

'Injustice against journalists costly for society,' says UNESCO chief on International Day

2 November 2017 – Justice must be done for the murder of journalists, who perform important functions in taking forward fundamental freedoms and bolstering the strength of societies, a senior United Nations official said Thursday, marking the International Day to end impunity for crimes against them.

Justice is a [cornerstone](#) of a free society. It dissuades those who threaten freedom of expression and emboldens those who stand to defend it,” said Irina Bokova, the Director-General of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ([UNESCO](#)), in her message for the [International Day](#), observed annually on 2 November.

The date was chosen in commemoration of the assassination of two French journalists in Mali on 2 November 2013.

This is why injustice against journalists is so costly for all societies,” she added.

From 2006 to 2016, at least 930 journalists were killed. In 2016 alone, some 102 journalists were killed in the line of duty. Worryingly, more than nine out of 10 cases, the perpetrators are never brought to justice.

We must ensure justice is done for every journalist killed,” she declared.

Journalists must be defended through concerted action by Governments, supported by the UN, working with all relevant actors, from international regional organizations, judiciaries and media to private companies, academia and civil society.

This partnership for action was embodied UNESCO's recent Multi-Stakeholder Consultation, held in Geneva to strengthen implementation of the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity.

On Wednesday in Geneva, two UN experts warned that the world is witnessing a “downward spiral of attacks” on journalists, spurred on by hate speech even from senior politicians.

Speaking on the eve of International Day, the Special Rapporteurs on arbitrary, summary and extrajudicial executions, Agnes Callamard, and on freedom of expression, David Kaye, said that when authorities [fail to follow up such attacks](#) with independent and impartial investigations, the killers and their allies achieve their objectives.

The attacks need to stop, so too does the public demonization of reporting

and specific media outlets and reporters by political leaders at the highest levels, they added.