



## **Press corps/Australian Associated Press**

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### **Press Corps**

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**Topic: HRC / The Safety of Journalists**

A journalist's job is to report the truth, but sometimes they are prevented from doing so. The worldwide issue of journalist's safety is undoubtedly prevalent. In non-democratic countries and other Arab States, most active journalists in that area are victim of countless assaults, abductions, harassment, illegal assaults, threats, and even murder. However, they are not treated fairly in democratic countries either. In the United States, Greg Gianforte, a politician and member of the U.S. House of Representative, body slammed and broke the glasses of a reporter in 2017. Note that not all journalists are treated this way, but this poor treatment still prevents journalists from doing their job. Finding a solution to this problem is really difficult considering how complex this topic is. During one of the formal consultations, delegates tried different approaches to tackle this topic. A solution that was suggested and considered was "the buddy system," a solution that a delegate from Indonesia suggested and elaborated on during the formal consultation. It was the idea of a private UN ran website that was to randomly pair journalists together. The partners or "buddies" would be in contact with each other and would

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have a safe word that they can say to their partner to alert them that they are in trouble. Both the UN and the journalists would know where the other journalist is because of a tracker or microchip. The microchip would tell the partner and the UN the location of the journalists. The delegate of Indonesia said the trackers would be placed inside of the journalists.

The idea of the tracker and buddy system was discussed and considered for a while, until it was eventually shut down for being unethical, unsafe (because of possible hackers), and the cost to the UN's budget.

During the final informal consultation, delegates came up with two ideas that were unopposed, one was safety indications, where the UN would consider many factors (crime votes, death toll, etc.) and provide the needed protection—no delegates opposed that idea. The next idea was to raise awareness through social media, so no money would be needed.

However, does the social media idea really make a difference? The International Declaration on the Protection of Journalists was a statement made in 2016 that does the same thing: informs people about international's values related to journalism.

9/10 killed journalist cases go unpunished around the world. Delegates only discussed how to keep journalists safe, but didn't discuss what would they do about the cases of journalists who were killed and how they would bring justice to them and their families. I wish that the delegates would have discussed the topic of impunity.

The solutions suggested were the buddy system, safety indications, raising awareness, and more. In the end, there wasn't a solution that would ultimately stop the dangers of journalism

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completely and quickly, but hopefully this will bring us closer to the goal of making journalism a safer profession.

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