

The End to Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists?

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This November 2nd, as every year, the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists was celebrated. The commemoration was proclaimed by the United Nations (UN) in 2013.

That year the UN General Assembly passed its first resolution on the safety of journalists and impunity. This resolution condemns any attack against media workers. It also urges States to do everything possible to prevent violence against them and to ensure that the guilty are brought to justice.

The date was chosen in memory of two French journalists murdered in Mali.

But these French reporters are not the only ones, nor this is an isolated incident. According to UN data, 1,200 journalists have been killed for just fulfilling their profession in the last 14 years. These figures do not include other crimes such as torture, disappearances or other physical harm.

Since that moment dates the first agreed effort of the international community to fight violence against the exercise of journalism and communication. In this endeavor, international organizations, national authorities, the media and civil society organizations have joined efforts. According to data available on the UN website, since then the issue of journalists' safety has become more visible. The issue is even part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Nowadays...

Despite the UN's good will, impunity for crimes against journalists is a problem that tends to become politicized and, however, it has not reached its end. A cable from EFE press agency, quoted by Forbes magazine, reflects that in 2021 alone, "at least 77 violent deaths of reporters in 28 countries" were committed.

The same information refers that Afghanistan and Mexico "were the most dangerous countries to practice journalism", with 12 and 10 murders, respectively. Also in 2021, Pakistan, India, the Philippines, and Yemen sadly stood out. In Latin America, fatal incidents occurred in Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, and Haiti.

At a global scale, impunity does not cease when it comes to violence against journalists. In recent months, the example of journalist Shireen Abu Akleh, murdered in May while reporting for Al-Jazeera News in the West Bank was a huge scandal. This case is an unfortunate example of how much remains to be done so that, beyond the politicized rhetoric from the centers of world hegemony, journalism remains a safe profession.

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