
Council of Europe: “attacking a journalist means attacking democracy itself”

“The perpetrators of at least 22 murders of journalists in Europe are shielded from justice”: this finding sums up the meaning of the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists that is celebrated today. “The key role played by journalists and other media professionals in revealing wrongdoings, corruption, crime and abuse of power exposes them to intimidation, threats, harassment and violence, sometimes to the arbitrary deprivation of freedom and, in some extreme circumstances, to torture and murder”, says a notice from the Council of Europe, the upholder of the Platform for the Protection of Journalism and Safety of Journalists, which receives messages and reports about such gestures nearly every day. These are “particularly serious breaches of human rights”, because they affect people and because they “deprive others of their right to receive information, thus undermining the public debate, which is at the centre of pluralist democracy”. Attacking a journalist means “attacking democracy itself”. Therefore, the Council of Europe goes on, “political attention at the highest level and coordinated measures by national and international governments in partnership with all the parties involved” are needed. “Decisive measures to protect journalists from threats and violence” must be taken.

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