



Statement of Ireland

50th session of the Human Rights Council

Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression

24 June 2022

Madame Vice-President,

Ireland aligns with the EU statement and thanks the Special Rapporteur for her report.

Your report's conclusion that media freedom and the safety of journalists are in decline across the globe is a matter of serious concern.

We are particularly concerned that many Governments have used the pandemic as a pretext to impose new restrictions on the rights to freedom of expression and access to information. Free, independent, and pluralistic media are essential in countering disinformation and allowing people to make informed decisions and to hold governments accountable. Journalists must be able to operate in a safe environment, online and offline, in carrying out their essential work.

We welcome your report's focus, given the alarming increase in the use of digital technologies for the surveillance and targeting of journalists online and we note with concern that women journalists are targeted disproportionately by harassment and violence.

We strongly condemn impunity and call for the protection of journalists, whether in situations of conflict, or in the digital space. We call on all States to adhere to their obligations to refrain from arbitrary restraints, and to put in place measures to create a safe and enabling environment for journalists and media workers.

Special Rapporteur, you note that online gender-based violence against women journalists has been aggravated by digital technology. What concrete steps can States take to ensure protection for women journalists online?

Thank you.