

<b>Committee/Council:</b>	<b>Social and Humanitarian Committee</b>
<b>Issue:</b>	<b>The safety of Journalists in war-torn areas</b>
<b>Student Officer:</b>	<b>Pateraki Maritina</b>
<b>Position:</b>	<b>Co-Chair</b>

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## Introduction

Nowadays in a world full of unexpected events the safety of journalists is an issue of global concern and their deaths an almost everyday hazard considering the most recent attacks by terrorist groups and the numerous war-torn areas. It can be argued that working as a war correspondent is one of the most dangerous forms of journalism. Journalist deaths are on a constant rise in all international reports. Terrorist attacks, wars between countries, civil wars especially, raise the challenge for journalists to find reliable and accurate information i.e. information vital for the general public and international organizations. They put their lives into danger in order to accomplish the assignment and actually inform the public, because this is the main purpose of their jobs. Their job is to tell the story, not to become the story. Journalists can become a target in situations of violence and danger, although attacks against journalists are considered to be illegal and that is the reason why they need and more specifically require the appropriate skills, special equipment and of course experience to cover war-torn areas.

Moreover media's and a journalist's role is essential in armed conflicts because firstly they are disseminators of information but also media, through the work of journalists, give people the opportunity to form a clear picture of a live conflict-situation. With this "function" the media shows that it is one of the most powerful tools in war-torn areas. One very important fact concerning this issue is that journalists represent freedom of expression and information, which arguably are the foundation of democracy and among the most important human rights that as it is well known are often under threat. The safety of journalists in war areas is not always guaranteed, even though international law provides protection to journalists, because they have always been a significant part of the world's updating on important and current events. It is a fact that during a period of war journalist's work is becoming more dangerous due to two reasons. Firstly because of the constant and non-stop developing technology that in the latest years is commonly used in armed conflicts. Secondly because of the insatiable wants of the public to be provided with first-hand and top news.

Governments play a significant role and sometimes are directly implicated to the killings of journalists. Journalists put their lives and safety at risk and sometimes they lose this fight. Sometimes their deaths are inevitable. Specific and few cases of journalists are investigated. War journalists are in the position in dangerous war-torn areas to please the demands and the assignments of the governments and above all with providing essential information to the public and to the governments to stay safe and most importantly not get imprisoned, kidnapped or even worst killed.

Therefore, during this year's DSAMUN conference, the delegates of the Social and Humanitarian Committee, are called upon to debate and create a resolution, aiming to protect journalists in war-torn areas and thus eliminating the killings, the kidnappings and the imprisonments of the journalists.

### Definition of Key-Terms

#### Safety:

- "The freedom from harm or danger: the state of being safe"
- "A place that is free from harm or danger: a safe place"
- "The state of not being dangerous or harmful"

#### Journalist:

"all representatives of the media, namely all those engaged in the collection, processing and dissemination of news and information including cameramen and photographers, as well as support staff such as drivers and interpreters"

#### War:

*"War is a hostile interaction between two or more States, either in a technical or in a material sense. War in the technical sense is a formal status produces by a declaration of war. War in the material sense is generated by actual use of armed force, which must be comprehensive on the part of at least one party to the conflict."*

#### Journalism :

- "The collection and editing of news for presentation through the media"
- "An academic study concerned with the collection and editing of news or the management of news medium"
- "Writing designed for publication in a newspaper or magazine writing characterized by a direct presentation of facts or description of events without an attempt at interpretation"
- "A function shared by a wide range of actors including professional full time reporters and analysis, as well as bloggers and others who engage in forms of self-publication in print, on the internet or elsewhere"

### War correspondents or journalists:

“War correspondents or journalists are defined as specialized journalists who are present, with the authorization and under protection of the armed forces of a belligerent on the theatre of operations and whose mission is to provide information on events relating to ongoing hostilities”

