

# OSCE South Caucasus Media Conference

## Tblisi 6 July 2016

- William Horsley – Centre for Freedom of the Media, University of Sheffield, UK
- *Strategies against online and offline threats to journalism*



2nd UN Inter-Agency Meeting

# Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity

22-23 November 2012  
Vienna, Austria

Jointly organized by





With the support of the

Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs

# Strasbourg: The European Court of Human Rights

*“The conscience of Europe”*



# New and acute threats to journalism

- Violence, abductions and killings (34 in past six years, OSCE area)
- Targeted attacks – journalists at Maidan protests, 2014, despite PRESS VESTS
- Misuse of laws on terrorism defamation etc
- Jailing of journalists (36 in Turkey)
- High levels of impunity for crimes against journalists

## Press Freedom – international organisations

- OSCE (Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe)
- European Union
- EU External Action Service (EEAS)
- United Nations - General Assembly Resolution 2013 etc
- Council of Europe – Shift from ‘standards’ to ‘implementation of States’ obligations’

# Council of Europe Secretary-General 2016 Report: 'State of Democracy, Human Rights and the Rule of Law'

- Data on 47 Member States
- Safety of journalists: 14 'satisfactory and stable'; 30 getting worse or unsatisfactory
- Protection from 'arbitrary use of law': 18 'satisfactory and stable'; 26 getting worse or unsatisfactory
- Criminal defamation laws: 27 States have them; only 10 have de-criminalised defamation
- Overly harsh Anti-Terrorism laws: 16 States
- Common lack of transparency on media ownership; leads to self-censorship

## Council of Europe Committee of Ministers “Recommendation on protection of journalism and safety of journalists and other media actors” (April 2016)

- Press freedom as essential pillar of democratic society
- States should conduct urgent, wide-ranging reviews of all relevant laws and practices to ensure protections
- Reviews to be led by independent national human rights institutions
- National early warning and rapid response mechanisms
- Independent investigations into violence against journalists – with specialised units
- All public bodies should be subject to independent oversight; States must create favourable climate for open debate

# Online threats: “Protecting journalism sources in the digital age” Report (UNESCO/WAN-IFRA)

- Report author: Julie Posetti
- Dangers from surveillance of journalists, whistle-blowers etc; and mandatory data retention:-
- Security and source protection at risk
- Leads to official cover-ups; corruption;
- High risk of criminal prosecutions and other reprisals



# Self-protection: actions by journalists and civil society

- Media editorial and online security practices
- Counter falsehoods with facts: Stopfake etc
- Cooperation and solidarity among media and civil society organisations: International Declaration on Protection of Journalists (IPI)
- International pressures on states: OSCE, Council of Europe Platform etc
- ‘Review of laws and practices’ : Council of Europe Recommendation on protection of journalism and safety of journalists

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