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UN experts: Time to end global crisis of impunity for crimes against journalists

International Day to End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists 2 November 2018

GENEVA (31 October 2018) - Speaking ahead of the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists, UN human rights experts* strongly urge States to take firm steps to ensure accountability for violence and attacks against journalists, reversing and resisting the appalling trend of impunity. Their statement reads:

"Journalists around the world face threats and attacks, often instigated by government officials, organised crime, or terrorist groups. Political leaders incite hostility by framing reporters as 'enemies of the people' or 'terrorists'. Hundreds of journalists are detained or forcibly disappeared because of their journalist work. Governments conduct surveillance of journalists and undermine digital security as part of the daily attack on free and independent media. Press freedom organisations conservatively estimate that dozens of reporters have been killed this year alone.

States have not responded adequately to these crimes against journalists. Most recently, States and the international community, including the United Nations, have failed to address the enforced disappearance and murder of Saudi journalist, Jamal Khashoggi. The only way forward is to establish an independent, transparent and credible investigation into his murder, one authorised by and reporting to the United Nations. Anything short of a complete investigation, recognised as such by the international community, will make a mockery of government claims of commitment to the safety of journalists.

Impunity for crimes against journalists triggers further violence and attacks. We urge States to comply with their obligations to conduct impartial, prompt, thorough, independent and effective investigations, including international investigations where necessary. Perpetrators, including those who order or otherwise bear responsibility, must be brought to justice and held to account. Victims and their families should have access to remedies.

As a matter of urgency, we call on all States to implement the international legal framework on safety of journalists. High-level commitments, such as the latest resolution on the safety of journalists adopted this year by the Human Rights Council, must be implemented. We call on all leaders worldwide to end their role in the incitement of hatred and violence against the media. These last weeks have demonstrated once again the toxic nature and outsized reach of political incitement against journalists, and we demand that it stop."

ENDS

*The UN experts: **Mr. David Kaye**, *Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression*, **Ms. Agnes Callamard**, *Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial,*

[summary or arbitrary executions](#); Mr. Iae-Ung Baik (Vice Chair), Mr. Bernard Duhaime (Chair), Ms. Houria Es-Slami, Mr. Luciano Hazan, Mr. Henrikas Mickevičius, **Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances**.

The Special Rapporteurs are part of what is known as the [Special Procedures](#) of the Human Rights Council. Special Procedures, the largest body of independent experts in the UN Human Rights system, is the general name of the Council's independent fact-finding and monitoring mechanisms that address either specific country situations or thematic issues in all parts of the world. Special Procedures' experts work on a voluntary basis; they are not UN staff and do not receive a salary for their work. They are independent from any government or organization and serve in their individual capacity.

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This year is the **70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights**, adopted by the UN on 10 December 1948. The Universal Declaration – translated into a world record 500 languages – is rooted in the principle that "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights." It remains relevant to everyone, every day. In honour of the 70th anniversary of this extraordinarily influential document, and to prevent its vital principles from being eroded, we are urging people everywhere to **Stand Up for Human Rights**: www.standup4humanrights.org

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