Merriam-Webster: Dictionary and Thesaurus

## **Background Information**

### War reporting:

War reporting, as it is already mentioned, could be considered as one of the most dangerous forms of journalism but covering a war is also one of the most successful outlets of journalism. Throughout history it appears that war journalists have always been a part of journalism since it originally existed. More precisely during armed conflicts war correspondents or special correspondents, as they were called in the 19th century, were always observers and they had never participated in the events. In the past, before all the new technologies in the field of journalism and media, journalists at the time used to write their side of the story after the war because the stories were longer and they did not have the opportunity journalists have now, the constant connection and access to the web and generally the media and the public. The first well known journalist of the past is Herodotus's account of the Persian Wars. Then Thucydides was an Athenian historian, political philosopher and general. After his exile he observed both sides of the Peloponnesian War and he actually described them in his work. Both of them did not take any part in the events. Furthermore in the 18th century the Baroness Frederika Charlotte Riedesel's Letters and Journals Relating to the War of the American Revolution and the Capture of the German Troops at Saratoga it appears to be the first report of a war by a woman and as far as her description of the events is concerned it is vivid and lively because she was in the middle of the battle. Moreover the Dutch painter Willem van de Velde is considered to be actually the very first modern war correspondent. He, more specifically, in 1653 observed from a boat the naval battle between the Dutch and the English out of which he created some sketches from that spot and afterwards he developed these sketches into a big drawing writing also a report to the States General. Last but not least the development of newspapers and magazines was another modernization at the time with Henry Crabb Robinson covering Napoleon's campaigns in two countries - Spain and Germany - for the Times of London.

### Principles:

On the one hand journalism is a very interesting profession because of its great importance in informing the public with presenting news in a neutral way without the journalist's perspective. On the other hand journalists wishing to cover war-zones are obliged to follow a specific number of principles that shall apply every time so as to be safe and protected during armed conflicts.

i. **Principle 1 (Commitment)**

It is a fact that journalists working in dangerous war-zones have a passion in order to put their lives and safety at risk every single day they spend in that specific war area. During armed conflicts journalists shall discuss and exchange essential information that will help them survive and they automatically help each other and reduce risks and danger. Because working together in such difficult environment gives journalists courage and excitement to continue than working all alone. Along with journalists either freelance or war journalists, the media and public authorities have also a responsibility to seek ways to decrease the risks and help the journalists in every possible way. But in order to achieve and be sent as a war journalist in war-torn areas, the journalists should have passion and commitment to their assignments and to the other journalists or crew and not abandon them and eventually give up.

ii. **Principle 2 (Free Will)**

Free Will is one of the most important and essential rights for people wishing to work in dangerous war areas. As a result journalists need to accept the risks and go on a strictly voluntary basis. But of course, journalists can deny such war assignments. In case that they do deny their sending in war-torn areas the assignment they had to complete will be completed upon request by the reporters or the editors. Editors should pay attention and not exercise any kind of pressure on war journalists that do not wish covering a war-zone.

iii. **Principle 3 (Experience)**

It is obvious that some journalists are more experienced than others and also more aware of how to handle difficult situations for example an accident or a crisis situation. From their previous experiences they know how to act and how to think in such dangerous areas. Editors must choose correctly which journalists they should send. They have to choose journalists who are mature enough and possess the required special skills to cover a war. Junior journalists that do not have a particular good experience and are not used to this kind of pressure like experienced journalists cannot be sent there alone to cover a war for the very first time.

Experienced journalists along with junior ones can work together and achieve a greater work than a journalist all alone during armed conflict. Thus teamwork is one of the most important things journalists can lean on in war-zones. When journalists return from war-torn areas the people responsible for their mission should always debrief them so as to learn from their experiences and collect important survival information to pass to the next journalists.

iv. **Principle 4 (Preparation)**

One of the most important things to survive in dangerous war areas is to be well prepared to overcome every obstacle and every difficulty that may arise. The editors and the journalists need to ensure that they are physically fit and follow the special training that is offered to them in order to prepare them. Are the journalists ready to run for example during the night for their safety? Fitness is really important for their dangerous assignments. In addition to that all journalists, experienced but also juniors, must have a first-aid training in order to work in a hostile and war-torn environment. This special training will focus on security and first-aid training, how to stay safe and protected and how to use the media alerts during armed conflict but also to be aware of the laws and their rights. With the abovementioned training it is believed that journalists will be ready and well prepared to deal with every crisis because this training can make the difference between life and death. Moreover journalists should not only be physically prepared but also they should be informed through research about the situation in the war-zone they wish to work. More specifically information about the social and political situation and the people living in that specific area but also the language. Last but not least it is of great importance that all the journalists need to be aware of their rights. A great number of journalists wishing to work in war areas travel having little or no knowledge of their rights as war reporters and most importantly as civilians. Lastly, they should be aware of the organizations that play a significant role in their protection and safety.

