

**Outcome Statement  
of the 29<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Governing Council  
of the Community of Democracies  
London, United Kingdom, January 29, 2019**

Protecting freedom of expression for the media and the safety of journalists are at the heart of a strong and resilient democracy. The Warsaw Declaration, the founding document of the Community of Democracies, includes the right of the press to collect, report and disseminate information, news and opinions as a core democratic principle and practice. Tragically, 2018 was a deadly year for journalists, with reports of 80 killed, 348 imprisoned and 60 being held hostage because of their work<sup>1</sup>. This illustrates a worrying deterioration in media freedom across the world, and constitutes a serious threat to democracy and sustainable development: impunity for crimes against journalists continues. Never has there been a more important time for us to work together to protect the principles to which we are committed.

At the meeting of the Governing Council in London, participating states reaffirmed our commitment to the promotion and protection of media freedom, freedom of expression online and offline and the protection of journalists and other media workers. We called on all governments to safeguard a pluralistic and independent media. We commended the brave work being undertaken by journalists and those working to support and promote freedom of expression for the media where they are under threat. We committed to give this issue regular and sustained attention.

Much good work exists to protect journalists around the world, such as actions taken following the Community of Democracies Toolkit on the Safety of Journalists for the Personnel of the Diplomatic Missions. We are committed to deepening our collaboration on tackling harassment, threats and violence against journalists to promote a safe and open environment both online and offline for journalists and media workers to conduct their work, and to ensure that there are stronger deterrents and accountability mechanisms in place for those who target journalists for their work. In this context, we welcome the Groups of Friends on Safety of Journalists in international organisations. However, much remains to be done to make this a reality and to ensure that there is no impunity for crimes against journalists and accountability for those who threaten that environment. Respect for freedom of expression is critical for a free and pluralistic media and we urge all governments to uphold their human rights obligations and commitments in this regard.

In this context, we encourage nations to organise national and local events dedicated to promotion of media freedom and safety of journalists, including using principles for cooperation and possible practical actions proposed in the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity and Implementation Strategy.



Community  
of Democracies

The Community of Democracies resolves to strengthen its efforts to support media freedom and the safety of journalists and reaffirms our commitment to the issue, as set out in the Warsaw Declaration.

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<sup>1</sup> Reporters Without Borders (2018), Worldwide round-up of journalists killed, detained, held hostage, or missing in 2018.