UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC
AND CULTURAL ORGANISATION (UNESCO)

I. OVERVIEW

UNESCO has become increasingly involved in raising awareness on the importance of freedom of expression and freedom of information as a fundamental human right since the adoption of its New Communication Strategy of 1989. The organisation claims that it 'is the only United Nations agency with a mandate to defend freedom of expression and press freedom.'[1] Declarations and plans of action are adopted at regional seminars to guide the work of the organisation in this field. It organises various good-practice promotional events (e.g. awards) and assists, together with other UN organisations, funds and programmes aiming at solutions in conflict prevention, emergency assistance and peace-building in the aftermath of conflicts.

II. RELEVANT OFFICES

A. COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION SECTOR: DIVISION FOR FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION, DEMOCRACY AND PEACE

http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=1657&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

UNESCO's action is carried out by the Division for Freedom of Expression, Democracy and Peace, as part of its wider sector of Communication and Information that established in its current form in 1990.

a. Thematic activities

The Division for Freedom of Expression, Democracy and Peace has various thematic activities, which include **'Media in Conflict and Post-Conflict Situations'.** http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=18538&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

The 'Media in Conflict and Post-Conflict Situations' thematic activity focuses *inter alia* on **'Security and Safety of Media Professionals'.**

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[1] http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=16998&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-
URL_ID=22193&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

A special webpage entitled **'UNESCO remembers assassinated journalists'** provides a non-exhaustive list of journalists who were killed in the exercise of their profession (covering the period 2002-present).
http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-
URL_ID=16998&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

In addition, articles relating to the safety of journalists appear in **'The UNESCO Courier'**, a magazine that is published by the organisation.
http://www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco-courier/the-magazine/
See, e.g., 'Shoot a journalist and society is wounded' by Toby Mendel, The UNESCO Courier, vol. 4, 2008.
http://www.unesco.org/ulis/cgi-
bin/ulis.pl?catno=162566&set=4C216491_1_266&gp=1&lin=1&ll=1

b. Documentation

- *Press freedom: Safety of journalists and impunity* (CI-2007/WS/14)

This is a book of articles written by experienced and specialist writers who discuss the problem from various perspectives and legal bases and with reference to a number of countries/regions.
From the description of the book we quote the following: 'Although all [these writers] agree that violence against journalists for doing their job is morally and legally unacceptable under any circumstances, there are differing points of view about whether journalists should be afforded extra legal protection under international humanitarian law.'

http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-
URL_ID=25845&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

- *Handbook for Journalists*

Compiled by Reporters Without Borders and UNESCO in 2009, the handbook lists various international law norms and contains practical advise to journalists working in war zones.
http://www.scribd.com/doc/43807815/Handbook-for-Journalists-Manual-Guia-
Practica-para-Periodistas-In-English-En-Ingles

- *International seminar on assistance to media in tension areas and violent conflict,* Stockholm, Sweden, 25-27 May 2003

A booklet of discussion papers.
http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-
URL_ID=14988&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

B. INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNICATION (IPDC)

http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/intergovernmental-programmes/ipdc/about-ipdc/

One of the programmes of the Communication and Information sector is the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC), which provides support for media projects including healthy working environment for the growth of pluralistic media in developing countries.

Recently, the Intergovernmental Council of the IPDC has been engaged in various 'special initiatives' that include the **'safety of journalists'.**

http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/intergovernmental-programmes/ipdc/special-initiatives/safety-of-journalists/

❖ **Documentation**:

- ***The safety of journalists and the danger of impunity* (2010)**

This Report by the Director-General to the Intergovernmental Council of the IPDC (CI-10/CONF.202/4/BIS REV, 30 March 2010) includes an analysis of the responses received from member states on the status of the judicial inquiries concerning journalists killed in 2006-2007, as well as factual information regarding the killings of journalists condemned by UNESCO's Director-General by country. The report notes that in the period from 2008 to 2009 the great majority of the victims were not foreign war journalists but local journalists who were working on issues of local interest in peacetime.)