v. **Principle 5 (Equipment)**

The International News Safety Institute(INSI) states that journalists (working in dangerous war areas) “must provide efficient safety equipment and medical and health safeguards appropriate to the threat to all staff and freelancers assigned to hazardous locations”.

Journalists need in war-torn areas the following equipment for their own safety; communication and survival equipment, bullet-proof jackets and helmets and first-aid kits. More specifically war journalists are required to wear special clothes and of course avoid wearing paramilitary-type clothing. Darker colors of clothing are preferable because bright colors will bear attention. Of course objects that are not in need such as personal belongings or jewelry are not recommended as well as shiny objects. As far as the communication is concerned every journalist should be aware of what kind of communication means he or she can use in order to stay safe, but also be careful if someone is spying. If a journalist wishes to use any kind of device he or she needs to make sure that he/she is aware of the advantages and the disadvantages of the device. Last but not least vehicles are also an important part of the equipment needed. During armed conflicts it is of great importance to be with another experienced war correspondent because it is better than travelling and working all alone. Furthermore the vehicle shall be roadworthy and it may not look like a military or military-type vehicle. Lastly all the journalists have a duty to inform their headquarters and coworkers where they are going, the planned time of their arrival and the time or day they wish to return.

vi. **Principle 6 (Insurance)**

Before every journalist’s mission, media management and the editors have the responsibility for the journalists and their assignments in war-torn areas. As a result journalists have insurance to cover disability, illness and even death. But media management and editors should provide this insurance before the sending of journalists in armed conflicts.

vii. **Principle 7 (Psychological counselling)**

Journalists, after their return, have the right to consult

a psychologist in order to report events that shocked them or did not know how to handle specific situations etc. Media managements shall ensure that they have this kind of psychological support so as to be ready for the next time they cover a dangerous war area.

viii. **Principle 8 (Legal protection)**

All types of journalists under the Article 85 of Additional Protocol I of the Geneva Conventions states that they must be treated as civilians only in case of arrest the International Humanitarian Law (IHL) distinguishes war journalists between independent ones. Furthermore under the Article 79 of Additional Protocol of the Geneva Convention states that journalists only during armed conflicts and life-risking assignments are considered to be civilians under the condition that "they do not engage in any actions adverse to their status of civilians and may be held accountable for acts of perfidy pursuant to Article 37 AP (Additional Protocol I) and for spying pursuant to Article 46 AP I. But, as it is already mentioned, any kind of attack against journalists from simple physical injury to even loss of life is illegal and it violates the Protocol and is considered to be a serious crime.

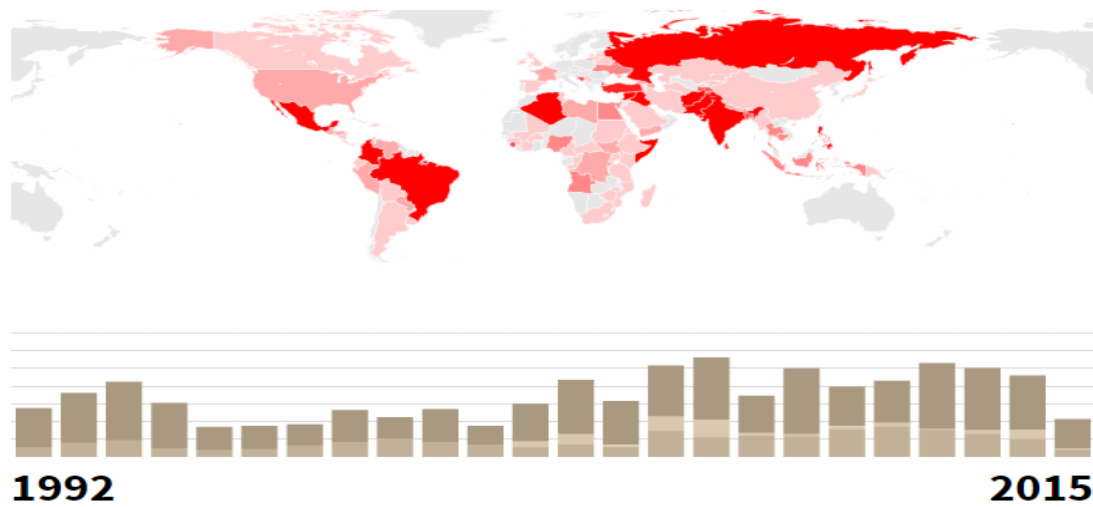
Committee to Protect Journalists:

