

TUESDAY, 9 DECEMBER 2008 (14.30pm – 16.00pm)

Workshop 4: Monitoring Attacks on Journalists

PELLA, LEVEL 1 , English

Workshop Title: ¿Who did what? Monitoring and documenting aggressions against journalists and media outlets

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Language: (Please mark one) English, French, Spanish, Russian, Arabic

Workshop description:

1. What are the main points you want to raise in the workshop?
 - The documentation and the monitoring of attacks against journalists and media require clear and public methodologies.
 - Exchanging experience between FoE groups working in this field is very useful for capacity building and for achieving greater advocacy impact.
 - Identifying common problems and attacks against journalists and media outlets can be a starting point for the construction of common indicators and methodologies.
2. Give some background information to the issue you want to raise.

Freedom of expression (FoE) advocacy – like all human rights areas - uses figures as a basic tool to address governments, media and the international community. Figures are also the base line to establish priorities and measure the impact of the work done.

Many FoE groups monitor and document aggressions against journalists and media outlets, and produce alerts, statements, and reports with that input. But often those reports and figures are based on unclear methodologies or fragile monitoring systems. Governments use this weakness to challenge FoE diagnoses.

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Many countries have diverse FoE groups working in this area; some of them are national-based and others from abroad. It's common to find different and uneven figures regarding similar indicators (assassinations, attacks, threats), which undermines the credibility and impact of FoE advocacy efforts.

This problem is neither new nor exclusive of FoE work, and has been discussed lately by Latin America FoE groups (in Mexico, Peru Ecuador and Colombia, among others). The objective is to share experiences and establish public methodologies for monitoring and documentation. Based on common problems (para-military groups, drug-trafficking and corruption), Latin America is trying to develop a common agenda to 'speak a common language' when reporting attacks and aggressions.

The workshop will analyze typical aggressions against journalists and media outlets. Participants will discuss how different organizations classify the cases, and compare indicators and documentation protocols.

Although this workshop is based on Latin America's experience, it seeks to include FoE groups from Asia, Africa and Eastern Europe.

3. List three key questions you want the workshop to address.
 - How are freedom of expression organizations monitoring and documenting aggressions against journalists and media outlets?
 - What are the biggest challenges of this work?
 - Have these organizations established clear methodologies and indicators?
4. What would be the main desired outcome of the workshop?
 - Develop a common agenda (upon regions or topics, for example)
 - Agree on a set of common indicators and establish a public methodology
 - Exchange experiences regarding capacity building

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