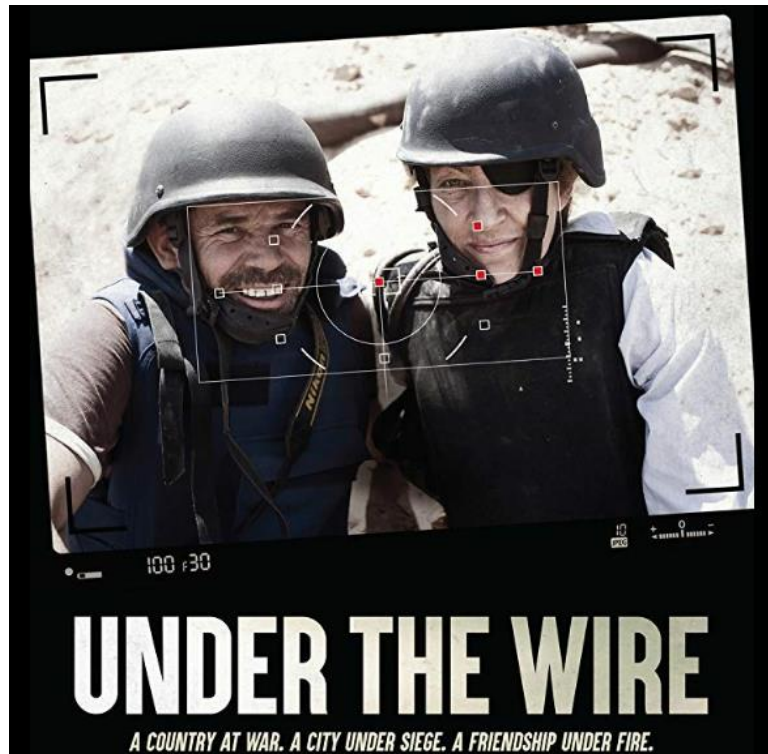


2019 International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists at UNHQ



*Strengthening international cooperation
to end impunity for crimes and attacks against journalists*

**Tuesday, 5 November 2019
3 to 5 PM, Conference Room 6, UNHQ, NY**

Click [here](#) to RSVP

In 2019, **UNESCO** and the **New York Group of Friends for the Protection of Journalists**¹ are marking the International Day at the UN Headquarters in New York with the **screening of the documentary film “Under the Wire”**. Legendary war correspondent Marie Colvin and photographer Paul Conroy were no strangers to danger but their last mission together would shock the world, this is the story of that fatal, final mission. An adaptation of Conroy's book, Chris Martin's film unfolds like a thriller showing the horrors that those who risk their lives to uncover the truth endure.

The event aims to strengthen the fight against impunity and inscribe this issue in the larger framework to protect fundamental human rights and the realization of Sustainable Development. **Impunity for crimes against journalists constitutes one of the main factors fuelling the cycle of violence against the exercise of freedom of expression.** It weakens not only freedom of expression and access to information, but all other fundamental rights.

¹ Argentina, Austria, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cape Verde, Chile, Costa Rica, Ghana, Greece, France, Jordan, Latvia, Lebanon, Lithuania, Sweden, Republic of Korea, Switzerland, Tunisia, United Kingdom, United States and Uruguay.



Background

Since its proclamation in 2013, the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists (IDEI) has gained significant support by all actors involved in the promotion and protection of freedom of expression and the safety of journalists. **With over 1,000 journalists killed in the world in the last 12 years (2007 to 2018) according to UNESCO's 2019 Report on 'World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development', and only one case out of ten judicially solved, the level of impunity for crimes against journalists remains terribly high.** This high level of impunity imposes a climate of fear in many parts of the world, not only for media professionals but also for the whole society, which is detrimental to the free circulation of information and the expression of opinions and ideas for all citizens.

Impunity for crimes against journalists, and for the countless other forms of violence against them, such as arbitrary detention, tortures, kidnapping, gender-based violence, threats or harassments, are hindering the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals and in particular SGD 16, which strives to promote peaceful and inclusive societies. More specifically, it affects the realization of target 16.10 that aims to ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms.

Combatting impunity for crimes against journalists is an important step in addressing the high levels of journalists killed, as it perpetuates the cycle of violence against them and sends a chilling message across society. IDEI commemorations offer a unique opportunity to raise awareness and promote a dialogue and collaboration between all actors involved, including UN agencies, regional bodies, Member States, members of the judiciary, civil society and the media, to address this issue.