The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) is an independent non-profit organization that stands for the promotion of press freedom all around the world. It was founded in 1981 by some American correspondents in order to help and protect other journalists and colleagues during armed conflicts on a daily basis. Journalists worldwide would come together as a team so as to defend their rights and their colleagues' rights working in dangerous and hostile environments. That was the main purpose of this organization. The Committee to Protect Journalists guarantees for 30 years the free flow of news by taking action wherever journalists are attacked, imprisoned, killed etc." *When journalists can't speak, we speak up.*"

1. Statistical Analysis: 1992-2015

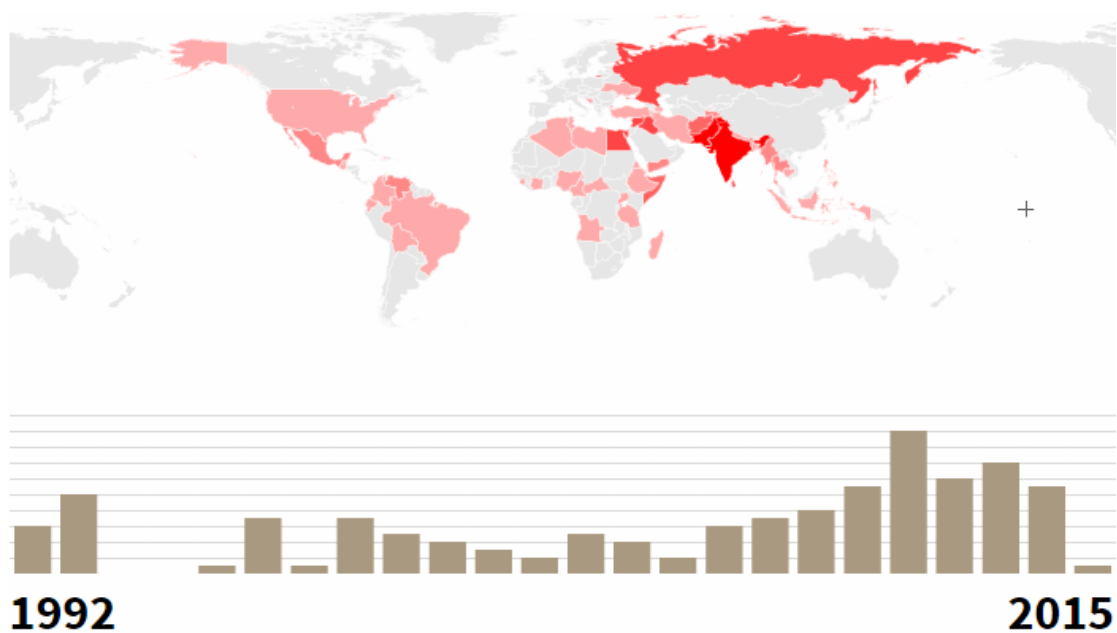
Over the last two decades journalists paid a heavy toll losing their lives during exercising their profession, while most of them were targeted. Journalists have always been a significant target in war zones. Since 1992 until today a great number of journalists have been killed for the sake of covering events in the war-torn areas. More specifically a number of 1135 journalists have been killed worldwide, but out

of the 1135 the 38%, thus 429 has lost their lives during armed conflicts. The map below illustrates in the red spots the 20 deadliest counties worldwide and the bar-charts show the number of journalists murdered each year since 1992.



