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Security Council

Seventieth year

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Wednesday, 27 May 2015, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Linkevičius	(Lithuania)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Chad	Mr. Cherif
	Chile	Mr. Barros Melet
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Jordan	Mr. Omaish
	Malaysia	Mrs. Adnin
	New Zealand	Mr. Van Bohemen
	Nigeria	Mrs. Ogwu
	Russian Federation	Mr. Zagaynov
	Spain	Mr. Ybañez
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Ms. Power
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Ramírez Carreño

Agenda

Protection of civilians in armed conflict

The protection of journalists in conflict situations

Letter dated 1 May 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Lithuania to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2015/307)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Protection of civilians in armed conflict

The protection of journalists in conflict situations

Letter dated 1 May 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Lithuania to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2015/307)

The President: I would like to warmly welcome the Deputy Secretary-General, ministers and other representatives present in the Security Council Chamber. Their participation is an affirmation of the importance of the subject matter under discussion.

In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Albania, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Colombia, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Latvia, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Morocco, the Netherlands, Norway, Pakistan, Palau, Poland, Qatar, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, the Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey and Ukraine to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedures, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Christophe Deloire, Director-General of Reporters Without Borders, and Ms. Mariane Pearl.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following to participate in this meeting: His Excellency Mr. Ioannis Vrailas, Deputy Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations; and His Excellency Mr. Téte António, Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations.

I propose that the Council invite the Permanent Observer of the Observer State of the Holy See to the United Nations to participate in the meeting, in accordance with the provisional rules of procedure and the previous practice in this regard.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2015/307, which contains a letter dated 1 May 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Lithuania to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting a concept paper on the item under consideration.

I wish to warmly welcome the Deputy Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Jan Eliasson, and I give him the floor.

The Deputy Secretary-General: I thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to address the Security Council on the protection of journalists in conflict situations. This issue is fundamentally about the right to information, protection of civilians, respect for human rights and not giving in to threats and intimidation from those who advocate and practice violence and intolerance.

In recent years, we have seen a deeply troubling rise in the number of journalists killed in conflict situations. Of the 593 cases of killings of journalists between 2006 and 2013, almost half — 273 — occurred in conflicts zones. Journalists are also being increasingly targeted and subjected to threats by criminal or terrorist groups, with the blatant intention of silencing them. Recent killings of journalists have been given extensive and welcome attention around the world. We recall, for instance, the brutal murders of Western media representatives in Syria. Yet, we must not forget that around 95 per cent of the killings of journalists in armed conflict concern locally based journalists, with far less media coverage. The Security Council and the Human Rights Council have been presented with findings that illustrate the extent of the problem from South Sudan to Libya, from Syria to Somalia and beyond.

Against the background of this sobering reality, it is not surprising that countries facing armed conflict and a breakdown of the rule of law are ranked at the bottom of the very important annual World Press Freedom Index compiled by Reporters Without Borders. Here, I want to commend Director-General Deloire and Reporters Without Borders for their work. We know that armed conflict not only endangers the life and safety of journalists; it also limits the free flow of information, eroding the rule of law and democracy.

We should recall that conflict can easily be exacerbated in an environment that stifles freedom of expression. Conflict and insecure environments must never be a pretext for silencing journalists; on the contrary, it is precisely in these situations where the voices of the voiceless and reports from the front lines must be heard loud and clear.

Ensuring the safety of journalists requires a comprehensive and multifaceted approach. The challenges for journalists reporting from an armed conflict situation may not be the same as for those who are engaged in other forms of reporting. Women journalists may face challenges different from their male colleagues. The security situation of foreign correspondents may differ from those of locally based journalists. Furthermore, corruption, intimidation, reprisals and weak judicial systems, all of which contribute to impunity, must be seriously tackled if we are to deal with the roots of the problem. The same goes for the basic need for a culture of respect for human rights and the rule of law.

