

World's press demands protection of journalists in Russia-Ukraine conflict

Wan-Ifra and the World Editors Forum called for journalists covering the Russia-Ukraine conflict to be afforded the maximum protection.



Source: www.pexels.com

As signatories to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), both Russia and Ukraine have binding commitments under international human rights law to respect the right to freedom of expression. Journalists are civilians and as such should be treated as non-combatants.

Wan-Ifra is particularly alarmed by reports that Russian forces have allegedly drawn up a target list of journalists.

“At this extremely dangerous moment, we call on all parties to this escalating conflict to do everything in their power to prioritise the safety of journalists and respect the role of the press,” said Wan-Ifra CEO, Vincent Peyrègne.

“Too often during recent conflicts, we have seen the deliberate targeting of journalists and severe disruption to the free-flow of information. In this volatile moment, journalists must be afforded every protection to carry out their essential role. We remind both Russian and Ukrainian authorities of the illegality of attacks on journalists and news media, as well as their obligations to take the maximum precautions when preparing military action that might affect them.”

The organisations also warned against deliberate attempts to spread disinformation and called for news media reporting on the conflict to be extra vigilant and to fall back on the highest professional standards as they navigate coverage. The risk of cyber-attacks against news outlets, as well as individual journalists, is also increasingly likely.

“We have already seen the deliberate circulation of false or misleading statements, widespread disinformation, and the use of doctored footage in an attempt to justify military intervention and inflame tensions,” continued Peyrègne.

“We remind all parties to this conflict of the need to keep channels of information open and reliable so that the public may remain informed. This is simply a matter of protecting lives.”

Wan-Ifra and WEF also called for journalists and news organisations reporting on the conflict to take charge of their own safety and to protect themselves as best they can.

Journalists and news organisations are strongly encouraged to access freely available online resources and practical guidance to ensure they are doing everything possible to protect the safety and security of staff, freelancers, their sources and company assets:

- <https://www.acosalliance.org/resources>
- <https://cpj.org/campaigns/protecting-journalists-covering-conflict/>

“The conflict will have a profound impact on our Ukrainian members, their staff and families who run local, regional and national news organisations,” said Peyrègne. “Our solidarity is with them.”

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>