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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Written statement* submitted by the Press Emblem Campaign, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[13 February 2012]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

Journalists need special protection in order to avoid summary executions

According to the figures registered by the Press Emblem Campaign (PEC), 107 journalists have been killed during the current year in 39 countries -- around 2 every week. The revolutions of the Arab Spring resulted in at least 20 journalists killed.

The year 2011 was particularly dangerous for media work because of the coverage of the uprisings in many Arab countries. In addition to the killing of more than 20 journalists during the Arab Spring, more than 100 others were attacked, intimidated, arrested and wounded in countries of the region, including Egypt, Libya, Syria, Tunisia and Yemen.

For the second year in a row, Mexico has been the most dangerous country for media work with 12 journalists killed. The raging war between the army and the drug cartels in the north explains this heavy toll in Mexico. The casualties could be higher if figures were known for journalists who were victims of enforced disappearances.

Again for the second year in a row, Pakistan comes in second with 11 journalists killed, the majority of whom were killed on the border with Afghanistan.

Iraq is tied for third place with Libya with 7 journalists killed during the Libyan armed conflict. In these 4 countries are concentrated more than one third (37) of all casualties.

Next come the Philippines with 6 killed, Brazil (6) and Honduras (6), then Yemen with 5 killed followed by Somalia (4), Afghanistan, Egypt, India, Peru, and Russia with 3 each.

Two journalists died in Bahrain, 2 in Thailand. One was killed in each of the following countries: Algeria, Azerbaijan, Bolivia, China, Colombia, Ivory Coast, Gaza (OPT), Guatemala, Haiti, Nepal, New Zealand, Nigeria, Uganda, Panama, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Sierra Leone, Syria, Tunisia, Ukraine, Venezuela, and Vietnam.

Latin America the most dangerous region

By region, Latin America leads with 35 killed in one year. In addition to the killing of journalists, threats and attacks against media and their representatives have increased. Press freedom is threatened in many Latin American countries by government tactics to obtain control of information and to discredit, intimidate and prosecute journalists, all of which leads to self-censorship. Asia (excluding the Middle East) is the second most dangerous region with 30 killed, then the Middle East and North Africa with 28 killed. In Africa (excluding North Africa) 9 journalists were killed, in Europe 4 (3 in Russia and 1 in Ukraine).

One year after the beginning of the Arab Spring in Tunisia, improvements are very slow in the field and remnants of the past still prevail in curbing freedom of expression. When people express themselves through social media and internet and flood into the streets in peaceful demonstrations, they are faced with the brutal use of force. One year later, the security apparatus is still using the tactics of the past and hunting down journalists. A real strategy against impunity and for respect for the rule of law should be immediately conducted.

Women journalists in particular paid the highest price when attacked sexually both in Libya and Egypt.

Intentionally targeted

Two thirds of the journalists killed, that is some 70 of the total, were intentionally targeted, especially in Latin America. Others were accidentally killed during demonstrations, in fights, in suicide bombings or in mine explosions. There are half a dozen cases worldwide where the causes leading to the death of journalists are still unclear.

More than two third (68) of the fallen journalists were killed in countries experiencing armed conflict, popular uprisings, repression, terrorism and crime. Others were killed in countries where peace prevailed.

Bad start in 2012

Until the end of January, 10 journalists were killed worldwide. Two in Syria and Nigeria and one in each of the following countries: Brazil, Mexico, Pakistan, Philippines, Somalia and Thailand.

Some progress

In view of this serious situation, the PEC applauds the governments and international organizations for their growing awareness that the journalism profession faces growing dangers in totally novel situations.

A number of countries have launched initiatives for the protection of journalists, and a number of conferences have been organized to this effect, notably that of UNESCO in Paris in September and one in Vienna organized by the Austrian government in November.

In the Amman - Dead Sea forum organized by the Centre for Defending Freedom of Journalists (CDFJ), a resounding call echoed throughout the forum for an Arab convention for the protection of journalists, which would draw on the current document circulated as the PEC's December 2007 draft Convention on the protection of journalists.

International Conference to Protect Journalists in dangerous situations

The Conference took place on 22-23 January 2012 in Doha (Qatar), under the auspices of the National Human Rights Committee of the Kingdom of Qatar.

The Outcome document of the International Conference declares:

- that although the United Nations and its agencies have a wide range of tools and instruments which can address the issue of safety, scores of journalists and media workers continue to be killed every year while carrying out their professional responsibilities. Many of such abuses are not investigated and remain unpunished and
- that renewed and urgent action is necessary to press for robust implementation to the existing mechanisms and procedures by increasing the effectiveness of monitoring and enforcement of the current instruments.

The International Conference recommends:

To the United Nations and its agencies

- Implement forthwith their latest plan of action agreed at their Paris Autumn (2011) conference and enhance their working with specialised non-governmental organisations dedicated to the safety of journalists and media worker.
- Develop new tools to bind all states to acknowledge and accept a standing obligation to provide particular safeguards and protection for journalists beyond the provisions of UN Security Council resolution reminding states of their obligations to give journalists protection in peacetime as in war.
 - Adopt ambitious reforms to its mechanisms and procedures such as through regional security organizations, expanding the mandates of Special Rapporteurs and concerned UN bodies, organizing emergency alerts and missions, considering intrusive inspections and mandatory sanctions—developing or renewing existing systems, developing further monitoring and peer review processes and work towards an ultimate goal setting up an international treaty so that countries can collectively adopt a set of radical new measures to afford credible protection to journalists.
 - Expand the current legal provisions beyond the obligation to protect journalists against attacks on their life, and include forced disappearances and kidnapping (by state or private actors), arbitrary arrest, intimidation, deportation/refusal of entry, confiscation/ damage to property, and new forms of violence experienced by journalists during the 2011 Arab spring, and further develop human rights council resolutions S-2/1 and S-9/1 concerning the attacks on media installations and allowing access as well as safe media corridors in conflict zones.
 - Asking the Human Rights Council to appoint a special rapporteur on the protection of journalists, requesting the High Commissioner for Human Rights (HCHR) to create a unit to follow up media cases.

To governments

- Respect the letter and spirit of all international instruments they signed up to, of the binding and non-binding resolutions, covenants and declarations of the United Nations.
- Include an assessment of other country's record when granting aid and other development assistance. International development institutions, such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, should also scrutinize a country's record on violence against journalists when assessing the granting of aid and other assistance.
- Strengthen national laws including criminal laws and overhaul justice system to end impunity and to provide judicial and legislative assistance to prevent serious violations of international humanitarian laws including the targeting of journalists.
- Agree that families of killed journalists have a right to compensation directly or through media institutions and establish a solidarity fund for the victims.

To news organizations

- Acknowledge their duty of care for all their journalists, in particular news gatherers, staff or freelance and their responsibility to provide safety training and equipment for dangerous situations in peace time as in war.

- Arrange trauma counselling through specialized organizations.
- Negotiate at all time with journalists and their representatives all issues of safety in news coverage, including safety protocols, medical care, life insurance, financial compensation, equality to provide those social guarantees to all, including freelancers.
- Increase awareness and knowledge of legal international agreements and conventions as well as regional ones.
- Include awareness of all aspects of the region under coverage in any training.
- Include special training for women in view of the attacks such as sexual harassment and the spate of other violent attacks directly targeted at women.

To journalists

- Develop of culture of being responsible for their own safety and seek out training before travelling to conflict zones.
 - Develop a culture of solidarity, in particular a duty of care towards each other.
 - Be ready at all time to help record any incidents of attacks to provide evidence to cases of violence.
 - Develop an understanding of how the military works and be ready how to handle them.
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