Let us also remember that the safety of journalists is of concern in non-conflict zones as well. Ensuring their protection and their work can be of the essence if we are to prevent conflict and human rights violations in threatening situations. As we know, threats and attacks are committed by State and non-State actors alike, often to silence journalists seeking information or opinions on subjects perceived to be off-limits, such as human rights violations, political repression or drug trafficking, to name a few. The United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity aims to help tackle these challenges. The Plan is being piloted and laid out in several countries, including Iraq, Nepal, Pakistan and South Sudan.

Members of the Security Council have a critical role in advancing this agenda. Let me briefly and in closing point to five ways in which they can do so.

First, they can unequivocally and consistently condemn the killing of journalists in conflict situations. Secondly, they can continue to hold regular debates on the protection of journalists. I encourage them to continue to hear the views of journalists, affected family members such as Ms. Pearl here today, civil society representatives and relevant United Nations and regional mandate-holders. Thirdly, they can encourage Security Council-authorized missions to also look into the safety of journalists and media workers as part of protection of civilians mandates, and report back to the Security Council on their findings. Fourthly, they can encourage Security Council-authorized missions to ensure that freedom of expression and the safety of journalists are integral parts of human rights and justice reforms. Fifthly and lastly, they can endorse and support the United Nations Plan of Action. Occasions such as the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists — which falls on 2 November every year — can also be better utilized to draw attention to these problems.

The United Nations system will continue to assist the Security Council in all these efforts by bringing to its attention situations of concern in this area in a timely and proactive manner. It is our shared responsibility to protect the voices that alert, warn and inform on situations threatening international peace and security.

The President: I thank the Deputy Secretary-General for his statement.

I now give the floor to Mr. Deloire.

Mr. Deloire (*spoke in French*): Not everyone knows the name of Raad Mohammed al-Azzawi. In the autumn of 2014, that 36-year father was kidnapped in Samarra, a town in the province of Salahedine in Iraq, a few kilometres from the city of Tikrit. He worked as a cameraman for a television channel. While he was held hostage, the jihadist Islamic State group threatened to behead him because he refused to cooperate. Raad Mohammed al-Azzawi was murdered in public in Samarra on 10 October 2014, alongside his brother and two other civilians. This heinous murder has received less coverage than others, but each time the blood flows, be it that of James Foley, Kenji Goto or another journalist, it is the same horror.

Raad Mohammed al-Azzawi was one of 66 journalists killed last year in the exercise or on account of their duties. Another 25 have died since the beginning of the year, including five in the Sudan, two in Iraq, two in Yemen, two in Ukraine and one in Syria. Beyond the human tragedy for the victims and their families — tragedies that repulse the heart — there are additional risks for those who suffer horrors, sometimes in private, without witnesses. Let us not forget that these are stories that have led to the establishment of such legal protections as the Geneva Conventions.

On behalf of Reporters Without Borders, an organization that champions and promotes press freedom, I thank the Security Council for meeting today on the essential topic of the protection of

journalists. I welcome the excellent work carried out by the Lithuanian presidency. This is a historic day for the protection of journalists and, we hope, for the freedom of the press as a whole.

The draft text on which the Council will vote and, I hope, adopt refers to the right to freedom of expression as provided for by article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is, I believe, a historic moment in which the Security Council shall for the first time link the right to freedom of expression to the need to protect journalists, even if that may a priori obvious. It is not a matter of protecting a corporation, much less of guaranteeing the privileges for a category of civilians, as if all the civilians were not of equal dignity. This is about defending a right of all — the freedom of the press, "the freedom that allows you to verify the existence of all the other freedoms", in the words of the famous Burmese journalist Win Tin, who spent 19 years of his life in detention. The statement that the work of free, independent and impartial media constitutes one of the essential foundations of a democratic society, and can therefore contribute to the protection of civilians also deserves to be welcomed.

As Council members know, resolution 1738 (2006) was, unfortunately, not enough to solve the problem of the insecurity of journalists. No matter how outstanding it may be, it is not certain that a new resolution will suffice, either. It is clear that the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Human Rights Council are working assiduously to protect journalists by deepening international law and adopting the Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity. But in 10 years, more than 700 journalists have been killed in the line of duty or because of their work. Each time, we have tried to avoid reality. How many crimes against journalists must there be before United Nations resolutions are finally implemented?

