Beat: News

Global Partnership on Online Harassment and World Press Freedom Day

US Department of State Joint Statement

Washington, D.C., 04.05.2022, 05:38 Time

USPA NEWS - Today, on World Press Freedom Day 2022, the undersigned foreign ministers for country members of the Global Partnership for Action on Gender-Based Online Harassment and Abuse call attention to the pressing need for enhanced safety of women journalists and media workers.

Women in journalism are disproportionately impacted by threats and attacks, which are more often gendered and sexualized than threats against their male counterparts and increasingly take place online. Many women journalists face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and sexual and gender-based violence, including on the basis of other characteristics, including race, religion, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity. The latest study from 2020 (UNESCO) shows that almost 75 percent of women journalists worldwide have experienced online violence.

Social media is a critical avenue for journalists and media organizations to engage their audiences, but it is also a vector of online harms.

Furthermore, the escalation of technology-facilitated gender-based violence is of urgent concern and forms a serious threat to an inclusive and diverse media landscape. It is a risk to media pluralism and democracy. Online threats to women journalists and media workers can lead to self-censorship and disengagement from the digital public square, undermining their ability to exercise their human rights and enjoy freedom of expression, compounding the forms of violence they face offline. All people – including women – should be able to speak out without fear of harassment, discrimination, or violence. There is also in many places a culture of impunity surrounding online attacks on women journalists and media workers, which perpetuates the cycle of gender-based violence.

Today, we call upon all states, media companies, workplaces, technology platforms and civil society groups to speak out against technology-facilitated gender-based violence, to prevent and address all forms of violence against women journalists and media workers, both online and offline, and defend their ability to practice journalism freely and safely.

Co-signatories:

Australia Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Women, Senator the Hon Marise Payne;
Danish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Jeppe Kofod;
Republic of Korea Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. Chung Eui-yong;
Sweden Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ms. Ann Linde;
United Kingdom's Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs and Minister for Women and Equalities, Rt Hon Liz Truss;
United States Secretary of State, Antony J. Blinken.

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Wendy writes for the United States Press Agency and is a former columnist with the Fulton County Expositor, Wauseon, Ohio.

Source: US Department of State press release May 3, 2022

Article online:
https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-20650/global-partnership-on-online-harassment-and-world-press-freedom-day.html

Editorial office and responsibility:
V.i.S.d.P. & Sect. 6 MDStV (German Interstate Media Services Agreement): Wendy Westhoven, based in Hungary

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Editorial program service of General News Agency:
UPA United Press Agency LTD
483 Green Lanes
UK, London N13NV 4BS
contact (at) unitedpressagency.com
Official Federal Reg. No. 7442619