

Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on the occasion of the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists, 2 November 2017

Press contacts

Catherine Ray

Lead EEAS spokesperson

+32 2 296 99 21

+32 498 96 99 21

Maja Kocijančič

EEAS spokesperson

+32 2 298 65 70

+32 498 98 44 25

On the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists, the European Union commends the work of journalists in uncovering abuses of power, shining a light on corruption and human right violations, and questioning received opinion, often putting themselves at risk of intimidation, violence and death. An independent and free media is the basis of a participatory and pluralist democracy, and a tool to make governments accountable for their actions.

An attack on journalists represents an attack on democracy and pluralistic societies. Information comes to us at a price: journalists are still being persecuted, detained or even killed, not only in situations of armed conflict, but also in peacetime, including in the European Union, as we have sadly witnessed only a few weeks ago. Violence against journalists and media actors not only represents an attack on the victim, but also limits the ability of the public to access information and ideas of all kinds, both online and offline.

The EU will continue to use all appropriate external policy and financial instruments to enhance the quality of journalism, access to public information and freedom of expression. The EU plays a key role in funding the European Centre for Press and Media freedom (ECPMF) and provides targeted protection through Human Rights Defenders programmes.

We condemn killings, acts of violence, intimidation and harassment against journalists and other media actors in the strongest possible terms. We expect State authorities to uphold their international obligations by protecting journalists against intimidation, threats and violence, irrespective of their

source, whether governmental, judicial, religious, economic or criminal. Any alleged unlawful killing, ill-treatment, threat or attack against journalists, whether by State or non-State actors, should be promptly investigated in an effective and independent manner, with a view to prosecuting the perpetrators of such crimes and bringing them to justice. Any impunity for these crimes is a blow to democracy and to the fundamental rights such as freedom of expression.

[Download as pdf](#)