Reporters Without Borders asks the the Council to establish an effective monitoring mechanism on implementation. We ask that the post of Special Representative of the Secretary-General on the protection of journalists be established, with the responsibility for ensuring follow-up and monitoring paper of compliance by Member States with the obligations imposed by resolution 1738 (2006) and an eventual new resolution. The mandate could be established along the lines of that of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict. The setting up of such a mechanism will have the advantage of putting in place a permanent structure at the heart of the United Nations system.

Appointed and mandated by the Secretary-General, the Special Representative would have the task of collecting all the relevant information, in particular within the United Nations system, concerning violations against the safety and security of journalists in armed conflicts. The office would serve as an early-warning mechanism for the Secretary-General and, through him, for the Security Council. He would liaise with the United Nations system on activities for preventing attacks against journalists in armed conflicts and strive to enhance the United Nations capacity to analyse and manage all information relating to such crimes. And he would undertake investigations, in a complementary role, in situations in which no investigation was opened by the Member State in which occurred an act of violence against a journalist, a media professional or associated personnel. The eventual possibility of individual referrals to the Special Representative by professional and amateur journalists victims of abuse could be considered.

As the Deputy Secretary-General mentioned, today more than 90 per cent of crimes against journalists remain forever unpunished and even go unprosecuted. Such a degree of impunity serves as encouragement to those who commit crimes against journalists.

Reporters Without Borders expresses its satisfaction at the inclusion of the draft resolution that will be voted on today of an obligation to report on the safety of journalists in the context of peacekeeping operations. We believe that the United Nations can also expedite genuine investigations. For example — unfortunately, a tragic one — on 29 April 2015, the Libyan Government in Tobruk announced the murder of seven journalists, including four Libyans, two Tunisians and an Egyptian, who had disappeared at the end of 2014. According to the official announcement, that information was based on statements by suspects recently arrested by the authorities. Reporters Without Borders believes that the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Libya should establish an independent investigation to shed light on the murder of those journalists.

We are very pleased that the new draft resolution mentions the role of the International Criminal Court in the prosecution and trial of the perpetrators of war crimes. As said here during an Arria Formula meeting by Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda, attacks against journalists not only constitute a grave breach of the

Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocol 1, but fall under war crimes under article 8 of the Rome Statute, which established the Court. She also said that the Court would not hesitate to investigate crimes in the context of its current investigations. For Reporters Without Borders, that gives hope for a decline in impunity.

But elsewhere? In Syria and Iraq, in the area under the control of the Islamic State, an information black hole has formed. In the same way that in the physical world light does not escape black holes, journalists are no longer able to report on reports or to deliver information in those areas. The conflict in Syria began in 2011, and then spread to Iraq in the summer of 2014. It has caused the deaths of more than 210,000 civilians. Kidnapped, murdered and beheaded — journalists in Syria and Iraq are deliberately targeted and attacked by various parties to the conflict.

According to statistics compiled by Reporters Without Borders, in Syria alone over the past four years, at least 45 journalists were killed in the course or because of carrying doing their jobs. Since the summer of 2014 at least three journalists have been killed, 15 of them since the beginning of the 2013. A large number have been victims of kidnapping, arbitrary detention and hostage-taking.

As Syria and Iraq are not States parties to Rome Statute, it is urgent that the Security Council, acting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, refer to the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court the situations in Syria and Iraq where war crimes have been committed against journalists. Member States of the Security Council must show consistency when it comes to its resolutions on protecting journalists and launch a concrete process aimed at bringing perpetrators of crimes against journalists to justice at the international level.

The draft resolution that the Council is preparing to adopt deals with journalists, media professionals and associated personnel. In a welcome act, it mentions freedom of information online and offline. But it should explicitly extend the scope to all journalists worthy of the name. Journalism cannot be defined by a contractual relationship with a big media company. It has to do with a social function of collecting information methodically in accordance with the rules of honesty and independence. Whehter ones performs that function professionally or not is not important.

