



2 September 2014 – The recent execution of the American journalist James Foley by the ISIS group, and deep concern for the fate of at least seven other journalists and members of the media believed to be held captive by ISIS in Syria, has sparked a call for an increased protection of journalists in conflict zones.

Recent attacks, ongoing kidnappings, and arbitrary and unjustified incarcerations of journalists around the world must be condemned and opposed by the international community, a group of international freedom of expression rapporteurs said today. “We call for improved international protection for anyone engaged in journalism, especially during conflict situations.”

“Attacks against journalists covering conflicts victimize individuals first and foremost, but they also harm us all,” they said. “But attacks also deter and sometimes prevent journalists from exercising their right to seek and disseminate information. Attacks deprive all of us of the right to know and to access information about critical situations around the world.”

“It is a sad fact that violent attacks against journalists covering conflicts are common. In Syria alone, reports indicate over sixty journalists have been killed in the last three years. Journalists working in Ukraine and Iraq, for instance, are subjected to attacks, kidnappings and violence on a daily basis, and several journalists have been killed during the recent violence in Gaza,” the international rapporteurs said.

Their statement ended with a call for “an open and committed dialogue among governments, non-state groups, journalists and other interested parties in order to strengthen protections to promote the safety and respect for those reporting on a conflict, especially to ensure that those responsible for such violence are held accountable.”

*More information:*

UN - Freedom of Expression: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/FreedomOpinion/Pages/OpinionIndex.aspx>

OSCE - Freedom of the Media: <http://www.osce.org/fom>

OAS - Freedom of Expression: <http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/expression/index.asp>

ACHPR: Freedom of Expression and Access to Information: <http://www.achpr.org/>