

Committee:The Social,Humanitarian And Cultural Commitee(SOCHUM)

Country:Republic of Korea

Delegate:Buse Zeybekoğlu

Agenda Item:Accomplishing Freedom of Press and Protection of Journalists Within Conflict Zones

The role of the press is crucial and essential as they are the voices of truth and accountability. In conflict zones, journalists risk their lives to report matters such as human rights violation, war crimes and the effects it has on civilians. Under IHL and Article 48 of Additional Protocol 1, radio and television facilities are considered “civilian objects” and must not be directed operations unless they take part in the hostilities and contribute to the conduct of the hostilities. The protection given to the journalists should not be taken away merely because they disseminate propaganda which indirectly may support the war effort.

In conflict zones such as but not only limited to Gaza, Ukraine and Sudan; civilians, civilian structures and humanitarian workers are under constant attack and this matter indicates deep crisis of accountability to international humanitarian and human rights law. Journalists are being killed at an unimaginable and unspeakable rate unseen in modern history. The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) reported that as of 31 May 2024 the estimated number is 107 journalists and media workers. The overall picture is painfully clear. Journalist, whom sacrifice their lives for international peace all around the world are being unrightfully and most importantly brutally assaulted, silenced and murdered. This is a matter of significant violence and injustice, shall be adressed properly and resolved.

The Republic of Korea views the freedom of press as a core subject for democracy. As the Republic of Korea has gone through a transformation from an authoritarian rule to democracy, it acknowledges the importance of the protection of the journalists.As a UNESCO member state, South Korea supports the “UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity.” Furthermore, it has endorsed significant UN resolutions, A/RES/68/163 and A/HRC/33/2 for instance. Although not actively involved in key crisises, it has emphasized the importance of information that are free of parties and expressed concern over human rights violations repeatedly. It supports global cooperation with member states which will enhance and ensure protection for press freedom and journalists.

As for the matter of possible concerns, the Republic of Korea believes that many actions may leşsen the severity of the impact and they are well within accessibility. A UN supported framework to protect the journalists in conflict zones, money and material aids such as medical assistance that is immediate, establishment of legal task force to ensure accountability and investigate crimes against journalists, improvement of independent monitoring systems such as UNESCO’s Journalist Safety Indicators for transparency are possible steps that can be taken to ensure international peace and protection of journalists.

Overall, the Republic of Korea strongly believes that the freedom of press is key in upholding peace, accountability and human rights and journalist are the pillars for this matter. From its democratic value to technological strength, South Korea stands firmly and ready for all kinds of support.It encourages all countries to share this values and calls upon them to ensure international peace and the truth will be secured, even though it is faces with conflicts.

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