The United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, adopted under the auspices of UNESCO in 2012, recognizes that the protection of journalists should not be limited to those officially recognized as such but also benefit other people, including community media workers and citizen journalists and others who use new media to reach their audiences.

Technology opens up spaces of freedom, for information and for expression in general; but there can be manipulation just as much as probity. Unfortunately, we are entering a new era of propaganda where completely new ways of controlling information — and therefore of controlling thoughts — are being put in place. We are entering a period of information wars.

Thanks to new technologies, terrorist groups, like all enemies of factual truths, can directly distribute their content around the world. Everything gets through: the barbarian propaganda film disguised as reportage, including sometimes journalists taken hostage, with a gun to their head, as well as truncated reality dressed up as a description of actuality.

Humankind and society need a trusted third party that makes collective and individual choices based on the unrestricted pursuit of objective truth, in the words of UNESCO's Constitution. Of course, that assertion cannot be accepted without an understanding that this truth can take different shapes and sometimes contradictory results, as no one is the holder of truth. But if the search for the facts is conducted on the basis of that dictum and is not sponsored by interested parties and avoids seeing things through the prism of culture as much as possible — that is journalism.

We are witnessing a sort of globalization of threats. Responsibility for massacres such as the one carried out at the offices of *Charlie Hebdo* are claimed, rightly or wrongly, from thousands of kilometres away. Murderous ideologies and propaganda machines are aimed against all those who report on dangerous reality, so as to intimidate into silence journalists and all those who embody and are living the freedom of expression, even on the other end of the world. That is the case in times of war, but it is also the case in peacetime.

That the Security Council is about to adopt a draft resolution on the protection of journalists in areas of armed conflict is a positive sign. But let us not forget that most journalists killed during or because of carrying out their duties are in countries said to

be at peace in which persons in the pay of regimes, women and men of power, mafia linchpins and so on are perpetrating the worst abuses. We should not forget that half of the world's population has no access to free information, much less the right thereto, or are deprived of independent information because those who embody the freedom of information and persecuted and prevented from doing their work.

One day the Security Council will have to take that into account. One day the Council will have to assign obligations to States above and beyond situations of armed conflict. The Nobel Peace Price laureate in economics Amartya Sen has defined development as a process of expansion of substantial individual liberties. The freedom of information is one of the freedoms that favours the capabilities of an individual, in the sense of his mastery of the health system, the education system and the public debate — in a way, the sense of control over his life. If we want development not to be just about increasing wealth, but about improving all social, economic and political possibilities for individuals, then the freedom of information is a prerequisite. Accordingly, the protection of journalism depends upon this last condition.

As I speak here before the members of the Council, more than 150 professional journalists and 170 non-professional journalists are in prison worldwide as a means to prevent them from pursuing their investigative work and reporting. They too must be protected. As long as they are behind bars, millions if not hundreds of millions of people are deprived of the fruits of their investigative reporting.

It is the responsibility of the representatives of States to strike the balance between individuals and nations Accordingly, journalism's role is to depict the world as it is constituted by common aspirations and divergent interests. In giving a voice to everyone and portraying different angles, journalism gives us the ability to understand the other. Without that, no peace, worthy of the name, is possible, and it is the responsibility of Member States to establish this peace.

The President: I thank Mr. Deloire for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Pearl.

Ms. Pearl: I thank you, Mr. President, for inviting me to share my thoughts on the safety of civilians, and particularly journalists.

I believe the future depends on the depth and intensity of the vow embraced by people today. I think that this is very good news, as it is very difficult to stop someone with the strong sense of justice. The will to ensure that no one else, including future generations, must endure the suffering that afflicts us depends upon individuals. Journalists everywhere are those single determined individuals who increasingly are bearing the weight of our democracies on their own.