## 2. Statistical Analysis: 1992-2015

On the other hand the map in the red spots and the bar-charts below by the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) depict the exact number of journalists killed while working on a dangerous assignment and the 10 deadliest countries where these journalists were murdered. More specifically a number of 145 journalists have been killed generally while working, but out of the 145 the 27%, thus 39 journalists or war correspondents working in dangerous war-zones and covering one specific event.



<https://cpj.org>



## Major Countries and Organizations Involved

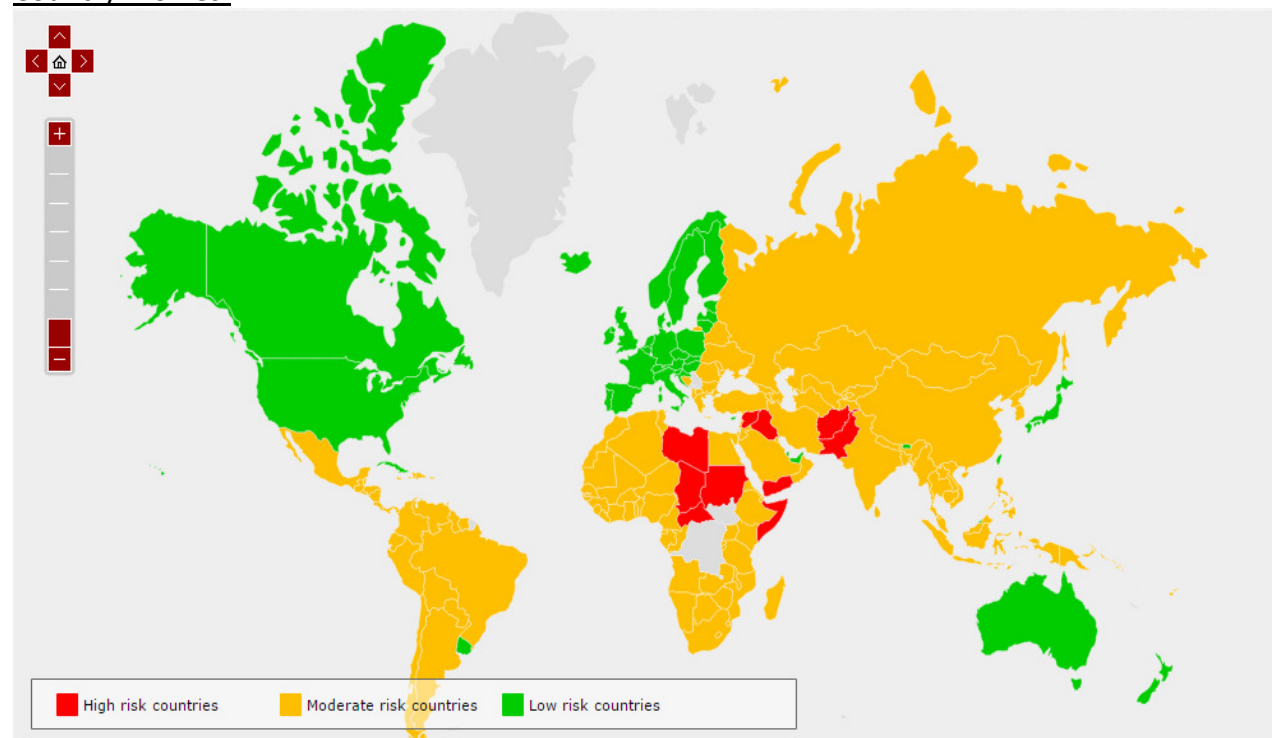
### The International News Safety Institute (INSI):

The International News Safety Institute is one of the most important organizations for the safety of journalists worldwide. The institute provides real-time, practical information, training and research to help journalists around the world in order to do their jobs without danger and fear. Safety is amongst the most essential rights of a human being and it is the only priority of this organization. INSI is staffed by working journalists and overseen by a board comprising senior news executives with real life experience making critical decisions about how far to go to get a story. This institute has members that are aware of the difficulties in war-torn areas and are familiar with the dangers and even worst with the loss of life of their journalists.

