO are supporting journalists on the frontline in Ukraine with safety equipment, training and support to displaced journalists.

The threats to journalists and their work are plain to see. The Security Council should call out attacks on journalists, and work to mitigate the risks they face. Impunity cannot prevail: those who attack journalists must be held accountable.

UAE STATEMENT AT THE ARRIA-FORMULA MEETING ON THE PROTECTION OF JOURNALISTS

Madam Chair,

At the outset, I would like to thank Ireland for convening today's timely meeting and to our briefers for their insights.

As we have heard today, journalist Shireen Abu Akleh was killed and another reporter injured on 11 May while reporting from the West Bank city of Jenin in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The Security Council strongly condemned the killing and called for an immediate, transparent, and fair and impartial, investigation and also stressed the need for accountability.

Abu Akleh was one of 36 journalists killed this year according to UNESCO. In this context of rising attacks against journalists, it is important to reaffirm that they must be protected in line with international law, including international humanitarian law.

Furthermore, the Security Council should build on resolution 2222 and better reflect today's realities. In this vein, I would like to focus on the following areas for the Council to act.

First, we need to consider how the emerging complexities of the evolving digital landscape impacts the protection of journalists in armed conflicts. Digital technologies, namely social media and messaging platforms, change the nature of journalism and expand the pool of journalists and their audience, as well as the impact of their reporting.

However, these platforms are also spaces for growing animosity toward so-called "fake news", eroding trust in journalists, and putting them at an increased risk of violence in the real world. We need to push for effective responses to fighting disinformation across all levels to protect journalists, including by engaging the private sector through regulations, fact-checking, labelling of information, and media literacy campaigns.

Second, to strengthen the protection of journalists, we must consider the gendered dimensions of attacks against journalists. This aspect was highlighted by Special Rapporteur Khan in her first report focused on gender. Sexual and gender-based violence, hate speech, and disinformation are being employed to target women journalists. In Afghanistan, for example, the killing of news anchor Mina Kairi last June was part of an alarming trend of targeted attacks and discrimination and hate speech against Afghan journalists, particularly women.

Ultimately, the Security Council's approach to measures aimed at protecting journalists cannot be effective unless they are gender responsive.

Madam Chair,

To conclude, the UAE stands in support of efforts to strengthen the protection of journalists in situations of armed conflict. We realize and appreciate all journalists who risk their lives on the front lines of conflict to provide accurate reporting even amid challenging situations.

Thank you.

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Kenya to the United Nations

New York Security Council

2021-2022

**UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL ARRIA-FORMULA MEETING
THE PROTECTION OF JOURNALISTS TUESDAY, 24 MAY 2022 (4.30PM)**

STATEMENT BY MS JAYNE TOROITICH, POLITICAL COORDINATOR

Madam Chair,

1. I thank Ireland for organizing this important arria formula on the protection of journalists.
2. I thank Irene Khan, Jon Williams, Abderrahim Foukara, and Joshua Melvin for their insightful remarks.
3. Free, independent and impartial media is essential in fostering healthy public dialogue and debate, as well as building inclusive and peaceful societies.
4. Journalists and media professionals play an important role to provide credible and timely information, particularly in situations of armed conflict. They are instrumental for early warning, mobilization of international attention, and collection of information that could be used as evidence in case of crimes.
5. The Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and in particular article 79 of the Additional Protocol provides for the protection of journalists as civilians. States therefore bear the primary responsibility and obligation to protect journalists in conflict situations

Madam Chair,

6. We pay tribute to journalists and media professionals who risk their lives, to perform their duty in conflict situations, in order to keep the public informed.
7. We note from the latest Secretary-General's report on protection of civilians that 55 journalists were killed in 2021. And only a week ago, the Council was seized on the killing of Palestinian American journalist Shireen Abu Akleh in Jenin.
8. Journalists are also being increasingly targeted and subjected to egregious acts of violence by terrorist groups including the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida, and Al Shabaab.
9. Kenya strongly condemns the deliberate targeting of journalists and media professionals in armed conflict.
10. In this regard, we underscore the following important points and recommendations:
11. First: We encourage all Member States which have not yet done so, to consider becoming parties to the additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions including relevant international human rights treaties.
12. Second: We urge the international community to promote the protection of journalists and media professionals by supporting capacity building, training and raising awareness on international humanitarian law obligations, and commitments relating to the safety of journalists.
13. Third: Journalists and media professionals have a responsibility to adhere to professional ethics and codes of conduct to avoid the pitfalls of disinformation that may risk worsening conflicts. They should always bear in mind that they have power

to the decisions people make. They should therefore at all times be objective, truthful, independent and impartial.

14. Fourth: Media agencies must act responsibly when deploying their personnel to dangerous assignments. They must in particular, implement stringent risk evaluation and safety measures for journalists and media workers especially those in conflict areas.

15. Fifth: The digital space is increasingly being used to propagate propaganda, misinformation and disinformation, to incite hate and violence leading to escalation of armed conflicts. There is a clear need to build the capacity of States to protect digital spaces by designing transparent, responsible, accountable and inclusive regulatory systems that protect freedom of expression and free media.

16. Sixth: The United Nations should strengthen legal frameworks and monitoring mechanisms designed to ensure the safety of journalists. Peacekeeping operations and special political missions, where mandated, can support international efforts to promote and protect journalists and media professionals including through facilitating their freedom of movement and monitoring and reporting on specific acts of violence against them.

I thank you for your attention!

INTERVENCIÓN DE MÉXICO EN LA REUNIÓN CON ARREGLO A LA FÓRMULA ARRIA SOBRE LA PROTECCIÓN DE PERIODISTAS

Nueva York, a 24 de mayo de 2022

Agradezco a la Misión de Irlanda por la organización de esta reunión, la cual ofrece una oportunidad para reconocer la labor de los periodistas y honrar a quienes han perdido la vida o sufren ataques a causa de su labor.

Señora Presidenta:

La libertad de prensa y el ejercicio de derechos fundamentales como la libertad de expresión y el acceso a la información, son la base esencial de toda sociedad democrática.

La labor de los periodistas en zonas de conflicto armado es esencial para la protección de civiles, la rendición de cuentas, el combate a la desinformación, y para identificar avenidas para el diálogo y la construcción de la paz.

La implementación de la resolución 2222 del Consejo de Seguridad es clave, pues reafirma las Convenciones de Ginebra, al establecer que en zonas de conflicto armado los periodistas y corresponsales de guerra deben ser considerados como civiles y ser protegidos como tales.

De igual manera, los equipos y las instalaciones de los medios de comunicación constituyen bienes de carácter civil, y como tales, no podrán ser objeto de ataques.