I am speaking at a troubled time for our profession, a time that requires all of us to take a step back and display more than one form of courage. To me, courage — intellectual and moral — is the active ingredient that will allow us to use our destinies to inspire others and to defeat oppression. It was Mark Twain who said, "It is curious that physical courage should be so common in the world and moral courage so rare". I believe there is no greater courage than the strength to live up to one's values, no matter what the circumstances. To stand up and speak takes courage; to sit down and listen also takes courage. I therefore thank the Council for doing this.

Somewhere during the wars, we journalists have lost the old, unspoken agreement that we were a neutral and fair profession. As a result, we are in danger. All of us are forced to wonder what kind of journalism exactly is worth dying for. Often, true acts of courage are invisible to others. It is not recklessness; it is not a search for fame or adrenaline. Rather, it is an intimate process, the profound will to enlighten humankind, to go beyond the obvious, to fight preconceived ideas, to battle the corruption and the greed that are crippling our societies.

Today, the confusion within our profession is great. We are searching for economic models, and we are trying to counter the competition of the Internet. Some run after breaking news for the sake of breaking the news. Others are walking on shaky ground, blurring further the frontier between proper journalism and entertainment news. The media itself needs introspection, so I will not talk on behalf of the media as a whole. Instead, I would like to concentrate on those journalists who have the courage to embrace the complexity of our world. The courage to honour the truth, no matter what the circumstances are, no matter how unpleasant, no matter how contrary it is to what the majority thinks. Those individuals who truly have the strength to empathize with others and the determination to honour the core values of journalism,

such as giving a voice to the voiceless, resisting power, and letting those values that define our profession become who we are.

That search for integrity is our lifeline; but it is not only ours, it is also that of those here. For we are the ones who ensure that the public and politicians alike have the information they need to make informed choices: that the world is aware of the atrocities carried out by Daesh in Iraq and Syria, by Boko Haram in Nigeria and by the drug cartels in Mexico and Central America. Let us not forget that beyond the news are individual lives; beyond the politics is a human society; and beyond our differences is our common ground. That common ground is what terrorists are seeking to destroy. They want and they need to end dialogue, understanding and bonding among people.

How do they operate? They create a narrative, they use labels, and mostly they thrive on our weaknesses. Wars and conflict cannot live without a narrative, a justification that breeds on ignorance, fear and frustration. They kill journalists, workers of non-governmental organizations, Americans, Jews, those whom they call infidels and so on, in the hope of dispiriting all those who identify with their victims. Labels do not matter to them. But we are dealing with a group of militants who dehumanize themselves enough to kill a journalist whom they knew to be innocent and whom they held for an entire year.

How do we deal with this? How do we create a counter narrative? I believe that in Islam the most elaborate form of jihad is the battle an individual fights with him or herself to become enlightened. I and many journalists members may never hear about do what we can with the tools journalism gives us to destroy the base on which terrorists operate, that is, hatred. Accordingly, we report on what hatred feeds on — ignorance, prejudice, greed, corruption, human rights abuse, brain washing and the act of simplifying what cannot be simplified.

In my case, that translates into 13 years of a daily struggle — with a little help from my friend here, who is my son — to oppose hatred with empathy, violence with compassion and ignorance with education. I am not alone, but we have become targets. Insurgent groups no longer use reporters to transmit news, but instead kidnap them to make news. They treat us as enemy combatants and spies. This is our everyday reality. In many cases, the journalists taking this on are freelancers. That means young journalists doing the job that the mass media is increasingly reluctant to do. Often, they have no insurance, little training or equipment and no support. But they do have as much to lose as anybody else in this Chamber.

Women are bringing the world more than half of the news. A great majority of them are freelancers, which means they also face the added threats of sexual violence, cyberattacks on their integrity and harm to their families and children.

But let us not fool ourselves. Daesh and the likes are only the visible part of the iceberg. The worrying truth is that the response from Governments around the world is equally damaging and dangerous to journalists. Nearly 60 per cent of journalists jailed around the world are imprisoned on anti-State charges. Murder is the ultimate source of censorship, and not only in the case of Daesh. In 2014, impunity in journalism murder cases reached a staggering 96 per cent — a figure that Christophe Deloire just mentioned — and the remaining 4 per cent obtained only partial justice. Mass surveillance by some Security Council member States puts journalists and their sources at risk, undermining the trust and confidentiality vital to quality journalism. Additionally, an increasing number of countries are now using anti-terrorism laws to muzzle the press even further.