### The International Association of Independent Journalists (IAIJ):

The International Association of Independent Journalists is a non-profit association that provides protection, support service and advocacy to professional as well as amateur journalists. The Association founded in 2003 in Toronto, Canada, by Maurice Ali, who was a journalist and a writer, has won an award called as the "IAIJ Award for Journalism" and is presented to journalists who have distinguished themselves in news gathering and investigative reporting. Independent journalists put their lives also at risk and in war-torn areas they need to have all the necessary equipment in order to be safe. This organization provides this type of journalists the appropriate protection so as to accomplish their work.

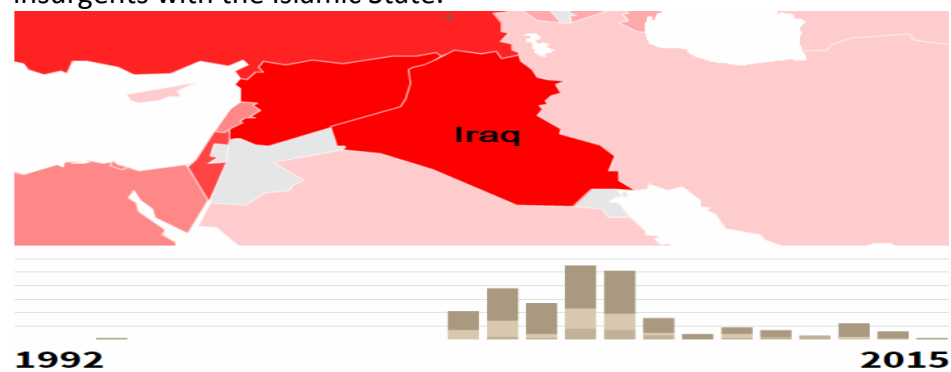
### Country Profiles:



<http://www.newssafety.org/>

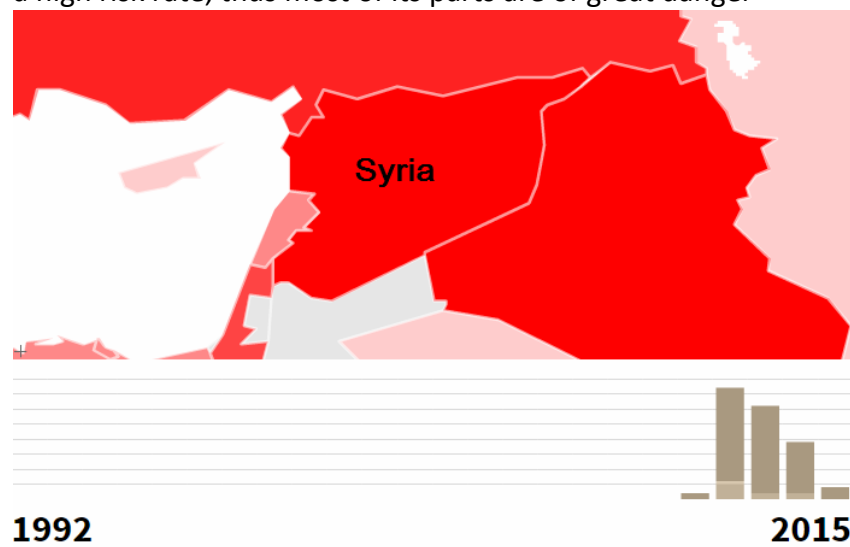
### Iraq:

Due to several terrorist attacks that have happened in the past the country of Iraq is considered to be one of the most dangerous countries for journalists. Not only due to the Iraq War but also attacks by several terrorist organizations such as ISIS it is not only dangerous for the journalists but also for the citizens. ISIS controls many regions of the country and as a result it becomes a threat to the journalists. Furthermore out of a total number of 167 murdered journalists in the country of Iraq, 72% of those, thus 121 journalists were killed during exercising their profession in war-torn areas. Lastly in Iraq the issue of solving impunity is of great importance, because 99% was complete impunity and 1% was partial justice. The most recent death of a war journalist in Iraq was Leyla Yildizhan (Deniz Firat) August 8 2014, in Makhmur District, who was covering the Mukhmur district between Kurdish forces and insurgents with the Islamic State.