Las mujeres periodistas enfrentan, de manera desproporcionada, violencia sexual y de género, acoso, represalias y amenazas, tanto en persona como en línea, incluso contra sus familiares. Las medidas de protección de las periodistas, incluidos los protocolos de procuración de justicia y la rendición de cuentas, deben incorporar una dimensión de género.

Al igual que la población civil, la inseguridad de los periodistas se agrava por los flujos ilícitos de armas pequeñas y ligeras. Es crucial que mejoremos los mecanismos internacionales para prevenir dichos flujos.

Señora Presidenta:

Sin duda alguna, una sociedad bien informada, es una sociedad más resiliente, por lo que reiteramos nuestro reconocimiento a los periodistas, los profesionales de los medios de comunicación y personal asociado que laboran en zonas de conflicto armado, pues contribuyen a establecer las condiciones de la paz.

Señora Presidenta,

Se han mencionado las condiciones de inseguridad que enfrentan los periodistas en mi país. Desafío que reconocemos y que responde esencialmente al crimen organizado transnacional, que se alimenta del tráfico ilícito de armas de fuego, pero al que México enfrenta con los instrumentos de un Estado democrático.

Los periodistas que informan sobre actividades económicas ilícitas están en la primera línea de la lucha contra mercados ilegales internacionales.

Reconocemos su importante labor y reiteramos nuestro compromiso para prevenir e investigar todos los actos de violencia, amenazas e intimidación contra los y las periodistas.

En este esfuerzo trabajamos con múltiples actores, entre ellos organizaciones de la sociedad civil y la Oficina de la Alta Comisionada de Naciones Unidas para los Derechos Humanos.

Permanent Mission of Ghana to the United Nations
19 East 47th Street, New York, NY 10017
www.ghanamissionun.org <http://www.ghanamissionun.org/>

STATEMENT BY SOLOMON KORBIEH SENIOR
ALTERNATE/SPOKESPERSON,

ARRIA-FORMULA MEETING ON PROTECTION OF JOURNALISTS
ORGANISED BY THE PERMANENT MISSION OF IRELAND TO THE
UNITED NATIONS

Chairperson,

1. Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this timely discussions on the safety and security of journalists. The discussions couldn't have taken place at a better time than now as the United Nations system focuses attention on the Protection of Civilians throughout this week.
2. I would like to begin by commending the delegation of Ireland for convening this meeting and to further welcome the useful perspectives from the briefers.
3. Ghana stands in solidarity with all journalists, media professionals and associated personnel, who have been victims of assault, reprisals, and sheer criminality, for simply doing their jobs. We pay tribute to the memories of all those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice. Our sympathies are with their families and hope that they will be able to find the fortitude, even in the difficult circumstances, to overcome their loss and turn on a new page in their lives.
4. Never should we forget that fighting impunity and securing accountability for them is the only way to honour their memories and to guarantee our individual liberties.

Chairperson,

5. Permit me to posit that preventing attacks against non-combatants and holding perpetrators accountable is fundamental to ending the growing impunity and grave violations of the human rights of civilians in situations of armed conflict.
6. It is no longer a matter of choice but a compelling obligation on all parties to a conflict to take effective measures to secure civilian infrastructure, particularly health facilities and schools as well as to create humanitarian corridors that ensure the protection and safe passage of civilians.
7. Upholding this commitment is critical to ensuring that all non-combatants, including journalists, receive the protection guaranteed by International Law, International Humanitarian Law and other laws on war.
8. Let me affirm Ghana's unyielding commitment to continuously create a conducive environment for media pluralism. Our own democratic experiment has been anchored on a free and vibrant media activism, which has contributed immensely in ensuring democratic accountability.
9. In Ghana, we have not only repealed laws such as the Criminal Libel Law, that sought to criminalize free speech but we have ensured that state institutions, notably, the National Media Commission, mandated to monitor and regulate the media space functioned independently of governmental control. To further enhance the capacity of journalists to do their work, the Government of Ghana has enacted the Whistle Blowers Act and the Right to Information Act to guarantee access to information. I should also add that the security services have been empowered to investigate threats and assaults against journalists and to ensure that the perpetrators of such reprehensible acts are made to face the full rigours of the law.

Chairperson

10. We continue to firmly support calls for the intensification of global efforts to combat and eradicate hate speech and dangerous rhetoric, especially on unmonitored and unregulated online platforms.

11. We also acknowledge the pivotal role of the international community, especially, the UN system in ensuring that adequate protection is given to journalists even as they cover conflicts situations. Let us be clear that without the cameras, voice recorders or the presence of journalists in conflict theatres, grave human rights abuses and violations committed against civilians or even combatants in armed conflict will go unreported. That certainly will not be in the interest of our common humanity.

12. We further urge all members of the international community to work together, in a spirit of mutual respect and shared responsibility, to translate our collective aspirations for justice and accountability for all victims by supporting the swift, independent, impartial, thorough, and transparent investigation into all reported cases of assault, reprisals and criminality against journalists.

13. And perhaps, the time may have come to scale up the support for the UNESCO Observatory to enable it effectively monitor, report and document all cases of assault, reprisals and criminality against journalists so that the evidence is preserved to support the important task of accountability.

Chairperson, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

14. In conclusion, let me underscore that no matter the grievance or how we profoundly disagree with the work of journalists, there is no justification, whatsoever, for issuing threats or directing attacks against journalists. Even where content undermines privacy or has the potential to breach national security, there are legitimate and legal avenues opened to those aggrieved to seek redress.

15. Finally, we reiterate our support for the implementation of Security Council Resolution [2222 \(2015\)](#) and align ourselves with the demands for accountability for all acts of assault and violations committed against journalists.

I thank you

Arria Protection of Journalists

Brazil

I thank Ireland for organizing today's debate and the briefers for their presentations.

As cosponsor of various initiatives on the protection of journalists within the UN System in New York, Geneva and Paris, Brazil follows closely and with grave concern the growing threats to journalists, especially in countries in situation of conflict, in violation of international human rights, international humanitarian law and UNSC resolutions, especially resolution [2222 \(2015\)](#). member of the group of friends for the protection of journalists and

Journalists are essential for preserving the fundamental right to freedom of expression and to enable access to independent information. Particularly in conflict situations, the free flow of independent and accurate information is indispensable to fight both misinformation and disinformation. As an essential element of democracy, states must ensure a free and safe environment for journalists to perform their work without interference. Specific risks faced by women journalists must also be properly addressed.