It appends:
    ✓ *Decision on the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity* (2008)
(adopted by the IPDC intergovernmental council at its 26th session UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, 27 March 2008.
    ✓ *Resolution 29 "Condemnation of violence against journalists"* (1997)
*(*adopted at the general conference, 29th session, Paris, 1997)
    ✓ *Security Council Resolution 1738 (2006)*

http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001874/187491e.pdf

- ***Report of the Intergovernmental Council of the IPDC* (2010)**

The Report was adopted at the 27th session, Paris, 24-26 March 2010.
Chapter X (pp.11-22) is titled: *Debate on the safety of journalists and the danger of impunity: what can IPDC do?*
http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001896/189697m.pdf

Chapter X also includes:
    Decision on the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity (2010)
(adopted by the IPDC Intergovernmental Council at its 27th session, UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, 24-26 March 2010)

Among other issues, the Decision requires from specific states – and urges those states that have not yet responded – to provide information on judicial follow-up to the killings of journalists condemned by UNESCO Director-General in 2006-2007.

http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/pdf/ipdc2010_safety_decision_final.pdf

- ***Medllin Declaration: Securing the safety of journalists and combating impunity* (2007)**

The Medllin Declaration was adopted by the participants at the UNESCO conference on Press Freedom, Safety of Journalists and Impunity, meeting in Medellin, Colombia, on World Press Freedom Day, 3-4 May 2007. The entire text is relevant for the purposes of the current research, but we can quote the following passages:
"Call on Member States
To investigate all acts of violence of which journalists, media professionals and associated personnel are victim which have occurred in their territory or abroad when their armed or security forces may have been involved in them;
To search for persons alleged to have committed, or to have ordered to be committed, a crime against journalists, media professionals or associated personnel, to bring such persons, regardless of their nationality, before their own courts or to hand them over for trial to another concerned State, provided this State has made out a credible case against the said persons;
To fulfill the duty incumbent upon them to prevent crimes against journalists, media professionals and associated personnel, to investigate them, to sanction them, to provide witness protection for those testifying against them and to repair the consequences so that such crimes do not go unpunished;
…
To recommend to multilateral and bilateral institutions of international cooperation and financial assistance that they require from recipient countries as a specific condition of eligibility respect for freedom of expression and effective protection of the exercise of press freedom, also to recommend to these institutions that a state's failure to comply with its obligation to investigate and punish killers of journalists could be cause for revision, suspension or revocation of such cooperation;"

http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/flagship-project-activities/world-press-freedom-day/previous-celebrations/worldpressfreedomday2009000/medellin-declaration/

- ***Belgrade Declaration: 'Support to Media in violent conflict and in countries in transition'* (2004)**

The Declaration was adopted by the participants at the UNESCO conference on Support to Media in Violent Conflict and Countries in Transition meeting in Belgrade, Serbia and Montenegro on World Press Freedom Day, 3 May 2004. The participants "[u]nanimously declare that: …3. Assuring the safety of both local and international journalists should be given highest priority. There should be an end to a

culture of impunity over killings and other attacks on journalists and there should be independent investigations into such killings and attacks."

http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/flagship-project-activities/world-press-freedom-day/previous-celebrations/worldpressfreedomday2009000000/belgrade-declaration/

- *Dakar Declaration: Media and Good Governance* **(2005)**

The Declaration was adopted by the participants of the UNESCO-sponsored World Press Freedom Day conference in Dakar, Senegal, 1-3 May 2005. The participants "[c]all on Member States…To act to put an end to killing of, attacks on, harassment of, arrests and jailing of journalists, including those investigating corruption, and to make all reasonable efforts to bring those responsible to justice".

http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/flagship-project-activities/world-press-freedom-day/previous-celebrations/worldpressfreedomday200900000/dakar-declaration/

http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/flagship-project-activities/world-press-freedom-day/previous-celebrations/

- *Colombo Declaration: Media, Development and Poverty Eradication* **(2006)**

Adopted by the participants of the UNESCO-sponsored World Press Freedom Day conference in Colombo, Sri Lanka, 1-2 May 2006, the declaration "[c]all[s] on Member States to:…2. Ensure that those responsible for attacks on media professionals and institutions are investigated and brought to justice".

http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/flagship-project-activities/world-press-freedom-day/previous-celebrations/worldpressfreedomday20090000/colombo-declaration/

III. CONCLUSION

UNESCO offers a standard-setting normative framework of good practices (including legislative and administrative measures) that draws on the expertise of civil society groups and other specialists. With its IPDC programme, UNESCO has built an intergovernmental mechanism that exercises additional political pressure on participating States to implement these standards. However, no binding instruments have been adopted under the auspices of UNESCO, and there are no mechanisms to enforce compliance with the principles affirmed in the declaratory instruments or other applicable human rights treaties.