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Message from Ms Irina Bokova,
Director-General of UNESCO
on the occasion of the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists 2017

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Justice is a cornerstone of a free society. It dissuades those who threaten freedom of expression and emboldens those who stand to defend it. This is why injustice against journalists is so costly for all societies.

From 2006 to 2016, no less than 930 journalists were killed. In 2016 alone, we saw the loss of 102 journalists in the line of duty.

What makes these figures even more unbearable is that, in more than nine out of ten cases, the perpetrators are never brought to justice.

This concerns mostly local journalists -- 93% of journalists killed in the last 11 years were local journalists covering local stories. This concerns also the threats faced by female journalists, including the alarming rise of online harassment.

We must ensure justice is done for every journalist killed. This is essential for their memory -- it is vital to strengthen the rule of law and good governance, and take forward the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, specifically Sustainable Development Goal 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions.

Journalists perform unique functions in taking forward our fundamental freedoms and bolstering the strength of our societies -- they must be defended through concerted action by Governments, supported by the United Nations, working with all relevant actors, from international regional organizations, judiciaries and media to private companies, academia and civil society.

This partnership for action was embodied UNESCO's recent Multi-Stakeholder Consultation, held in Geneva to strengthen implementation of the *UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity*. We must draw on this spirit to support Member States in enhancing the safety of journalists and eliminating impunity through stronger mechanisms.

On this day, UNESCO calls for the world to stand together to bolster the safety of journalists and ensure justice is done.

Irina Bokova