In times of conflict, journalists and media workers are civilians under the protection of international humanitarian law. Media equipment and installations also constitute civilian objects and shall not be the object of attack or reprisals. Resolution [2222 \(2015\)](#), unanimously adopted by the Security Council, reiterates that those rights must be respected.

In case of attacks against journalists and media workers, full, transparent and independent investigations must be undertaken with the cooperation of all the parts involved. Ensuring accountability for crimes committed against journalists is essential in the prevention for future attacks.

In Brazil, journalists are, for instance, included in public policies designed also for the protection of human rights defenders.

The Security Council can also help protecting journalists and facilitating their freedom of movement by strengthening, when appropriate, peacekeeping mission mandates to protect civilians.

Brazil joined the declaration of the Group of Friends for the Protection of Journalists condemning the killing of the Palestinian-American journalist Shireen Abu Akleh and will remain committed to enhancing efforts to promote the safety of journalists, both domestically and abroad.

UN Security Council Arria-Formula meeting

The Protection of Journalists

Statement by Greece on behalf of the Co-chairs of the

Group of Friends for the Protection of Journalists

(New York, 24 May 2022)

Madame President,

Excellences,

I have the honor to address the UN Security Council today on behalf of the Co-chairs of the Group of Friends for the Protection of Journalists.

Information, a public good which everyone is entitled to, empowers citizens to exercise their human rights, enables meaningful participation in democratic governance and sustainable development, and ensures no one is left behind.

Reliable and impartial information is essential in effectively addressing global threats to peace and security, including armed conflicts. Verified, unbiased information contributes to the protection of civilians, relief and recovery of survivors, and accountability for perpetrators of conflict-related violence.

Free and independent media is an essential component of democratic, peaceful, resilient societies.

Around the world, media freedom and the safety of journalists remains under ceaseless threat. Women journalists are disproportionately impacted by acts of violence, including gender-based and sexual violence, discrimination, and harassment.

The recent killing of Al Jazeera reporter, Shireen Abu Akleh, in Jenin; the repression of the free press, and the killings of journalists since the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan; the severe attacks and violations committed against journalists in the ongoing war in Ukraine, where several journalists and media workers have been killed, highlight only a fraction of the examples portraying the critical risk media professionals face in conflict and post-conflict settings.

The Group of Friends for the Protection of Journalists is proactive in advocating for the rights of journalists and media workers, remaining vigilant, and speaking out on their behalf when violations occur. Most recently, we issued a statement condemning the killing of the Al Jazeera journalist, Shireen Abu Akleh.

Acts of violence against journalists and media freedom should be condemned in the strongest terms possible. Journalists, media professionals, and associated personnel, engaged in dangerous professional missions, must be considered civilians and protected as such. Perpetrators of violent acts against media professionals must be held accountable, utilizing independent, transparent investigations.

Madame President,

The role of the Security Council in the protection of journalists is vital. As the principal UN organ for maintaining peace and security, it should continue to address the issue in the situations of armed conflict under its Agenda, explicitly urging all parties:

- to respect the professional independence and rights of journalists, as civilians, and
- to prevent violations of international humanitarian law against them.

The Security Council should systematically incorporate the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity in the thematic topics it implements, including the

Protection of Civilians, Peacekeeping, Women-Peace-&-Security, in addition to the Promotion and Strengthening of the Rule of Law in the Maintenance of International Peace and Security.

Furthermore, the Security Council should continue to enhance coordinated action and system-wide coherence, according to the UN Action Plan on the Safety of Journalists, by promoting and ensuring accountability for crimes committed against all media professionals.

In order to do so, the Council should urge states and all relevant stakeholders adopt:

- Human Rights based, gender-sensitive, context-specific, and survivors-centered approach, when addressing the root causes of threats to journalists and impunity, as well as
- robust mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the impact of interventions and strategies.

The UNESCO Observatory on Killed Journalists can serve as an exemplary mechanism for reporting violations against journalists.

Stronger coordination, coherence, and cooperation between the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission, during peacekeeping mandates, are of paramount importance.

In this respect, the UN peacekeeping missions in the field can meaningfully contribute to the safety of journalists in conflict situations, by including in their mandated reporting information on specific acts of violence against them.

Madame President,

The Group of Friends for the Protection of Journalists plays a fundamental role in submitting and promoting the biennial UNGA Resolution on the safety of Journalists and the issue of Impunity, which builds on the findings of the Secretary-General's latest Report.

Its latest version, in 2021, UNGA Resolution [76/173](#), adopted by consensus, gathered an unprecedented number of 112 cosponsors. The 23 members of the Group will continue the concerted efforts on the matter.

The world needs journalists to speak truth to power, and hold those in power accountable. The cornerstones of democracy, peace, and security are under threat as long as violence against journalists prevails.

It is time to act.

Thank you.

UNESCO STATEMENT

United Nations Security Council

Arria-formula meeting on The Protection of Journalists

Tuesday 24 May 2022

Current trends in the safety of journalists

The critical role of journalism in fostering open and democratic societies is centered around the idea that the exercise of power should be counter-checked to ensure democratic governance. Through fact-based news, journalists promote transparency and accountability, which are essential elements of democratic societies. More often however, journalists encounter threats to their own safety, including death, from a coterie of forces, not least of which include state and non-state actors. Although UNESCO's monitoring of the killings of journalists had recorded a declining trend between 2017-2021, the imprisonment rate of journalists in the same period has reached a record high of 293 journalists imprisoned in 2021, compared to 271 journalists in 2017. The rate of impunity remained high, with 87% of all killings of journalists not resolved.² At the same time, digital technologies have facilitated illegal targeted surveillance and an increase in hate speech against journalists, with women journalists being the most affected by a mix of online and offline violence.³

The 2022 global events have had a direct bearing on the safety of journalists; the protection of journalists is more than ever an essential part of promoting and protecting democracy around the world. Since the beginning of this year, the UNESCO Director General has condemned the killing of 36 journalists. Although this period accounts of only the first five months of the year, this number already represents 65% of all journalists killed in 2021, implying an inverse trend in killings of journalists as compared to 2021. Statistics indicate that where democracies are threatened and civic space is constrained, journalists run proportionately greater personal risks in defending the right to information. The protection of journalists is essential not only for their own safety, but also for the global quest for peace, justice and democracy.

UNESCO's work in the protection of journalists

As the coordinating UN Agency on freedom of expression and the safety of journalists and the lead implementer of the UN Plan of Action on Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, UNESCO is engaged in a number of critical initiatives in support of press freedom, such as:

- Knowledge resources development and capacity-building activities,
- Monitoring and reporting systems,
- Awareness-raising and advocacy initiatives,
- Training of judges, prosecutors, lawyers and law enforcements agents,
- Strengthening media protection,
- Support media policy reform on national and regional levels.

