

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C.,
M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON, K1A 0A2

The Honourable Stéphane Dion, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Foreign Affairs
125 Sussex Drive
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0G2

November 2, 2016

Dear Prime Minister and Minister,

We, the undersigned organizations and supporters, urge the Canadian government to lend its support to and publicly endorse the [campaign](#) to appoint a Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for the safety of journalists. Around the world, journalists are being targeted in unprecedented ways, from kidnappings to cyber-attacks and even public killings, and these crimes too often go unpunished. Today is [United Nations](#) International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists, created in 2013 as part of UN General Assembly Resolution [A/RES/68/163](#). The Resolution urged Member States to do their utmost to prevent violence against journalists and media workers, to ensure accountability for perpetrators of crimes against journalists and media workers. By endorsing the creation a concrete mechanism to coordinate and give real political weight to UN efforts on the safety of journalists, Canada can help fulfill this commitment, and become a global leader in the fight to [end impunity](#).

There has never been a more [dangerous time](#) for journalists. They are being killed and imprisoned worldwide in record numbers. Whether covering conflict, crime or corruption, journalists often have to put themselves at great risk in order to do their job effectively; and when they are threatened, attacked or killed, the crimes against them too often are committed with [impunity](#). According to CJFE's research, 787 journalists and media personnel were killed while exercising their profession over the last 10 years, including [77 in 2015](#) alone. In 9 out of 10 cases these crimes remain uninvestigated and unpunished. With their loss, the right to information for hundreds of millions of citizens is shattered.

There have been various resolutions adopted in the past decade, including by the Security Council and the General Assembly, dedicated to this issue. Despite this, former UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, in his August 2015 report on the safety of journalists, acknowledges the world's "failure to reduce the frequency and scale of targeted violence that journalists face and the near absolute impunity for such crimes." These strong resolutions will continue to be little more than empty words without a concrete mechanism to assure the compliance of member states with their obligations. Only a Special Representative, working closely with the UN Secretary General, will have the political weight, the capacity to act quickly, and the legitimacy to coordinate with all UN bodies to implement change.

Giving the Special Representative a central and permanent position under the UN Secretary General aegis would significantly empower the [UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists](#) and the Issue of Impunity and all UN efforts lead by UNESCO, the Human Rights Council, the Office of the High

Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression, as well as reinforce the regional actions of the Council of Europe or the Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (Organization of American States).

Progress has been made, but more needs to be done. Canada is a global haven for persecuted journalists; it can be a world leader in helping to end impunity. We call on you to endorse the appointment of a Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for the safety of journalists as soon as possible. It is time for concrete action.

We thank you for your attention and look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely,

Canadian Journalists for Free Expression
Rogers Media
Canadian Association of Journalists
Canadian Freelance Union
CWA/SCA Canada
Centre for Free Expression
Canadian Freelance Union
Fahmy Foundation
Newspapers Canada
National Newsmedia Council
Rabble.ca
The Tyee
RTDNA Canada



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*CC Ambassador Marc-André Blanchard, Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations
Ms Éline Ayotte, Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of Canada to the United Nations
Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)*