

# Media Update

30 April 2021

## United Nations

### SECRETARY-GENERAL MESSAGE

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#### VIDEO MESSAGE ON WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY 2021

#### “JOURNALISM AS A PUBLIC GOOD: 30 YEARS OF THE WINDHOEK DECLARATION”

New York, 3 May 2021

The global challenges we have faced during the COVID-19 pandemic underline the critical role of reliable, verified and universally accessible information in saving lives and building strong, resilient societies.

During the pandemic, and in other crises including the climate emergency, journalists and media workers help us navigate a fast-changing and often overwhelming landscape of information, while addressing dangerous inaccuracies and falsehoods.

In too many countries, they run great personal risks, including new restrictions, censorship, abuse, harassment, detention and even death, simply for doing their jobs. The situation continues to worsen.

The economic impact of the pandemic has hit many media outlets hard, threatening their very survival.

As budgets tighten, so too does access to reliable information. Rumours, falsehoods and extreme or divisive opinions surge in to fill the gap.

I urge all governments to do everything in their power to support a free, independent and diverse media.

Free and independent journalism is our greatest ally in combatting misinformation and disinformation.

The United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists aims to create a safe environment for media workers across the globe – because information is a public good.

Today, we commemorate the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Windhoek Declaration for the Development of a Free, Independent and Pluralistic African Press. Despite dramatic changes in the media over the past three decades, the Declaration's urgent call for press freedom and free access to information is as relevant as ever.

Let's reflect on its message, and renew our efforts to protect media freedom – so that information remains a lifesaving public good for all.

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## Video Link:

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Audio file mp3,

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English sub-title,

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