UNESCO develops knowledge resources and organizes capacity-building activities. The tools, guidelines and policy briefs developed for different categories

² <https://www.unesco.org/reports/world-media-trends/2021/en>

³ <https://en.unesco.org/publications/thechilling>

of actors deepen understanding, partnership, and engagement in promoting freedom of expression and the safety of journalists. It includes the guidelines on the safety of foreign correspondents; guidelines on the safety of journalists covering protests; guidelines for prosecutors on how to prosecute crimes against journalists. UNESCO organizes capacity-building activities for all actors, including media managers and women journalists, on ensuring their safety.

Through its Observatory of Killed Journalists, UNESCO monitors and reports on journalists' killings and the responses received from concerned Member States regarding judicial follow-up of these crimes.

By leading the global commemorations of World Press Freedom Day, UNESCO develops numerous awareness-raising and advocacy initiatives. UNESCO has mobilized various state and non-state coalitions on media freedom⁴ to give significant impetus and visibility to issues of safety and protection of journalists over the past 10 years. Through declarations such as the Belgrade World Press Freedom Day Declaration, the Addis Declaration on media and elections, as well as the Windhoek+30 Declaration on Information as a Public Good, UNESCO has guided normative and strategic work. For the last two years, UNESCO has drawn attention to the particularly worrying situation of women journalists facing online threats. A new publication was issued stressing how news organizations and internet companies must address this issue.⁵

Over the past years, UNESCO has trained judges, prosecutors, lawyers and law enforcements agents. More than 23,000 judges and prosecutors from over 60 countries were trained, as well as more than 8,000 security forces from 17 countries on freedom of expression and safety of journalists as part of the broader strategy of engaging state actors in the protection of journalists.

UNESCO strengthens media protection: Through mechanisms such as the Global Media Defence Fund, UNESCO has improved journalists' access to specialized legal assistance.

UNESCO supports media policy reform on national and regional levels: UNESCO has accompanied over 10 countries in two regions to align their policy with international standards and gender-sensitive perspectives.

The 10th anniversary of the UN Plan of Action and the need to intensify the fight against impunity

UNESCO, together with the Austrian Government and OHCHR, organizes activities to mark the 10th anniversary of the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity. Regional and thematic consultations will culminate in the High-Level Multistakeholder Conference in Vienna, Austria, on 3-4 November 2022. There will be no revision of the UN Plan, but it will be an opportune moment to renew commitments to fight impunity and mobilize greater international cooperation in the protection of journalists. To build on existing initiatives, UNESCO recommends the following key actions:

- Mainstream Protection of journalists in all UN work, including UN missions and peacekeeping operations, particularly in areas whose contexts provide the greatest danger to journalistic work.

⁴ Among others: the UN Focal Points Network on the Safety of Journalists, the Groups of Friends for the Protection of journalists, the Media Freedom Coalition, and the International Civil Society Coalition.

⁵ UNESCO. 2022. The Chilling: What more can news organizations do to combat gendered online violence? UNESCO. 2022. The Chilling: assessing big tech's response to online violence against women journalists.

- Recommend to international justice mechanisms such as the International Criminal Court/special tribunals, or specific investigation procedures such as truth commissions or special jurisdictions in transitional contexts to pay attention to crimes against journalists.
- Continuously highlight - in relation to increases in disinformation, misinformation and hate speech - the vital importance of press freedom and safety of journalists as conditions for information as a public good to serve as a bulwark for protecting human rights and advancing sustainable development.
- The topic of safety of journalists should be a special chapter in the reports of UN special envoys, heads of UN missions to the Security Council, allowing the Council to closely monitor the situation.
- Upscale communication by UN principals on the UN Plan of Action's 10th anniversary in order to mobilize broader support to its reinforcement within the UN system and other international networks.

**UN SECURITY COUNCIL ARRIA FORMULA MEETING****PROTECTION OF JOURNALISTS 24 MAY 2022 WRITTEN STATEMENT
BY THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Mr President,

The European Union and its Member States subscribe to freedom, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and the rule of law on which the European Union is based.

Independent journalism is a key pillar of a functioning democracy, it ensures a plurality of information and discourse and helps to hold authority to account. Free press is instrumental in the protection and promotion of human rights, in particular the freedom of opinion, information and expression.

Independent media and journalists are essential in providing us with factual information of the situation on the ground, which helps us to form our opinion and feed into our policies. And they are a crucial stakeholder in the fight against foreign disinformation and information manipulation. The free flow of independent and reliable information is essential in conflict situations.

The UN Security Council resolution 2222 from 2015 was a milestone for the protection of journalists. The resolution condemned all violations and abuses committed against journalists and affirmed that states must respect and protect journalists as civilians. It confirmed that that media equipment and installations constitute civilian objects and shall never be the object of attack or reprisals.

While States have the primary responsibility to ensure the safety of journalists and prevent impunity, the Security Council should step up its efforts to promote and ensure accountability for crimes committed against journalists, media professionals and associated personnel in situations on its agenda.

This Council is not alone in addressing this issue. The General Assembly and the Human Rights Council adopt annual consensual resolutions on the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity.

In this context, the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity a work led by UNESCO, aiming at greater cooperation between UN organizations and other stakeholders, is a key document that is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year. The 2021 Windhoek+30 Declaration on information as a public good is also of particular importance. Moreover, in his “Call to action for human rights”, launched in February 2020, the Secretary-General noted the worrying general trend of shrinking civic space and its negative impact on journalists, especially women.

Pressure on independent media has significantly increased in recent years. Journalists across the world have been intimidated and threatened (both online and offline), and fined, jailed, assaulted and even killed for doing their job.

We have seen the adoption of draconian new laws targeting media, individual journalists and bloggers in a number of countries, threatening to further restrict citizens’ access to reliable information. With so-called “fake-news” laws, many governments and leaders have taken advantage of the health crisis to escalate censorship, ill-treatment of journalists and restrictions aimed at silencing free speech.

We all have an obligation to react to this worrying trend of increased level of intimidation and violence that journalists, media actors and other individuals face. Coordinated efforts are needed to break this negative trend. Threats and acts of violence must be prevented. Accountability must be ensured through impartial, prompt, thorough, independent and effective investigations into all alleged incidents of violence, threats to and attacks on journalists and media workers.

Mr President,

The European Union is gravely concerned about the continued threats and attacks against journalists and media workers in many countries and conflict situations across the world, some of them on the agenda of the Council.

