

Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

Target 16.10: Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements

Indicator 16.10.1: Number of verified cases of killing, kidnapping, enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention and torture of journalists, associated media personnel, trade unionists and human rights advocates in the previous 12 months

Institutional information

Organization(s):

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Concepts and definitions

Definition:

For this indicator, killing includes intentional homicide and other arbitrary deprivation of life, as formulated in Article 6(1) ICCPR. Enforced disappearance is defined as the arrest, detention, abduction or any other form of deprivation of liberty, followed by a refusal to acknowledge the deprivation of liberty or by concealment of the fate or whereabouts of the disappeared person, which place such a person outside the protection of the law (International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, adapted to account for disappearances perpetrated by non-State actors). Arbitrary detention is detention without due process and safeguards, as outlined in Article 9(1) ICCPR. Torture means any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity (Convention against Torture). Assault means physical attack against the body of another person resulting in serious bodily injury.

Human rights defenders is a term used to describe people who, individually or with others, act to promote or protect human rights. Human rights defenders are identified above all by what they do and it is through a description of their actions and of some of the contexts in which they work that the term can best be explained. The definition of human rights defenders may include journalists and trade unionists, but each individual case is counted only once. Other examples may include a student campaigning to end torture in prisons, a politician who takes a stand against endemic corruption or witnesses in court cases on human rights abuses.

Journalists cover ‘journalists, media workers and social media producers who generate a significant amount of public-interest journalism.’ This conceptualisation, has been agreed by UNESCO Member States, and could include a wide range of actors, including professional full-time reporters and analysts, foreign correspondents and local journalists, as well as bloggers and other social media producers who engage in forms of self-publication in print, on the Internet or elsewhere, journalists from ‘traditional media’ and those who work across multiple media.

The term “trade unionist” refers to an individual employed or accredited by a trade union, and other elected representatives of workers, including workers in the informal sector.

Rationale:

Data on human rights violations committed against journalist, trade unionists and human rights defenders is required to know if fundamental freedoms, including the right to freedom of opinion and expression, which includes the right to receive information, and the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association are protected in accordance with international law. The State is obliged to respect the human rights of all persons under its jurisdiction, in that it must refrain from infringement on rights, as well as an obligation to protect individuals against acts of third parties. The indicator therefore measures all such cases, but where the killing, disappearance, detention, assault or torture is perpetrated by an agent of the State or any other person acting under government authority or with its complicity, tolerance or acquiescence, or where the State fails to adequately investigate, punish or redress an offence committed by a third party, this will constitute a violation of human rights.

Killing, disappearance, arbitrary detention, assault and torture of journalists, trade unionists or human rights defenders may have a chilling effect on freedom of expression and other fundamental freedoms. In order to have a full picture of the extent of protection of fundamental freedoms, it is advisable to also have a basket of indicators at national level including on access to information, other aspects of the rights to freedom of opinion and expression and freedom of assembly and association, notably the right to communicate with international human rights mechanisms, and other types of human rights violations often committed against journalists, trade unionists and human rights defenders, which may include intimidation, harassment, prosecution, defamation, and restricting mobility.

Comments and limitations:

Estimates of the number of violations are particularly sensitive to the completeness of reporting of individual events. Such data may underestimate (or sometimes, though more rarely, overestimate) the true number of cases. In most instances, the number of cases reported will depend on the access to information, motivation and perseverance of civil society organizations and the media.

While this indicator does not cover every aspect of this particular target, it does identify one of the most salient and measurable dimensions that impacts on the whole. Further, it is an indicator that draws upon existing UN agreements and mechanisms for data collection.

Methodology

Computation Method:

The indicator is calculated as the total number of reported cases of killing, disappearance, arbitrary detention, assault and torture of journalists, trade unionists or human rights defenders during the reporting period which are verified by an independent entity (in this case OHCHR and UNESCO).

Disaggregation:

The data on the indicator is disaggregated by type of violation, profession/area of work, ethnicity, sex, age, income, geographic location, disability, religion, migratory or displacement status, minority or indigenous status, sexual orientation and gender identity of the victim, and relevant characteristics of the perpetrator, where known (public official, private individual, agent of another entity, sex, age). The indicator could also distinguish on the basis of political opinion of the victim where this has been expressed.

Women human rights defenders have faced all the types of violations included in this indicator. However, their particular situation and role require special awareness and sensitivity both to the ways in which they might be affected differently by such pressures and to some additional challenges. It is essential to ensure that women human rights defenders as well as men are protected and supported in their work and, indeed, that such women are fully recognized as human rights defenders.

Treatment of missing values:

- [At country level](#)
NA
- [At regional and global levels](#)
NA

Regional aggregates:

UNESCO and OHCHR are the agencies responsible for compiling these indicators at the international level. This is a forward-looking indicator, for which full methodologies will be developed in the course of implementation of the SDGs. UNESCO and OHCHR will first publish data on killings, and then on the other human rights violations included in the indicator.

Sources of discrepancies:

NA

Data Sources

Description:

This indicator collates data from multiple sources, including National Human Rights Institutions, national non-governmental organisations, associations of journalists, trades unions, ILO, and international non-governmental organisations including, for example Reporters without Borders, Article 19, and the Human

Rights Observatory. Regional human rights Commissions, Courts and organisations also receive reports of such violations.

Information on the number of such violations committed against human rights defenders will be compiled annually by OHCHR from these data sources and further data collected through individual complaints to human rights treaty bodies, and Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council, including the Special Rapporteurs on human rights defenders, on freedom of opinion and expression, torture, the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, and the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention. Additional data from OHCHR field offices and UN Country Teams will also be included. These data will be verified, cross-checked to ensure no duplication, and compiled in line with the agreed international definitions outlined above.

Information on the number of journalists killed are compiled annually by UNESCO, on a mandate by its Member States, from data collected through multi-sourced research, including press reports, information from monitoring groups, direct reports, and information from UNESCO field offices and other UN bodies. Reports of killings and impunity compiled by UNESCO are then transmitted for clarification on the status of judicial investigation to Member States and categorized into the following: 1) no information received so far; 2) on-going; 3) resolved; 4) killed in cross-fire; and 5) others. This information can be found on an annual basis, within the reports by the UNESCO Director-General on 'The Safety of Journalists and the Danger of Impunity' and in the UNESCO study titled World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development.

UNESCO and OHCHR will serve as the lead agencies that will compile and validate data from these multiple sources. These agencies will develop a methodology of adjusting data taking into account data quality issues and to ensure the comparability of different data sources.

Collection process:

NA

Data Availability

Description:

NA

Time series:

NA

Calendar

Data collection:

NA

Data release:

NA

Data providers

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

Data compilers

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

References

URL:

References:

Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/SRHRDefenders/Pages/Declaration.asp>

United Nations (2004). Human Rights Defenders: Protecting the Right to Defend Human Rights. Geneva. Available from <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/SRHRDefenders/Pages/SRHRDefendersIndex.aspx>.

United Nations (2012). Human Rights Indicators: A Guide to Measurement and Implementation. New York and Geneva. Available from <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Indicators/Pages/HRIndicatorsIndex.aspx>.

United Nations (2014). The Safety of Journalists and the Danger of Impunity: Report by the Director-General to the Intergovernmental Council of the IPDC (Twenty-Ninth Session). Paris. Available from <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002301/230101E.pdf>.

United Nations (2015) World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development. Paris. Available from: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/world-media-trends>