

OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

OHCHR

Handbook A

**ACTIONS FOR THE PROTECTION OF
JOURNALISTS: MIDDLE EAST**

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TAEMUN 2015

Dear delegates,

Welcome to TAEMUN 2015 and to your committee Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). This committee represents the world's commitment to universal ideals of human dignity. Our mission is to protect and promote all human rights. The chair expects to see a debate full of ideas that attend the position of each country, in order to achieve an accurate resolution for our topics; Topic A: Action for the Protection of Journalist: Middle East and Topic B: The Warrantability of Human Rights for Racial and Ethnic Minorities. During the debate, we hope to see delegates who are able to analyze and to be conscious about the current worldwide situation, and to look for the most viable solutions to the subjects here present. Also, it is important to remind you that it is necessary to be respectful and tolerant with the ideas and proposes of other delegates. We want you to work together as a team in order to make the most of these three days. Do not hesitate on sharing your doubts with any of the members of the Chair during the debate. Thank you for attending TAEMUN 2015 and this committee. We wish you the best of lucks, delegates!

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

TAEMUN 2015

“Free expression is the base of human rights, the root of human nature and the mother of truth. To kill free speech is to insult human rights, to stifle human nature and to suppress truth”.

Liu Xiaob

Topic A: Actions for the protection of Journalists: Middle East



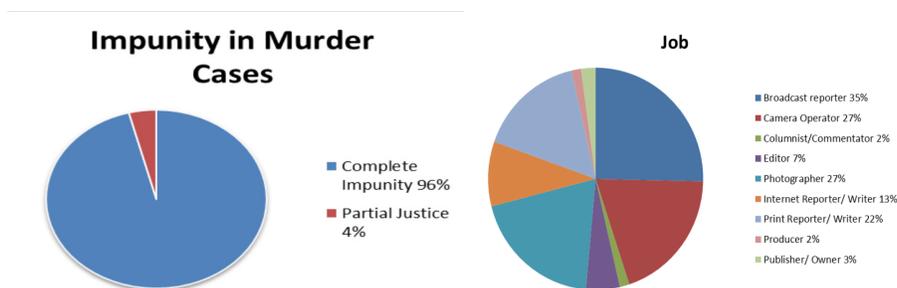
<http://noliesradio.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/n-JOURNALIST-PROTESTS-TURKEY-large570.jpg>

The freedom of speech was established on the UN General Assembly in 1946 as one of the most important pillars for the creation of a well-informed worldwide society with the ability of making and taking their own decisions based on the acquired information, in order to improve life quality, to demand a righteous response from governments and to always seek for the respect of human rights. Every human being has the freedom of speech, and the liberty to know the information they choose to have. As it is well known, the professionals that seek for the truth and the right of free speech to what their job are journalists.

Journalists are an element of great importance to the International Community. They are in charge of informing the government and the population about the concerns that take place all around the world. Journalism can be practiced in diverse ways, as Print Journalism that

often reports on magazines and newspapers; as Photo journalism, which applies the technique of expressing a certain situation or problem with a single photograph; as Broadcast Journalism, which is in charge of delivering the news via radio or television; and finally, as Multimedia Journalism, in which journalists post on the web their articles, photographs or even videos. The topics that concern this committee are mainly about politics. It must be kept in mind that despite the type of journalism practiced or the scoop they deliver; every journalist has the same goal: to deliver the news to their audience in a safe and truthful way.

One of the first things that has to be taken into consideration when it comes to analyzing the job of a journalist is the hazards that they have to face throughout their careers. In armed conflicts, journalists confront the dangers of getting caught between crossfire, lost bullets, sudden attacks, or even kidnapping by either the militants or the government (Having in mind Middle East’s situation). Furthermore, when in peaceful times, journalists also can be persecuted, harassed or murdered, among other things, by attempting to expose any infraction to the Human Rights or unknown information kept by either governments or other criminal groups. The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) reported in 2014, 61 journalists’ lives were taken by unknown attackers worldwide. The concerning matter about this issue, is that most of the aggressors were never condemned or punished for their crimes.



(Committee to Protect Journalists, 2014)

When analyzing the current worldwide situation, the CPJ concluded that almost half of the total attacks made to journalists took place in Middle East, especially in Syria, due to the current armed conflict that have been taking place since the Arab Spring in 2011. One of the most known cases of assault occurred when the recent militant group Islamic State kidnapped journalist James Foley, who was later

executed and made public through social networks. Syria reported around 17 journalists' deaths in 2014. Another country of great danger for these professionals is Iraq, with 5 killings during the past year, most of them while reporting from the clashes that happened between the government and The Islamic State led Insurgency. As of today, the previous two countries mentioned, along with Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories are determined as the most hazardous worldwide.

Additionally to this research, the CPJ resolved that almost 38% of the deaths disclosed occurred in combat or crossfire. Finally, it is also important to mention that a great amount of journalists attacked worked on their own as local freelancers who did not had any protection from journalism networks such as BBC or CNN News; making the journalists civilians that are part of a war crime. Actions need to be made, since it is a problem that is taking more and more victims every day, and neither consequences for the attackers, nor security for the journalists are given by the governments.

The Office of The High Commissioner of Human Rights (OHCHR) has been debating and trying to find viable solutions to this security problem since previous years. It has been urged for the states to stop the impunity to these crimes, and to have special investigations for the assaults toward journalists. In 2014, the UN Human Rights Commissioner, Navi Pillay, stated that "Every act of violence committed against a journalist that goes uninvestigated, and unpunished, is an open invitation for further violence. Ensuring accountability for attacks against journalists is a key element in preventing future attacks". In addition, UNESCO in 2012 released the "UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity" that has been used in various countries in Middle East. As it has been established there are current conflicts that have to be solved; now is the time to do it.

In order to help you with the research of the topic, we provide you with a questionnaire that will help you with the development of your position paper,

- What is the current situation towards journalists in your country?
- How does this situation affect journalists and media professionals in your country?
- What laws exist in your country to protect journalists?
- Have existing laws decreased violence against journalists?
- What does your delegation proposes to decrease the aggressions to journalists?

You can watch these videos for more information:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gFZoqo9uFmE>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Fme2gxBSFA>

Sources

- ANF- News Desk. (December 23, 2014). Middle East deadliest region for journalists, CPJ research reveals. Retrieved from <http://en.firatajans.com/news/news/middle-east-deadliest-region-for-journalists-cpj-research-reveals.htm>
- 70 Journalists Killed in 2013/Motive Confirmed. (n.d.). Retrieved November 28, 2014, from <https://cpj.org/killed/2013/>
- How does international humanitarian law protect journalists in armed-conflict situations? (-ICRC) Retrieved November 28, 2014, from <https://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/interview/protection-journalists-interview-270710.htm>