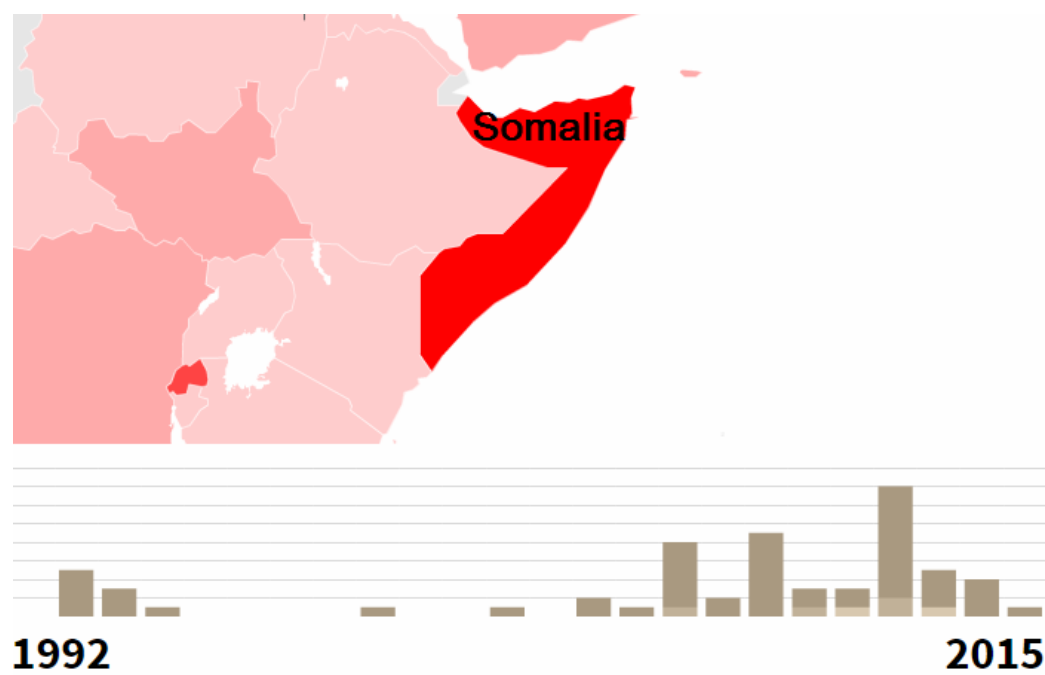
### Syria:

Syria is also considered to be one of the most dangerous counties worldwide due to the numerous terrorist attacks that have happened in the last years. Out of the 83 journalists that have been killed since 1992 in Syria 92% of the total number died covering a war, thus 76 war journalists. In Syria the issue of impunity in murder cases is also very crucial because 100% were complete injustice. Lastly, Syria is a country of a high risk rate, thus most of its parts are of great danger



### Somalia:

Somalia is a failed state and remains a high-risk country, where the long absence of authority has led pirates, being a dangerous threat to international shipping. Due to NATO and some international efforts pirates attacks dropped to a significant number in 2012. 57 journalists have been killed since 1992 until today. Out of this total number, 44%, thus 25 journalists, were killed during armed conflicts. Last but not least, impunity in murder cases was 98% and 2% was partial justice.



### Afghanistan:

The United States Institute of Peace promotes since the fall of the Taliban regime in 2001 peace and stability in Afghanistan. Many efforts have been made to re-create the country and the political order, but yet these efforts are not been accomplished. Since 2002 some programs have been designed in order to improve education in the community and better communication between the people of Afghanistan and international communities. Concerning the war journalists, Afghanistan is a dangerous country, where out of 27 journalists 89% thus 24 war journalists were killed during exercising their profession and even today the situation in the country is at a high risk.



### Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
1926(Paris, France), relaunched twice in 1946 and in 1952.	International Federation of Journalists (IFJ)
1981	Foundation of the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ)
1985	Foundation of the Reporters Without Borders (RWB)
1993	The United Nations Commission on Human Rights established the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression.
12 November 1997	"Condemnation of violence against journalists"
January 7, 2006	Jill Carroll was an American journalist who was kidnapped by unknown snipers while working in Iraq. She was released after 82 days. This event underlined the dangers journalists are facing in

	war-torn areas.
23 December 2006	The UN Security Council adopted the Resolution 1738
12 April 2012.	UNlan of action on the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity
18 December 2013	The United Nations General Assembly adopted the resolution 68/163 about the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity and November 2nd was declared as the 'International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists.
in August 2014	The death of James Foley, who was an American journalist and video reporter that was executed by the ISIS

## Relevant UN Treaties, Resolutions and Events

- Resolution 1738 (2006)  
Adopted by the Security Council at its 5613th meeting, on 23 December 2006
- Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 18 December 2013  
The safety of journalists and the issue of impunity
- Resolution 29 "Condemnation of violence against journalists"
- United Nations Human Rights Council Resolution  
The UN Human Rights Council Resolution A/HRC/21/12 on the Safety of Journalists  
was adopted on 27 September 2012
- UN plan of action on the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity  
(12 April 2012)  
[http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/pdf/WPFD/UN%20Plan%20of%20Action\\_Safety%20of%20Journalists.pdf](http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/pdf/WPFD/UN%20Plan%20of%20Action_Safety%20of%20Journalists.pdf)
- Resolution 2222 on the Safety of Journalists in armed conflicts  
[http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/2222\(2015\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/2222(2015))

- UNESCO's Berlin Declaration and Medellin Declaration on Securing the Safety of Journalists and Combating Impunity
- PEC's Draft Convention to Strengthen the Protection of Journalists in Armed Conflicts and other Situations Including Civil Unrest and Targeted Killings
- Convention on the Protection of Journalists Engaged in Dangerous Missions in Areas of Armed conflict
- RSF's Charter for the Safety of Journalists Working in War Zones or Dangerous Areas
- The Geneva Convention Declaration on Actions to promote Safety and Security of Journalists and Media in Dangerous Assignments

### **Previous Attempts to solve the Issue**

Although several resolutions have been adopted for journalists and their safety in armed conflicts there have not been any solutions that could cover the issue entirely and actually provide war journalists the protection they need. To begin with, the Reporters without Borders (RWB) introduced the 1738 Resolution, condemning intentional attacks against journalists in armed conflicts. The UN Security Council adopted this resolution in December 2006 but also the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity adopted it in April 2012. This resolution that was adopted by the above-mentioned was of a great importance to improve their protection and their safety. Furthermore it is a fact that many Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) as well as media organizations and international are dedicated to teamwork, because resolving this issue teamwork of organizations is crucial and it is already helping. Lastly, governments according to the Strasbourg Court are required to protect the lives of journalists that are threatened and investigate the cases of murdered journalists and media professionals and eventually punished.

### **Possible Solutions**

The number of journalists that have been killed, imprisoned, kidnapped etc. is on a constant rise. Journalists should be exercising their profession without danger and fear, but with the appropriate safety and protection that will be provided to them. First of all, in order to solve this issue it is important to recognize that cooperation and teamwork are essential and of great importance. More specifically Member States should cooperate in order to develop legislation and mechanisms for the freedom of expression and information, two essential rights of every human being and of the war journalists. Furthermore Member States should implement the international laws and rules concerning the safety

of journalists in war-torn areas and If possible improve or create the safeguarding mechanisms for the journalist's safety. Moreover the cooperation and partnering with UN agencies and intergovernmental organizations should be encouraged for programs to guarantee the protection of journalists to be established.

Secondly, raising public awareness in this topic would be very helpful so that all around the world people understand the meaning of freedom of expression and information, thus understand the importance of journalists and more specifically war journalists. With public awareness Member States and also citizens will be sensitized and be more familiar with war-torn areas and volunteer to donate organizations that provide everything that journalists need during armed conflicts such as the International Federation of Journalists, International News Safety, Reporters Without Borders but also the International Press Institute.

Lastly, all the Member States should try to implement all the resolutions that have not been tried yet and improve them if possible but also cooperate with each other to create new resolutions that will actually help to decrease the killings of journalists in war-torn areas and that will be efficient and productive.

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