



For immediate release – 6 June 2011

PRESS RELEASE

OSCE: Stop Impunity for Violence Against Journalists in Belarus, Russia and Ukraine

London and Vilnius, 06.06.11: On the occasion of the conference on safety of journalists in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) region, set to take place from 7-8 June 2011 in Vilnius, Lithuania, ARTICLE 19 and International Media Support (IMS) are releasing a report titled *No Justice for Journalists in Ukraine, Belarus and Russia: Impunity and Killings of Journalists Go Hand in Hand*. The report documents impunity for violence and disappearances of journalists in Belarus, Russia and Ukraine over the last decade. The report shows that the lack of effective investigation of violence against journalists has had a detrimental effect on freedom of expression and facilitated a climate of impunity and a detrimental effect on freedom of expression. The report documents the inadequate response of the Russian, Belarusian and Ukrainian governments to disappearances and killings of journalists in the last 10 years

“None of the perpetrators behind the murders or disappearances of journalists highlighted in the report have been brought to justice. It is first and foremost political will that is missing to address the impunity for these violations”, comments Dr Agnes Callamard, Executive Director of ARTICLE 19. *“It is crucial that the OSCE prioritises the protection of journalists and increases pressure on these three countries to comply with their international human rights obligations,”* continued Callamard.

Jane Møller Larsen, Head of the IMS Media and Democracy Unit adds: *“IMS insists that threats, attacks and assassinations of journalists be investigated and punished. Not only to give justice to the journalists and their families but also to secure that media can work professionally - to secure pluralism and diversity of the media and avoid self-censorship - and to make sure that the media can play its very important role in society as a watch-dog.”*

The report makes recommendations to the authorities in Ukraine, Belarus and Russia, as well as to the international community, on the legal and political measures needed to protect journalists and defend the right to freedom of expression in these countries. In the report, ARTICLE 19 and IMS urge the three governments publicly to recognise journalists' vulnerability to violence due to their work, condemn attacks, deaths and

disappearances without prejudice, and refrain from any negative propaganda about the journalist in question.

The report presses governments of Belarus, Russia and Ukraine to put in place appropriate and acceptable protection mechanisms for journalists under threat and conduct prompt, effective and independent investigations in cases of violence in order to bring both the perpetrators and the instigators to justice.

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS:

- For media interviews, please contact Mona Samari, Senior Press Officer, ARTICLE 19, mona@article19.org or call + 44 (0) 7515 828 939 or Antonina Cherevko, IMS Programme Officer for Ukraine, at ac@i-m-s.dk or at +380 50 410 27 68.
- Copy of the report in English can be found at the following link:
<http://www.article19.org/pdfs/reports/no-justice-for-journalists-in-ukraine-belarus-and-russia.pdf>
- ARTICLE 19 is an independent human rights organisation that works around the world to protect and promote the right to freedom of expression. It takes its name from Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which guarantees free speech. Read more on www.article19.org
- International Media Support (IMS) is a non-profit organisation working to support local media in countries affected by armed conflict, human insecurity and political transition. In more than 40 countries worldwide, IMS helps to strengthen professional journalism and ensure that media can operate in challenging circumstances. Read more on www.i-m-s.dk .