Why do we journalists continue working in such circumstances? Over the years, I have talked extensively to my colleagues on this subject. Those are people whom I am going to quote, and I am not quoting them because of their nationalities or because they happen to be women, but for rather for their bravery.

I remember meeting the excellent Russian journalist Anna Politkovskaya when she was receiving an award in New York. She said,

> "I am exhausted. I have seen too much. I don't want to go back to Chechnya, but if I don't who will?"

Her articles had freed the wrongfully imprisoned and helped recover the abducted. She was murdered in front of her home in 2006.

War correspondent Marie Colvin, killed in Syria in 2012, wrote,

> "We go to remote war zones to report what is happening. The public has a right to know what our Governments and our armed forces are doing in our name. Our mission is to speak truth to power. We send home that first rough draft of history. We can

and do make a difference in exposing the horrors of war, and especially the atrocities that befall civilians."

My dear friend Lydia Cacho, who revealed a pedophile network in Mexico, wrote:

> "I will never forget the face of General Montaño, who, with his colleague Agent Pérez, spent 20 hours torturing me psychologically, physically and sexually. It happened in a car that drove the 1,500 kilometres from Cancún to Puebla. They threatened to kill me, throw me out to sea and more. But I arrived at the prison alive because the media had managed to reveal the identity of my persecutors. Both of them were policemen."

Freelance photojournalist Nicole Tung, talked about Syria:

> "Covering Syria means facing a multifaceted set of problems, from bombardments to snipers to kidnappings by the Government, Islamic extremists and criminals. It is a place where journalists and Syrian activists must operate in a conflict of staggering destruction and desperation, and where no side" — and this is what is worrisome — "believes in the benefit of truth-telling any longer."

The neutral space in which journalists can operate as independent witnesses is shrinking. Governments and terrorist groups alike can bypass these objective witnesses and take their messages directly online and to social media. The lack of objective reporting means that extremists and Government propagandists are free to control the dissemination of information — information that is not based on facts and not investigated and confirmed by professional reporters. This has enormous implications when one needs to make informed decisions.

Furthermore, Governments are using terrorism charges as an excuse to clamp down on dissent and criticism. Journalists are routinely targeted and killed for their reporting on terrorist groups, while others are censored or imprisoned by Governments seeking to respond to the very same threat.

Already this year more than 25 journalists have been killed, the majority of them murdered. Member States have agreed to reduce impunity through resolutions on the safety of journalists and the United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity. These rhetorical commitments are welcome, but we need to see more concerted efforts on the ground to actually implement them.

Jailing and attacking journalists will not help defeat terrorists; it will only make them stronger. The Security Council must warn States that they should not use national security as an excuse to jail, harass or censor journalists. A statement or resolution outlining the threats journalists face, not only by terrorists but by the anti-terror movement as well, would be an important indication of this commitment.

All that said, I am intensely conscious that in the end it is the solidarity of ordinary people that will drive humankind forward — ordinary people such as the journalists I have just quoted, who have exemplified a moral courage that I truly hope will inspire the ordinary person in each of us.

The President: I thank Ms. Pearl for her statement and for her presence at this meeting.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2015/375, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Albania, Angola, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Chad, Chile, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Latvia, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Montenegro, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Palau, Poland, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America.

I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

In favour:

Angola, Chad, Chile, China, France, Jordan, Lithuania, Malaysia, New Zealand, Nigeria, Russian Federation, Spain, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

The President: The draft resolution received 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2222 (2015).

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Lithuania.

Let me start by expressing my sincere appreciation to Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson and Mr. Christophe Deloire for their briefings and valuable insights and to Mariane Pearl for sharing her very personal and deeply moving perspective with us today. What we just heard reaffirms my conviction that this debate on the protection of journalists in conflict situations is very timely.

