



Resolution 29 "Condemnation of violence against journalists"

General Conference 29th Session, Paris, November 1997

The General Conference,

Recalling Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that "everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers",

Confirming that freedom of expression is a fundamental right of everyone and is essential to the realization of all the rights set forth in international human rights instruments,

Also recalling the American Convention on Human Rights (Pact of San Jose, Costa Rica), the European Convention for the protection of Human rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the African Charter on Human Rights and Peoples' rights, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,

Bearing in mind resolution 59(I) of the United General Assembly, of 14 December 1946, in which it is stated that freedom of information is a fundamental human right, General Assembly resolution 45/76 A of 11 December 1990 on information in the service of humanity, and resolution 1997/27, of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, on the right to freedom of opinion and expression,

Reaffirming that the rights to life and to liberty and integrity and security of person and also to freedom of expression are fundamental human rights that are recognized and guaranteed by international conventions and instruments,

Considering:

- that over the past ten years an increasing number of journalists have been assassinated for exercising their profession, a development denounced by various international organizations, and that the majority of these crimes still go unpunished,
- that this reality in the Americas, for example, has been corroborated by the Inter-American Press Association (IAPA) through investigations conducted in various countries and by special missions,

Mindful that, as a consequence of the Hemisphere Conference on Unpunished Crimes against journalists convened by IAPA, several professional organizations have decided to engage in specific joint action to shed light on unpunished crimes against journalists,

Conscious that the assassination of journalists goes beyond depriving people of their lives as it involves a curtailment of freedom of expression, with all that this implies as a limitation on the freedoms and rights of society as a whole,

1. ***Invites the Director-General:***

- to condemn assassination and any physical violence against journalists as a crime against society, since this curtails freedom of expression and, as a consequence, the other rights and freedoms set forth in international human rights instruments;
- to urge that the competent authorities discharge their duty of preventing, investigating and punishing such crimes and remedying their consequences;

2. ***Calls upon*** Member states to take the necessary measures to implement the following recommendations:

- that governments adopt the principle that there should be no statute of limitations for crimes against persons when these are perpetrated to prevent the exercise of freedom of information and expression or when their purpose is the obstruction of justice;
- that governments refine legislation to make it possible to prosecute and sentence those who instigate the assassination of persons exercising the right to freedom of expression;
- that legislation provide that the persons responsible for offenses against journalists discharging their professional duties or the media must be judged by civil and/or ordinary courts.

Resolution adopted on the report of Commission IV at the 27th plenary meeting, on 12 November 1997.