WAN-IFRA Board Press Freedom Resolution – Safety of Journalists

The Board of the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers (WAN-IFRA), meeting in Estoril, Cascais, Portugal on 6th June 2017, on the occasion of the 70th World News Media Congress, calls for renewed commitment from governments, technology companies, civil society organisations, funders and the media industry itself to work together to improve the physical safety and digital security of journalists worldwide.

The Board of WAN-IFRA acknowledges the commitment and sacrifice of the 27 journalists who have lost their lives so far this year, and reiterates calls for thorough investigations into each death to ensure justice for the families of those killed while performing their professional duties. Furthermore, the Board reinforces its call for all stakeholders to do more to end the cycle of impunity that fuels attacks against the media and emboldens the criminals behind the killings of journalists.

The Board of WAN-IFRA acknowledges the rising threat of online attacks and harassment, particularly directed against women journalists, and calls for greater awareness and practical, collective and innovative solutions to fight the serious implications of this pernicious challenge to freedom online. Advances in technology also make it easier for hostile actors - from governments to organised crime - to spy on and harass journalists, therefore the Board of WAN-IFRA calls on news organisations and technology platforms to work together to develop stronger responses to these attacks on press freedom.

The Board of WAN-IFRA calls on all relevant parties to prioritise ways of providing continued access to the necessary training, knowledge and resources around physical safety risks, preventive measures, and online protection for journalists and newsrooms. The Board recommits itself to supporting the work of WAN-IFRA's Media Freedom Committees to enhance the skills and expertise of media worldwide in the face of growing physical and virtual threats to journalistic freedoms.

The Board of WAN-IFRA also reasserts its support to the United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, as well as other international, regional and local mechanisms designed to help reduce violence against the profession. However, the Board calls attention to the worrying increase in attacks, harassment and detention of journalists by governments who ignore their commitments within the United Nations system.

The Board of WAN-IFRA therefore calls for renewed solidarity amongst media and encourages all legitimate efforts to identify collective, inclusive solutions to the numerous safety and security challenges facing the industry.