In recent months, brave journalists, camera crews, reporters, photographers and bloggers are risking their lives to keep us informed about Russia's unprovoked and unjustified military aggression against Ukraine. Russian forces are detaining, abducting or kidnapping and targeting journalists and civil society actors to prevent the world from hearing the truth.

By reporting from the front lines and shedding light on the gross human rights violations and violations of international humanitarian law committed by the Russian armed forces, journalists contribute to counter disinformation and information manipulation surrounding the invasion. They play a crucial role in ensuring that these atrocities do not remain unpunished. Those responsible will be held accountable for their actions. The EU is providing emergency support to media outlets and journalists covering the war in Ukraine, including psychological support, helmets and other protective equipment, as well as financing to cover salaries.

In Russia and Belarus, despite the risk of long-term prison sentences and prolonged arrests, courageous independent media and individual journalists strive to inform about the war waged by the Russian leadership against Ukraine and the atrocities committed against Ukrainian people.

On 11 May 2022, Al Jazeera reporter Shireen Abu Akleh was killed in Jenin, in the occupied Palestinian territory. The EU joined many other actors asking that a thorough, independent investigation clarifies all the circumstances of these incidents as soon as possible and that those responsible are brought to justice.

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), the EU HRVP on behalf of Member States confirmed that safety of journalists is a priority for the EU. The UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres said that 'threats to journalists and media workers are growing by the day'.

Mr President,

The European Union has repeatedly reaffirmed its commitment to supporting independent media and protecting of journalists as showed by the recent EU Anti-SLAPP initiative and Recommendation on the protection, safety and empowerment of journalists.

The European Union works around the world to contribute to the safety and protection of journalists by condemning attacks, as outlined in the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy for 2020- 2024.

The European Union assists those intimidated or threatened via the EU human rights defenders protection mechanisms and supports media initiatives and appeals to state authorities to prevent and condemn such violence and take effective measures to end impunity.

EU Delegations around the world attend and monitor court cases involving journalists, helping to identify those cases that need a special attention. In the last 12 months, the European Union has supported more than 400 journalists with emergency grants, temporary relocation, or support to their respective media outlets. Dedicated programmes are implemented in all regions to support independent media and journalists' safety such as 'COVID-19 response in Africa: together for reliable information' or the programme 'Safejournalists', run by Western Balkans journalist associations. A Handbook on journalists' safety has been distributed to all EU Delegations.

The European Union is working on a daily basis to strengthen the media environment in the world, not least in the EU's Neighbourhood, with a focus on promotion safety of journalists; sustainable financing; diversity, inclusion and empowering; and fight against foreign disinformation, information manipulation and interference.

Through bilateral human rights dialogues with third countries, the European Union has encouraged States to take active steps to prevent violence and to promote a safe environment for journalists and other media actors, enabling them to carry out their work independently, without undue interference and without fear of violence or persecution.

In closing, the European Union will continue to support independent journalism and all efforts to promote the protection of journalists and media workers around the world.

I thank you

**Statement by Ambassador Cristian Espinosa,
Permanent Representative of Ecuador to the United Nations.**

**Security Council Arria formula meeting on
the Protection of Journalists.**

New York, May 24th 2022

Excellencies,

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the Permanent Mission of Ireland for organizing this timely Security Council Arria Formula meeting on such a relevant and current topic.

A few weeks ago, the United Nations commemorated World Press Freedom Day, to highlight the importance of a free press for the dissemination of knowledge and information, and to remember that the protection of journalists is a necessary condition for the existence of a free press.

On that occasion, as President of the Committee on Information of the United Nations, I said that it is regrettable that, 29 years after the first Press Freedom Day, journalists and media workers still face threats and attacks for doing their job.

Sadly, only a few days later, on the eve of the closing session of the Committee on Information, journalist Shireen Abu Akleh was killed while doing her job. Many delegations took the floor then to express their condemnation and call for accountability. The Committee observed a moment of silence to honor her, and all the other journalists that have lost their lives in the line of duty.

Physical security is the paramount concern in the protection of journalists but is not the only one. New forms of harassment have arisen with new technologies.

Ecuador believes that the international community must make every effort to ensure that journalists are physically safe and are also protected from surveillance, breaches of privacy, and online threats.

The importance of the free flow of knowledge and information cannot be overstated. Without them no sound opinions can be formed and, therefore, no informed decisions can be made. Evidently, an uninformed decision is frequently a wrong one, and wrong decisions can lead to conflict and violence, which in turn threaten international peace and security.

Safeguarding the ability of journalists to provide trustworthy information is a necessary measure to avoid living in a world of fake news and bad decisions; therefore, safeguarding journalists is necessary for a more peaceful world.

All of us should do our part to protect journalists. Ecuador is committed to do so and is currently working on an improved legal framework to safeguard freedom of the press. The United Nations also has an important role, and the Security Council has a responsibility to follow up on the implementation of Resolution 2222, adopted unanimously in 2015.

As stated in OP 7 of that Resolution, the Council has demanded “that all parties to an armed conflict comply fully with the obligations applicable to them under international law related to the protection of civilians in armed conflict, including journalists, media professionals and associated personnel”. These must not be empty words. The protection of civilians, including journalists, will be one of Ecuador’s main priorities if we are entrusted to serve as a member of the Security Council in 2023-24.

To conclude, we would like to recall that Resolution 2222 also stressed “the need to ensure better cooperation and coordination at the international level, including

among the United Nations and relevant international regional and sub-regional organizations, including through technical assistance and capacity-building, with regard to promoting and ensuring the safety of journalists, media professionals and associated personnel in armed conflicts”. We believe that this is one area that needs further efforts and could be very effective to protect journalists in the future.

I thank you.

Statement by
 H.E. Ms. Zahra Ershadi
 Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative
 of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations
 Before the Security Council Arria-Formula Meeting on
 The Protection of Journalists
 New York, 24 May 2022

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

Madame President,

I am grateful to Ireland for organizing today's discussion on the Protection of Journalists. I would also like to thank the briefers for the insightful remarks.

We emphasize the importance of protecting civilians in armed conflicts, including journalists, media professionals, and associated personnel, and call on all parties to an armed conflict to fully comply with their international law obligations.

Unfortunately, the rise in violence, intimidation, and harassment directed at journalists in armed conflict in many parts of the world, in particular deliberate attacks in violation of international humanitarian law, has reached a tipping point.

In the meantime, impunity for war crimes committed against journalists in armed conflict has posed a serious threat to their safety and protection. In this regard, we emphasize the necessity of strengthening UN action toward protecting journalists and ensuring accountability for crimes committed against them in situations of armed conflict.