We rely more and more on real-time information in our decision-making. It is especially important in situations of armed conflict, where our ability to mobilize international response and assistance depends on knowing the facts as they happen. Journalists are our eyes and ears on the ground. Sadly, our being informed comes increasingly at the cost of their lives. Since 1992, 1,129 journalists have been killed.

It is journalists and media workers who often expose violations of international humanitarian law and human rights by warring parties, abuses by military and security forces, and the tyranny of repressive regimes. By doing so, they serve as early warning mechanisms, because, as we know so well, human rights abuses often predict conflicts and humanitarian catastrophes to come. The deliberate targeting of journalists and media workers is often used as a tactic of intimidation and revenge by parties to the conflict who do not want their criminal actions exposed.

For reporters, being in the midst of action is part of the job. They have to brave armed attacks, cross enemy lines, move with the displaced or persecuted minorities. They go to places others seek to escape. They constantly push the limits of their own safety and security.

The spread of radical extremism and terrorism adds another highly dangerous dimension to the threats journalists and media workers are facing. The beheadings of Daniel Pearl, James Foley, Steven Sotloff, Kenji Goto and others are testimony to the rabid brutality of terrorists who target journalists not only to instil fear among those eager to expose their barbarity, but also to make news, to advertise themselves, in fact.

Local journalists, especially women journalists, as has been mentioned today, and freelancers, are particularly exposed. According to the Committee for the Protection of Journalists, roughly 90 per cent of those killed in conflict situations are local journalists. In September 2014, Daesh captured and beheaded cameraman Raad al-Azzawi in the Tikrit area. Earlier this month, Daesh killed a Mosul journalist Firas al-Bahri because he refused to pledge allegiance to the terrorist group. In most cases, however, the deaths of local journalists and media workers pass unnoticed by the international community.

Syria continues to be the deadliest place for journalists. At least 80 journalists have been killed in Syria since the conflict there began in 2011. The second and third places in the number of journalist deaths are Iraq and now Ukraine, because of the ongoing war against the country's sovereignty sponsored and supported by Russia.

Koichiro Matsuura, former Director-General of UNESCO, once said:

> "Every aggression against a journalist is an attack on our most fundamental freedoms. Press freedom and freedom of expression cannot be enjoyed without basic security."

I could not agree with that more.

Even if the legal framework for the protection of journalists has greatly evolved over the last decade, there is a need to reinforce existing international norms related to the protection of journalists by clarifying, reinforcing and amending existing the international framework. There is also an urgent need to reinforce the implementation of legal norms and provisions, including the accountability gap. Fewer than 5 per cent of the perpetrators of crimes against journalists have been prosecuted. In the majority of cases, the killers have never been found and no investigation has even been initiated.

It is the responsibility of all States to comply with their obligations to end impunity. Strengthening national legislation and tackling impunity for attacks against journalists would be an important contribution to their protection. The requirement to investigate, prosecute and punish unlawful arrests and attacks against journalists as well as the criminalization of any such unlawful behaviour should be an integral part of the fight against impunity.

Employer responsibility should also be strengthened, including with regard to local freelance staff, in order to improve the environment in which journalists operate today. Media agencies should contribute to the common goal of the protection of journalists by elaborating and implementing more stringent and more inclusive safety provisions for journalists and media workers covering stories, in conflict areas in particular.

It is not just traditional journalists who face threats. The rapid evolution of information technologies allows individuals to disseminate information freely and directly by using the Internet and social media. Such individuals, bloggers and independent reporters are increasingly targeted and their safety concerns need to be properly addressed.

Although we understand that dangers and threats can never be completely prevented or eradicated, and that journalists will still be targeted, not least because of the influence that their stories and objective reporting can have on the transformation of conflicts and societies, this awareness cannot justify inaction. Attacks on journalists are, like all attacks on civilians, attacks, first and foremost, on humankind. They are also attacks on the international community's ability to understand and respond effectively to conflicts that threaten international peace and security. Truth need not be the first casualty of war. Journalists need not be and should not be casualties of conflict. It is for this reason that Lithuania submitted a draft resolution on the protection of journalists. We thank all Council delegations for their cooperation and all the co-sponsors supporting our initiative.

