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**COMMITTEE: The Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee (SOCHUM)**

**ISSUE: Accomplishing Freedom of Press and Protection of Journalists Within Conflict Zones**

**COUNTRY: People’s Republic of China**

The protection of journalists and the freedom of the press in conflict areas has become a deeply concerning issue nowadays for many member states. While trying to report from conflict areas, journalists face serious obstacles which, in some cases, may lead to a journalist's death. In times of war and unrest, journalists play a crucial role in informing individuals. When thinking of a war or unrest, access to truthful information can be overlooked. Still, access to information, more precisely access to true and unbiased information can be difficult to reach at wartimes. (1) According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization’s [UNESCO Observatory](https://www.unesco.org/en/safety-journalists/observatory) of Killed Journalists, more than 1,600 journalists have been killed since 1993. The 2023 RSF World Freedom Index data shows that Norway, Sweden and Denmark are at the top three of the list, making them the safest countries for journalists in the world. (2) Reports emphasize that this year 42 journalists lost their lives in conflict areas, with 18 of them being journalists killed in Palestine, which had the highest number of deaths. Other countries such as Ukraine, Colombia, Iraq, Lebanon, Myanmar, and Sudan experienced lots of deaths, showcasing the increased dangers in areas intertwined with violence and instability. As the delegate of the People’s Republic of China, we acknowledge the importance of journalists’ safety in conflict areas while emphasizing the importance of such precautions which are going to be taken must respect cultural values, national sovereignty, and security of a government's stance. We believe that the most fundamental purpose should be ensuring not only the implementation of beneficial solutions but also possible, applicable solutions.

The international community through organizations such as the United Nations has taken significant steps to prevent any kind of harm to journalists in conflict areas. There are several NGOs and UN bodies that are leading the way in carrying out these actions. Reporters Without Borders, a global NGO that advocates for global press freedom, and the Committee to Protect Journalists, a non-profit organization that aims to protect the rights of journalists work for the safety of journalists in conflict zones. UN organizations such as UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) and OHCHR (United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights) are also closely involved in the issue. First and foremost, the **UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity** (2012), lauched by UNESCO, builds awareness on the issue and strenghtens legal frameworks while creating safety mechanisms for journalsits. The UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity addresses the fundamental aspects of **prevention,protection,** and**prosecution.**  This brings together UN bodies, national authorities, media, and civil society organizations. The Geneva Convention and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR, 1948) proclaims the right to freedom of opinion and expression, which paves the way for a safer environment for journalists. The UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/68/163 focuses on the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity by “condemning all attacks and violence against journalists and media workers such as torture,extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances and arbitrary detention, as well as intimidation and harassment in both conflict and non-conflict situations” in its second operative clause.

Despite the position that China holds in the world, China is usually misunderstood and accused of being suppressive because of the legal protections it deploys for its citizens safety. China is a country that gives importance to national sovereignty and directly opposes interference in internal affairs. The international media has frequently described China's legislative approach as a kind of oppression in recent years, but in reality, those steps were a component of a greater strategy to maintain the stability and unity of a large and diverse country. Interference in China's internal affairs is a direct threat of violence and is completely unacceptable to the Chinese government. Thus, China recognizes the power of the media and how it may influence public opinion, therefore it takes the necessary steps to prevent misinformation and social unrest. At the same time, it retains its commitment to the safety and protection of its authorized journalists, especially in places affected by violence. (4) The Constitution the People's Republic of China, Article 35 declares *"Citizens of the People’s Republic of China have the freedom of speech, of the press, of assembly, of association, of procession, and of demonstration."* This showcases China gives importance to the freedom of speech, which creates a wide area for journalists to state their own thoughts while respecting the countries stance. China’s Cybersecurity law and Data Security Law protects journalist from cyberattacks and harrassments. Another action taken by China is attending the BRICS Media Forum as a co-hoster. This enables News organizations from Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa to collaborate through this platform. China prioritizes a strong emphasis on initiatives to train journalists, journalist safety infrastructure, and conflict-resilient journalism in LDCs. China takes place in discussions for the safety of journalists through UNESCO platforms. The representetives of China emphasize the imortance of respecting cultural differences in media standards. Also, China is a signatory of Geneva Convention and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that advocates the safety of press all around the World. Unfortunately, China still has to take further steps to maintain balance and protect the press at the same time. The imbalances in China about press safety concern press groups and media companies. China ranks 172nd out of 180 countries for press freedom and safety according to the Index of Reporters Without Borders. (3) CPJ has investigated attacks against more than 20 journalists since 2002, and many more cases have been reported in the Chinese media. Further steps must be taken both in China and in the world itself to prevent misunderstandings and maintain a truthful environment where all countries can have trust in other countries without being concerned about their citizen's and government's safety.

All in all, it’s undeniable that there is an urgent need for global frameworks and coordinated efforts upon the safety of press in conflict zones. Despite UN’s actions such as the Geneva Convention and the UDHR, we must think how to solve this issue without jeopardizing the national sovereignty of governments. First of all, mediation activities should be held by UN bodies to prevent any rising tension between countries that contradict each other and may cause any conflicts. This can also include annual conferences held to discuss the safety of the press and journalists in conflict zones. We must always remember one thing: The more we remain seized on an issue, the higher the chances of solving or reaching a consensus is. By establishing a Neutral Press Protection Protocol (NPPP) under UNESCO, journalists working in high-risk locations might be objectively identified and supported by receiving equipment, protective training, and verified press IDs.

 Through 24/7 support networks, Regional Journalist Safety Hotlines and Emergency Lanes can provide prompt help. The establishment of the United Nations Media Infrastructure Development Fund (UNMIDF) would enable states to apply for assistance in constructing secure press facilities and communication channels, thereby enhancing media resilienc

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