



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
The Representative on Freedom of the Media**

Dunja Mijatović

Communiqué No.3/2016

Communique by the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media on the rights and safety of journalists reporting on refugees

The refugee crisis in Europe is a multi-faceted challenge for Governments and international organizations and it also has implications for freedom of the media. Guaranteeing the rights and safety of journalists reporting on this issue is a basic pre-condition for providing the public with information.

The arrival of high numbers of refugees in several participating States has had a significant impact on the principles and policies including border management, immigration and refugees' policies, social assistance, prevention of crime, protection of privacy, and protection of minors, among many others.

Public intervention in these areas should not interfere with the work of members of the media to fulfill their responsibility to report on matters of public interest.

The Representative has already intervened in several participating States where members of the media reporting on the refugee situation have been obstructed by law enforcement authorities.

To address potential threats to freedom of information and freedom of the media, the Representative issues this Communiqué with the following recommendations to OSCE participating States:

- Participating States should instruct immigration and other law enforcement agencies to respect the right of journalists and other media actors to report on issues of public interest and to ensure their safety;
- Participating States must not make use of broad and general notions of public safety or national security in order to prevent journalists from accessing sensitive areas or report on all aspects of the crisis. State authorities should facilitate journalists' access to areas and locations where stories related to the crisis develop: border areas, refugee camps and other relevant facilities;

- State authorities should allow journalists to interview or have contact with refugees in order to report on personal stories and current living conditions;
- Participating States will respect and promote media self-regulatory mechanisms in order to strengthen ethical reporting on these issues.

Dunja Mijatović

OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media

Vienna, 4 March 2016