



United Nations Human Rights Council, 14th Session, 4 June 2010
Panel on Protection of Journalists in Armed Conflict
Oral Statement by ARTICLE 19
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Thank you Mr President.

ARTICLE 19 welcomes the panel discussion on the protection of journalists in armed conflict and supports the comments made by Messrs La Rue and Schmidt. This is a human rights issue which deserves more focussed attention and action by the Human Rights Council. Media workers around the world – in states such as Iraq, Sri Lanka, the Philippines and Mexico – have been the subject of very serious and targeted threats, “disappearances”, physical attacks and killings in situations of armed conflict and other violent circumstances.

Yet, too often, a culture of impunity surrounds such attacks on journalists. The denial of journalists’ human rights during conflicts leads to a “chilling effect” on journalists’ freedom of expression, impedes the public’s “right to know” and is a significant restraint upon the media’s role as a watchdog on the state.

We urge states to properly implement their existing obligations under international human rights and humanitarian law to protect journalists in conflict situations.

Accordingly, state officials or agents should not be involved directly or indirectly in targeted attacks against journalists during conflicts.

Attacks on journalists by any side to conflict should be promptly and thoroughly investigated by a competent, independent and impartial body established by the state.

The authorities of a state should hold accountable all persons found to have committed abuses against journalists, regardless of political affiliation or rank, and according to procedures that meet international standards of due process.

States should prevent, punish and redress the harm caused by state or private actors, including unidentified armed groups, to journalists during conflict situations.

We urge Member States of the Council to ensure that there is concrete follow-up to this panel discussion.

Thank you Mr President