

12-POINT CHARTER FOR MEDIA OWNERS, MANAGERS AND EDITORS TO ENSURE JOURNALISTS' SAFETY

The State, media enterprises, owners, employers, managers and editors bear the greatest responsibility to ensure effective protection for free speech and the safety and security of journalists. Thus they are duty bound to establish a safe and enabling environment for journalism, which is the declared and proper goal of the UN's Action Plan on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity.” In this regard, they should establish security units in their newsrooms to implement, monitor and ensure compliance in respect of these requirements.

1. Assess and understand the element of risk and ensure the journalist is fully aware, issue him/her with incident reporting guidelines and allow him/her the choice of refusal.
2. Journalists on dangerous or risky assignments should be given a hostile environment training course, which teaches First Aid, basic rules to follow and psychosocial support.
3. Offer regular assignment-specific safety advice and training.
4. Insure journalists, including regular correspondents, against bodily harm, loss of life, property and equipment.
5. Provide legal protection and litigation support to fight impunity.
6. Provide relevant and adequate resources such as transport, protective gear and finances to journalists on dangerous or risky assignments.
7. Offer continuous well-being, including debriefing and counselling, particularly post-coverage of distressful assignments.
8. Have a comprehensive security management strategy, including an elaborate intervention and protection strategy for journalists such as an evacuation or relocation plan and a dedicated in-house security manager.
9. Establish a joint fund to cater for the safety of freelancers and correspondents on commissioned assignments. The fund would be supported through an annual levy on all media houses and/or Media Council of Kenya revenues generated from financial penalties imposed on “errant” media houses and journalists.
10. Establish specific protection measures to address gender and cultural-sensitive issues such as sexual harassment.
11. Set up fact checking and research desks as a mitigation measures against misinformation and misreporting which predisposes journalists to attacks.
12. Covid 19 – incorporate health guidelines on covid 19 in all their safety measures both in the newsroom and in the field.