Madame President

Nowadays, we are witnessing yet another heinous crime committed against the Palestinian people by the Israeli regime. Shireen Abu Akleh, a veteran Palestinian journalist was murdered in cold blood by the occupying forces in Jenin in occupied Palestine. She was a courageous voice for her people and a national symbol of truth and resilience in the face of a cruel occupation and injustice that the Palestinian people have endured for far too long. Israel's assassination of Shireen is part of its longstanding, well-documented war of harassment, intimidation and violence against journalists aiming at covering up its crimes perpetrated against Palestinians in grave breach of relevant international laws and norms.

She is also yet another victim of the international community's inaction in the face of continuous Israeli war crimes and terrorism against the Palestinian people.

We call on the United Nations, particularly the Security Council, to take urgent action to put an end to Israel's impunity, ensure protection for the Palestinian people, and pursue measures to hold this regime accountable for the most international crimes committed throughout the decades.

In conclusion, we restate our consistent position that issues of human rights including the protection of journalists are the responsibility of the General Assembly and other relevant UN organs. The Security Council should only address this issue when it is directly related to the maintenance of international peace and security.

I thank you Madam President,

United Nations Security Council

***United Nations Security Council Arria-formula meeting
The Protection of Journalists***

Statement by

His Excellency Mr. Gilad Erdan

Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations

United Nations, New York

May 24, 2022

Madame Chair,

We thank you for convening this important debate.

In Israel, on any given day you can go to a local newsstand or turn on the television or radio, or surf the internet and witness the full gamut of ideas and opinions – from left to right, from pro-government to anti-government. Our active media is a daily testament to Israel's robust democracy. Israel is wholly and fully committed to freedom of expression and freedom of the press, as well as to the protection of the press – both Israeli and foreign. Indeed, the only reason that many at the UN and in the international community are so familiar with our local politics and political situation is because of the unfettered access that the media and journalists receive in Israel.

Madame Chaire,

Israel was deeply saddened by the death of senior Al Jazeera correspondent Shireen Abu Akleh.

Ms. Abu Akleh lost her life while covering in real time a counterterrorism operation in Jenin, which had been undertaken in light of a deadly wave of terror attacks against Israeli civilians in recent weeks emanating from Jenin, in attempt to prevent further attacks. During this counterterrorism operation, Palestinian gunmen fired extensively, recklessly and indiscriminately at Israeli forces.

Following this tragic event, Israel swiftly called for a joint, impartial Israeli-Palestinian investigation, to uncover the facts and promote accountability. However, the Palestinian Authority has publicly rejected all of Israel's offers, choosing instead to act as judge, jury and executioner, while undermining any due process and justice. Nevertheless, Israel is conducting a thorough, independent investigation of the incident. We call on the Palestinian Authority to cooperate in order to get to the truth.

Madame Chair,

As we discuss freedom of the press, the protection of journalists and accurate reporting, it is imperative that, as we have these important conversations, we be honest about the state of the media in all States and regions of the world, rather than use this forum to single out and demonize Israel, the only State in our region with a truly free press.

If we take a look at our neighbors, as compared to the state of the media in Israel, we see, for example, that the Palestinian Authority is ranked 170th by the Reporters without Borders in their freedom of press index - right after Yemen and right before Syria.

Both the Palestinian Authority and Hamas deny this fundamental freedom, enacting laws like the 2017 Palestinian Authority Cybercrime Law, which may sound innocuous, but in practice serves to suppress dissents and silence opposition. Reporters without Borders reported that this law justified shutting down no less than

51 online Palestinian news sources. The same NGO exposed and issued formal complaints to the UN about the violent suppression of journalists critical of Abu Mazen and the Palestinian Authority.

These attacks are often undertaken by men in civilian dress while Palestinian security forces stand by and look on. Journalists in the West Bank and Gaza must either self-censor or face harsh penalties like those that the military Chief of Communications, Abu Arab, faced for criticizing the PA.

These day-to-day violations and suppression of basic freedoms however, never make the headlines. They are not noted in the concept paper for this debate.

The names of journalists who have been silenced by the Palestinian Authority and by Hamas go unnoted in these august halls of the UN. Ironically however, despite the Palestinian Authority's daily denial of the freedom of expression -- a basic right recognized by all major human rights instruments as well as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights -- they repeatedly and cynically lodge false accusations of human rights violations of a similar nature against Israel to deflect criticism away from PA practices.

The same is true in Lebanon, ranked 107th out of 180 countries by Reporters without Borders. No one here today has mentioned the murder of Lebanese journalist Lokman Slim, who had been threatened by Hezbollah activists for months before being murdered in 2021. Nor has anyone noted the 27 other brave Lebanese journalists who have been threatened, attacked and silenced by Hezbollah.

We did not hear an outcry by the international community when video journalist Hussein Bassal was attacked just last week by Hezbollah supporters while covering Lebanese elections. No one at the UN or the international community cries out to demand that these journalists' basic right to tell their countrymen and women and the world the truth about Hezbollah's murderous ways be protected. We have not heard calls by the Secretary General or other UN members for an end to the suppression of the media in Lebanon. This despite the fact that Reporters without Borders have lodged formal complaints with the UN.

Nor have we heard concern about the state of the media in Iran -- which ranks 178 out of 180 ranked countries in the aforementioned freedom of the press index. There, too, a journalist has been killed in recent months and 14 other journalists are reported to be currently incarcerated.

The media in Iran is wholly controlled by the Islamic regime, and, as Reporters without Borders reports, "Journalists and independent media in Iran are constantly persecuted by means of arbitrary arrests and very heavy sentences handed down after grossly unfair trials before revolutionary courts". Local laws ensure that reporting does not "offend the clergy and the Supreme Leader" or "spread false information."

In Syria too, ranked 171 out of 180, as we know, reporters are denied access to entire swaths of the country. The media is used as a tool to relay Baathist propaganda. There too, journalists have been killed or imprisoned and domestic laws are used to block the opposition.

Madame Chair,

In conclusion, when speaking about the critical importance of protecting journalists and a free media so that the truth may be reported and triumph over cover-ups, suppression and oppression, we must avoid selective criticism.

We must speak frankly and openly about the problem of suppression of journalists and freedom of expression in the Middle East.

As we recognize in Israel, a free, uncensored and unhindered press is one of the cornerstones of democracy, and is a critical component for a better and brighter future for all and for the creation of truly free societies.

I thank you Madame Chair.

**PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
NEW YORK**

NEW YORK, 24 MAY 2022

SECURITY COUNCIL – ARRIA-FORMULA MEETING – THE PROTECTION OF JOURNALISTS

**STATEMENT ATTRIBUTABLE TO MYRIAM OEHRI, DEPUTY
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE**

CHARGÉE D’AFFAIRES A.I.

