



The World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers promotes and defends press freedom, and helps independent news publishing companies to succeed in their transformation process, increase their business, and perform their crucial role in open societies

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# PROTECT JOURNALISTS

[www.ProtectOurJournalists.org](http://www.ProtectOurJournalists.org)

Paris, France 3 May, World Press Freedom Day 2016

For immediate release

On 3 May, World Press Freedom Day, we appeal for your support and endorsement in our latest campaign to prioritise the safety of journalists - an issue we know is of deep concern to you all.

Safety and protection are key areas of focus for WAN-IFRA's press freedom advocacy work. You will recall honouring our fallen colleagues during Congress in Washington D.C. in 2015, a moment of reflection during which we dedicated our prestigious Golden Pen of Freedom to 'Journalists Killed in the Line of Duty'. It was felt the situation for the safety of journalists had deteriorated to such a low point that the award was necessary as a means to highlight the urgent need for all stakeholders to step up and end attacks against journalists.

WAN-IFRA recently began collaborating with Reporters Without Borders to actively push for the creation of the role of Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for the Safety of Journalists.

Political will is the most important factor in making real, long-lasting and accountable change to the way journalists are protected and their safety is addressed worldwide. Recognising that media themselves have an active role in ensuring all they can do to protect the profession, nevertheless the majority of these measures hinge on having a committed State apparatus, judicial system and rule of law to back them up. So far, compliance at State-level with the various legal frameworks put in place to better protect journalists has been severely lacking. It is hoped that the creation of a designated role at the highest level of the United Nations will greatly facilitate compliance with the various existing international mechanisms and legal obligations available.

In the meantime, journalists and media professionals are still being attacked and killed, with virtual impunity, in record numbers. Clearly, this must stop. By supporting the recommendation for a Special Representative, governments around the world really would set the foundations to make this happen.

On one level, WAN-IFRA, will be seeking the support of our community to help lobby Foreign Ministries and UN Ambassadors to put their weight behind the proposal and support an eventual vote at the UN General Assembly. Building this critical mass of support on the voting floor is vital to ensuring the eventual role has a clear mandate, is effective, and has real impact.

Secondly, we are launching a public campaign to highlight more generally the active support from within the media industry for the creation of a Special Representative. For this, we are asking you to [endorse the recommendation](#) and to allow us to use your name, the name of your media company and its logo to add to an already impressive wave of support.

We urge you to visit the dedicated website [www.ProtectOurJournalists.org](http://www.ProtectOurJournalists.org), register your support, and give as much coverage to the issue of safety for our journalists as you can.

Over the coming months we will be approaching the WAN-IFRA membership and our colleagues around the globe to lend their support to the campaign to appoint a Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for the Safety of Journalists. A UN General Assembly vote on the issue could be scheduled for as early as the end of this year; our efforts at driving the industry's commitment to this will be crucial as States decide whether or not to back the recommendation. We hope that our solidarity in this will not go unnoticed.

Now is the time to act. Now is the time to **#ProtectOurJournalists**.

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WAN-IFRA, based in Paris, France, and Frankfurt, Germany, with subsidiaries in Singapore, Mexico and India, is the global organisation of the world's newspapers and news publishers. It represents more than 18,000 publications, 15,000 online sites and over 3,000 companies in more than 120 countries. Its core mission is to defend and promote press freedom, quality journalism and editorial integrity and the development of prosperous businesses.