

BANJUL/GENEVA/VIENNA/WASHINGTON D.C., 3 May 2024 – To mark International Press Freedom Day, during the Global Conference organized by UNESCO in Santiago de Chile, freedom of expression mandate holders* of the United Nations (UN), the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) and the African Commission on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR) issued a Joint Declaration on the Climate Crisis and Freedom of Expression:



PRESS RELEASE

Freedom of expression and media crucial to tackling climate crisis: International Freedom of Expression Rapporteurs

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“States must ensure informed, inclusive and open debate and access to information on the climate crisis which is endangering the planet’s biodiversity and threatening our common security,” said the international freedom of expression mandate holders.

The [2024 Joint Declaration on the Climate Crisis and Freedom of Expression](#) highlights the elevated risk faced by journalists, environmental or other human rights defenders, for their work to expose environmental harms and mobilize people to press for action on the climate crisis. It calls on States and companies to take concrete action to uphold the rights to freedom of expression, media freedom, freedom of association and peaceful assembly.

“We condemn the censorship of environmental and climate discussions online and offline, the repression of peaceful protests, the killings, arrests, arbitrary detention and prosecution of journalists and environmental human rights defenders, and strategic litigation against public participation initiated by public authorities and private actors to intimidate and silence critical voices,” the mandate holders said.

“We urge States to protect journalists and environmental and other human rights defenders by tackling impunity for crimes against them, establishing effective protection mechanisms and introducing measures against judicial harassment,” said the mandate holders. The Joint Declaration calls on States to foster transparency by proactively providing information to enable public debate and informed decision-making on environmental and climate issues.

“States should prioritize laws, policies and programs to create an environment where diverse voices – including those of journalists, environmental human rights defenders and, most particularly, the communities most affected by the climate crisis - can contribute to vibrant public discourse on the climate crisis,” they said.

“For the dialogue to be truly inclusive and meaningful, more support should be given to independent

environmental reporting in remote areas that are impacted by climate change but do not have adequate media presence or coverage,” they added.

The freedom of expression mandate holders noted that disinformation and misinformation can undermine public trust and hinder effective participation and decision-making on climate crisis.

“We call on States, corporations, online platforms and the media to refrain from creating or disseminating false or misleading information, and to mitigate the risks of disinformation and misinformation by taking all measures within their remit to foster a healthy, safe and diverse information ecosystem.”

“Corporations must make detailed disclosures on the environmental and social impact of their operations in accordance with international standards and engage in meaningful consultations with communities which are directly impacted by their operations.”

“All companies, including social media and media, must live up to their human rights responsibilities,” they stressed.

For the 2024 Joint Declaration on the Climate Crisis and Freedom of Expression, please see [here](#).

***The freedom of expression mandate holders: Irene Khan, [UN Special Rapporteur on the Protection and Promotion of Freedom of Opinion and Expression](#); Teresa Ribeiro, [OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media](#); Pedro Vaca Villarreal, [OAS Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression](#); Ourveena Geereesha Topsy-Sonoo, [ACHPR Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information](#).**

For PDF attachments or links to sources of further information, please visit:

<https://www.osce.org/representative-on-freedom-of-media/567971>

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