UNGA Resolutions

On the **initiative of Greece**, the United Nations General Assembly adopted **Resolution [A/RES/68/163](#)** at its 68th session in 2013, in order to raise awareness on this issue, foster actions of all stakeholders and curb the cycle of violence. The Resolution urged Member States to implement definite measures to counter the present culture of impunity and proclaimed **2 November** as the **International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists (IDEI)**. The date was chosen in memory of the assassination in Mali of two French journalists, Ghislaine Dupont and Claude Verlon, which took place on 2 November 2013.

This action was followed by UNGA **Resolution [A/RES/69/185](#)** adopted in 2014, recognising that **everyone's right to freedom of expression depends upon the safety of journalists and an end to impunity for crimes against them**. UNGA **Resolution [A/RES/70/162](#)** adopted in 2015 as well as **Resolution [A/RES/72/175](#)** of 2017, both reinforced the commitment of the UN General Assembly to protect the safety of journalists and end Impunity. In **2019**, the UNGA's 3rd Committee is set to adopt a renewed biannual resolution on the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity.

Connection with SDGs

The international **Agenda for 2030** set out by the **Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs) adds impetus to the challenge of ensuring journalist safety and ending impunity. **Goal 16** on “**Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions**” is particularly relevant to the issue of safety of journalists, as it calls for the promotion of the rule of law and equal access to justice for all, as well as ensuring public access to information and protecting fundamental freedoms (**target 16.10**).

The safety of journalists and ending impunity for crimes against them are major assets in ensuring fundamental freedoms and human rights, in particular freedom of expression and public access to information. Accordingly, the UN has developed a specific indicator to review the **implementation of target 16.10**: “Number of verified cases of killing, kidnapping, enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention and torture of journalists, associated media personnel, trade unionists and human rights advocates”.

Role of UNESCO

UNESCO publishes its findings related to the safety of journalists in its Global Report on ‘[World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development](#)’. It attests that across the world, journalism is under fire. While more individuals have access to content than ever before, the combination of political polarization and technological change have facilitated the rapid spread of hate speech, misogyny and disinformation, often leading to disproportionate restrictions on freedom of expression.

Moreover, to reinforce prevention, the ‘[UN Plan of Action on Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity](#)’ recommends working in cooperation with governments, media houses, professional associations and NGOs to conduct awareness raising campaigns. A number of engaged Member States have formed a **Group of Friends on the Safety of Journalists** in New York, Paris, Geneva and Vienna. They are leading initiatives to raise awareness on the crimes against journalists and the challenge to bring the perpetrators to justice.

International seminar in Mexico

The 2019 IDEI main event will be held in Mexico City on 7 November, organized by UNESCO with Mexican authorities, international, regional and, national stakeholders. The one-day seminar, entitled “[Strengthening regional cooperation to end impunity for crimes and attacks against journalists in Latin America](#)”, will seek to encourage the exchange of best practices and identify pragmatic solutions. It will aim to advance dialogues and strategies to strengthen regional cooperation on safety of journalists and ending impunity in Latin America.

The commemoration of IDEI through a regional seminar in Latin America represents a continuation of a series of seminars at the regional level, which raise awareness and initiated projects to tackle this issue. Previous commemorations of IDEI were held in Latin America (San Jose, Costa Rica) in 2014, Europe (Strasbourg, France) in 2015, Africa (Arusha, Tanzania) in 2016, Asia (Colombo, Sri Lanka) in 2017 and the Middle East (Beirut, Lebanon) in 2018. The first three events were organized in partnerships with regional courts of human rights, which are essential actors to set regional standards to foster freedom of expression and fight impunity.

Programme for the screening at UNHQ

The event at UNHQ will provide an opportunity for all stakeholders to focus on the importance of ending impunity for crimes against journalists. The main outcome of this mobilization is underscoring the importance of the fundamental right to freedom of expression and its corollaries such as access to information, freedom of the press and the safety of journalists.

- Moderation by **UNESCO**
- Opening by Representative from **Group of Friends for Protection of Journalists**
- Discussion with **Chris Martin**, Director, “*Under the Wire*” (TBC)
- Testimony from **Cathleen Colvin**, sister of **Marie Colvin**
- Testimony from **Marie Solange Poinot**, mother of **Ghislaine Dupont**, the Radio France Internationale journalist murdered in Mali on 2 November 2013 alongside **Claude Verlon**