

UK Statement on Safety of Journalists – Working Session 4 – Wednesday 18 September

Madam Moderator, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The United Kingdom fully aligns ourselves with the statement given by Sweden on behalf of the EU and would like to add some comments in our national capacity.

I outlined yesterday how the Global Campaign for Media Freedom has two objectives: to mobilise a global spotlight on media freedom and to increase the costs to those abusing it.

We are now working actively to deliver on the initiatives launched at the conference. We would welcome your participation and ideas on these five areas:

- First, we are encouraging more countries to sign the campaign Global Pledge, developed jointly with Canada. By doing so, Governments are committing to safeguard media freedoms and to protect journalists, and to hold themselves to the highest standards. Across the OSCE region, we already have 14 countries signed up. We are encouraging others to do so.
- Second, we will be launching the new Media Freedom Coalition next week at a Ministerial event at the UN General Assembly in New York on 25 September. Members of the Coalition – those governments who have signed the Pledge – will speak out and lobby on specific cases, make collective statements in international fora and provide peer review to encourage progress on media freedom. If your Government is interested in joining the Coalition, please contact the UK Delegation.
- Third, we encourage your support in providing financial contributions to the Global Media Defence Fund, administered by UNESCO, which will train, support and provide legal assistance to journalists. With thanks to Slovenia and Lithuania for their commitments already to join the UK and Canada on this important initiative.
- Fourth, we are responding to the appeal by the UN Secretary-General, OSCE Representative and other organisations to take preventative action at the national level by encouraging all countries to develop National Action Plans on the safety of journalists. We now have an international taskforce, led by UNESCO together with the OSCE, to support countries with best practice. Please do approach those organisations and the UK if your country might wish to develop such a Plan.
- In the UK, we have just started work on our own national committee and action plan which will examine current protections offered to journalists in the UK, and consider how to work together to reinforce them. The Committee will champion journalists' ability safely to carry out their important roles in society and to continue to hold the powerful to account. This is part of our broader commitment

to ensuring the future sustainability of high-quality, public interest news. We are happy to share our experience and arrange exchange visits between media professionals and the bodies that oversee the media.

- Fifth, the Foreign Secretary's Special Envoy Amal Clooney has convened an independent panel of prominent legal experts to help countries strengthen their legal protections to enable the functioning of a free media and prevent and reverse abuses and violations of media freedom. We encourage your governments to draw on support from the Legal Panel.

Madam Moderator,

We are grateful to the OSCE Representative for the Freedom of the Media and to civil society, journalists and media actors for their work to promote and protect media freedom. We invite you to discuss these issues further at the side event being held by the UK and Canada on legal safety of journalists at 1815 in room 1 immediately following the afternoon plenary session.

Thank you.