Madam Chair,

Thank you for convening this timely Arria-Formula meeting. Journalists and media workers are often at the frontlines of the fight to promote and protect human rights and defend democracy and the rule of law. Freedom of opinion and expression is a fundamental human right and the backbone of an open, free and informed society. In many situations the Security Council has focused on in recent months, an increase in restrictions on a free press have mirrored the rise in armed conflict, notably in Ethiopia and Myanmar. The war in Ukraine has placed many journalists in grave danger. We recognize their courage in providing facts and evidence under the most challenging of circumstances and remember those who have been killed in the course of the unprovoked aggression by Russia. Liechtenstein strongly condemns all threats, harassment, attacks, retaliation and reprisals against journalists, as well as their detention and imprisonment. In these situations as others on the Council’s agenda we hope to see the further implementation of Resolutions 1738 and 2222.

Madam Chair,

Liechtenstein is particularly concerned about the special restrictions and risks women journalists face. The recent developments in Afghanistan in this regard are highly alarming. The Taliban’s new directive ordering female news anchors to cover their faces on air is yet another step in a campaign to remove women from public life. We have to impress on those exercising effective control in Afghanistan their obligations under international human rights law as an indispensable prerequisite for the recognition they seek. We also must insist on an “inclusive, negotiated political settlement, with the full, equal and meaningful participation of women”, in line with Security Council Resolution 2593.

Madam Chair,

Last year alone, 55 journalists and media professionals were killed, one third of them in countries affected by conflict. The killing of Shireen Abu Akleh in the Palestinian city of Jenin is but the latest example. Liechtenstein joins calls, including by the Security Council, for an immediate, thorough, transparent, and fair and impartial investigation. With the killings of nearly 90% of journalists since 2006 worldwide still unresolved, we remain concerned about the large impunity gap, and call for immediate, independent investigations of these crimes.

I thank you.



**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALTA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

Arria-formula meeting on The Protection of Journalists

Malta Statement

Tuesday 24 May 2022

Madam President

Malta thanks Ireland for organising today's Arria-formula meeting and the briefers for sharing their views.

Malta aligns herself with the statement delivered by the European Union and would like to add a few additional remarks in her national capacity.

The protection of journalists continues to be a global priority. Security Council Resolution [2222 \(2015\)](#) calls on States to fulfil their obligations to protect journalists during armed conflict and requires UN peacekeeping operations to provide regular reports on the safety of journalists. Free access to information, both online and offline, is essential to protect human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, and association.

Journalists often face threats, surveillance, attacks, arbitrary arrest, and detention for doing their job and reporting what they see. We underline the fact that States are under an obligation to prevent and protect attacks against journalists. They should also create a safe and enabling environment for the work of journalists, which often necessitates legal reform and the creation of protection mechanisms.

Democracy thrives when a plurality of voices are heard both on- and offline. There is a worrying trend regarding the safety of women journalists, with a 2020 UNESCO/International Centre for Journalists survey finding that 73% of the 635 women journalists surveyed reported experiencing some form of online violence. Moreover, 20% of the 596 women respondents reported having been attacked in connection with the online violence they had experienced. It is therefore evident that women journalists face an added risk: being attacked as journalists and as women. Women's voices in journalism must be protected.

Many have also paid the ultimate price. For Malta, ensuring justice for the murder of journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia remains a priority. Since 2017, steps have been taken to address shortcomings that have been identified, and a number of key constitutional and legal reforms have been enacted.

More recently, the death of Al Jazeera reporter Shireen Abu Akleh in the occupied West Bank, which we strongly condemn, has once again illustrated the dangers faced by journalists on a daily basis. Malta continues to support a full, transparent investigation and accountability into her death.

In Afghanistan, the Taliban takeover led to journalists facing growing obstacles, and thousands have lost their jobs since August. We are especially concerned about the dangers faced by women journalists.

We regret that in Mali, the ban on two major international broadcasters operating inside the country reflects the growing regional intolerance towards freedom of expression, as the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights recently pointed out.

Malta is equally concerned about the safety of journalists covering the war in Ukraine. As Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and Opinion stated, journalists have been targeted, tortured, kidnapped, attacked, killed, or refused safe passage from cities and regions under siege. We are also concerned about Russia's disinformation and information manipulation campaign to justify its illegal and unprovoked aggression against its neighbour, and at discrediting the work of independent journalists.

Malta reaffirms its support towards the Special Procedures mandate holders, and we firmly believe in their independence and impartiality. The line of communication and coordination between the Human Rights Council (HRC) and the Security Council can be improved, especially given the HRC's preventative mandate and its capacity to act as an early warning tool for emerging human rights violations.

Madam President

Malta continues to strongly condemn impunity for attacks on journalists, and stresses that perpetrators must be held accountable. We reiterate our strong support to the work of journalists worldwide and emphasise that a free press and active civil society are essential to ensure that governments are held accountable, and the public duly informed.

I thank you

**REPUBLIC OF POLAND
PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

Check against delivery

**United Nations Security Council Arrria-formula meeting
The Protection of the Journalists**

**Statement by Ms. Joanna Skoczek
Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Poland
#to the United Nations in New York**

New York, 24 May 2022

Madam Chair, Protection of journalists and their safety is essential to ensure full and effective realization of freedom of opinion and expression. Poland is committed to respect and protect the said freedom, as well as freedom of the media, worldwide. They are crucial for a free, inclusive and lively public debate in the pluralistic and democratic societies – especially in case of crises and conflicts when a swift dissemination of unbiased and verified information is of vital importance. The importance of safeguarding freedom of expression as a precondition for democracy and lasting peace and the role of journalists in standing up for these values and ideals – particularly now, in a world in which democracy and freedom of the press face increasingly adverse conditions – was reconfirmed by awarding two courageous journalists, Maria Ressa and Dmitry Muratov, with a Nobel Peace Prize last year.

Yet, in some UN Member States the threats to journalists' work stem directly from internal policies aimed at silencing all critical voices, including through judicial harassment of journalists who oppose official narrative. In the present context of the Russian invasion on Ukraine, the draconian punishments introduced by the Russian Federation against all those who are calling this invasion by its name by making a reference to "war" when reporting about the aggression against a sovereign state, are extremely worrying examples of measures that target on an unprecedented scale the independent journalism in that country and the safety of individual media workers.

The armed conflict itself creates particularly dangerous conditions for the journalists' work. We are extremely concerned about the safety of journalists in Ukraine, whose life and health is under imminent danger caused by the Russian aggression against this country. Journalists reporting from the invaded Ukraine are subject to abductions and violence by the Russian military forces. Sadly, these brave reporters often pay the highest price for their work.

Since the beginning of the Russia's war in February 2022 at least seven journalists have been killed, out of which four were foreigners. Five more deaths are being investigated. Reporters without Borders have informed that 28 journalists have been assaulted and five have disappeared. There are serious concerns that the number of victims among the media workers might be even higher. Yet, disturbing pattern of harassment and intimidation by Russian Federation of both foreign and Ukrainian journalists has been a reality in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine since 2014 – as shown by the case of Vladyslav Yesypenko of the "Radio Liberty", illegally detained since March 2021, and many others harassed and detained in connection with their journalistic work, whose everlonger list is meticulously documented by the civil society organizations, such as PEN America.

In Ukraine Russia is trying to suppress free flow of information also by targeting media infrastructure. During the ongoing invasion it has hit ten TV towers in Ukraine, forcing some of the broadcasters to suspend their work altogether. Again, we would like to reiterate that attacks on journalists and on civilian infrastructure, including

media towers is illegal under international law. We need to hold accountable and bring the perpetrators of war crimes to justice, including those committed on journalists.

While recounting the tragic situation in Ukraine and other parts of the world, we cannot forget about Belarus where media and journalists have been facing massive wave of repression for years, which further escalated to an unprecedented level in the aftermath of the 2020 fraudulent Presidential elections. Individual journalists were detained at a massive scale and many media workers still face criminal prosecution, while 26 of them are deprived of liberty. Among them, there is a Pole, Andrzej Poczobut, detained over a year ago. Among sentenced by the authoritarian courts are also Daria Chultsova, Katerina Andreyeva as well as Iryna Slaunikava – all of whom have worked for TV Belsat.

Yesterday, a year has passed since Lukashenko's regime has decided to hijack a civilian plane in order to arrest a blogger and journalist Roman Pratasevich. This unprecedented act that clearly illustrates how important is free journalism for a democratic world is sadly just one event in a number of actions undertaken by the Minsk's regime to suppress free speech. While standing in solidarity with persecuted journalists, we urge the Belarusian authorities to release all imprisoned media workers in the country and drop all criminal charges against them.

The persecutions in Belarus target not only individual journalists, but also media outlets. A large number of legal entities that enabled operation of mass media organizations have been liquidated – including the Belarusian Association of Journalists and the Belarusian PEN Centre. In this context, we welcome UNESCO's decision to award the Belarusian Association of Journalists (BAJ) with the Guillermo Cano World Press Award. Poland is proud to be the initiator of this initiative, supported by 45 countries and many professional non-governmental organizations. We hope that this award will contribute to ensuring protection of individual media workers in Belarus and to supporting independent journalism in that country.

This Award is a symbol of solidarity with all journalists who oppose authoritarian regimes with their daily work by presenting unbiased information and promote freedom of expression. It is also a strong voice of protest of international community against blatant disrespect by the Minsk regime of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of the people of Belarus. BAJ is also a symbol of how far the Lukashenko regime has gone to suppress free media and freedom of expression. The Supreme Court of Belarus terminated BAJ license on August 27, 2021 after 35 years of its work to promote freedom of expression and independent journalism in Belarus. Now, BAJ continues its activities from abroad with the support of European Federation of Journalists and other organizations that fight for freedom of expression.

The world cannot stay indifferent to the fact that today in Belarus - a country that is a member of the UN Family - there are more than 1000 political prisoners, with numerous journalists among them. The only reason the journalists and media workers are being arrested or detained and their homes are being searched and families threatened is because they are doing their job and deliver unbiased information to the society.

Madam Chair,

Poland strongly condemns all acts of violence against journalists and media workers and stresses the obligation to protect them equally to the civilians in case of armed conflicts. We condemn in the strongest possible terms the killing on 11 May in Palestine of Shireen Abu Akleh, Palestinian-American journalist, and wounding of her colleague, Ali Samoudi. Such acts of violence against journalists doing their work for the benefit of the whole society must be unequivocally condemned, duly investigated and those responsible held accountable without delay.

Lastly, Poland reiterates the calls by international organizations and their relevant bodies to undertake all efforts to guarantee the safety of the journalists and necessary conditions of conducting their work.

I thank you.

Statement by the Delegation of Ukraine at the Arria-formula meeting on the protection of journalists

Madame Chair,

We thank Ireland for hosting the Arria-formula meeting on such important issue, as the protection of journalists.

We are also grateful to Ms. Irene Khan, UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, as well as other briefers for their remarks.

The full-scale armed aggression of Russia against Ukraine on February 24 marked a new phase of brutal repression against independent journalism in Ukraine.

The Ukrainian NGO “Institute of Mass Information” registered 280 crimes against media and journalists, committed by Russia. 29 journalists were killed, while the list of crimes committed by the Russian Federation against the media in Ukraine also includes abduction of journalists, unjustified searches of newsrooms and private homes, abductions and torture, the shelling and seizure of TV towers and other.

On April 28, Ukraine Radio Liberty journalist Vira Hyrych was killed when Russian missile hit the residential building. It happened when the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres was in Kyiv. This clearly demonstrated Russia’s real attitude to international institutions and the basic principles of international law.

It should be noted that not only Ukrainian journalists but also their colleagues – citizens of the United States, Lithuania, Ireland and Russia, who tried to tell the truth to the world about Russia’s war against my country – were killed.

We are grateful to all Ukrainian and international journalists who, under extremely difficult conditions, often risking their lives, work in combat zones to convey the truth about Russia’s war crimes in Ukraine.

Meanwhile, Ukrainian cities occupied or surrounded by Russia are continuing to be isolated from the Ukrainian information space, Ukrainian broadcasting, and the work of national Internet operators there are blocked.

In the occupied territories, Russia is launching its propaganda channels which are used for even greater information expansion, justifying the Russian invasion of Ukraine and inciting ethnic hatred.

It is clear that the Russian forces consider switching off the Ukrainian broadcasting, Ukrainian mobile networks and Internet services in the occupied territories as one of their priorities.

By doing so the Russian Federation is using the same practices in the occupied areas of Ukraine that are widely used in Russia itself.

We also remain gravely concerned over the deteriorating situation with the freedom of media and the work of journalists in the occupied Ukraine’s Crimea.

In conclusion, Madame Chair, Ukraine will make every effort to ensure that all perpetrators of crimes against journalists and media workers from the first days of Russia’s full-scale aggression will be held accountable.

Thank you.