The media is essential for the maintenance of international peace and security. It is our duty and responsibility to protect those who risk their lives in order to disclose and disseminate the truth. Today, however, wars are fought not only by means of equipment and weaponry, but also through deliberate disinformation, propaganda and media restrictions. As warfare becomes increasingly asymmetrical, and targeted propaganda becomes just another weapon of war, there is a clear need for more comprehensive measures to ensure the independence of the free media. To quote the French philosopher Helvétius:

> "To limit the press is to insult a nation; to prohibit reading of certain books is to declare the inhabitants to be either fools or slaves."

The fundamental freedoms of expression and information, part and parcel of fundamental human rights, are at the core of the freedom and prosperity of our societies. By protecting journalists and media workers, we help to protect our freedom.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I shall now give the floor to the other members of the Council.

Mr. Ybáñez (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to express my appreciation for the briefings given by Deputy Secretary-General Eliasson, Mr. Deloire on behalf of Reporters Without Borders, and Ms. Pearl. Their briefings were quite moving and we will have to carefully examine their proposals. I would also like to thank the Lithuanian presidency for organizing this open debate and for supporting resolution 2222 (2015), which we adopted today.

We are joined today in the Chamber by a sizeable delegation from the Congress of Deputies of Spain representing the various political forces of my country. Their visit reflects their desire to learn about the work of the Council, benefiting from our presence in this body, and to support the important work of this organ.

Freedom of the press, as a clear expression of freedom of expression and opinion, is the backbone of a free society. Freedom of expression and opinion is the oxygen that is essential to all democratic systems worthy of that name. That right is clearly enshrined in article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which expresses its dual role and states that it is essential for everyone to be able to express their views without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

The exercise of freedom of the press is fundamental, not only by journalists. It is a difficult profession as it must be guided by the need to provide truthful information. In that undertaking, it is inevitable that disagreements will arise with political authorities. However this job is essential in order to be able to know, to think and to shape opinions. Hence, the role of journalists is particularly important in armed conflicts. The independent press informs us about realities on the ground. The development of new technologies has significantly facilitated access to information and news in real-time, has increased the number of information sources and enhanced the role of the media.

Journalists are an important counterweight against propaganda, which often tries to manipulate public opinion. Abuses can occur, such as when radio stations were used in the Great Lakes region two decades ago to incite hatred. In some cases, journalists are the only mode of access to truthful information: today we would not know much about events taking place in Yemen or Syria if it were not for the presence of reporters who often take their commitment to their job to heroic extremes. Very often, journalists are the only voices

that the victims of abuses and attacks against civilians have to rely on. Hence, they play an essential role to ensure a response by the international community to try to prevent an escalation of violence or, at least, mitigate its consequences.

Furthermore, they are important to make sure that crimes do not go unpunished and that perpetrators area brought to justice. For example, the pictures taken and preserved by the Spanish deportee Francisco Boix in the Mauthausen concentration camp were critical in establishing responsibility in the trials after the Second World War. The media spurs Governments and civil society to find peaceful solutions to conflicts. Indeed, journalism has contributed to shaping the agenda of the Security Council by bringing attention to notions including the protection of civilians, children in armed conflict, and women and peace and security. The pressure to which journalists are subjected to in conflict situations is the best reflection of the uncomfortable yet irreplaceable role played by journalism such circumstances. In Burundi, for example, independent radio and television channels have not been able to broadcast for many weeks. Such type of pressure occurs in many parts of the world. Attacks against journalists in Ukraine throughout last year, for example, are very troubling.

The working conditions of journalists are unfortunately increasingly difficult due to the threat of terrorism. The pressure and intimidation by terrorist groups is increasing. Abductions of journalists increased by 30 per cent in 2014. In parts of Iraq and Syria we are now talking of a news blackout because there is no possible access by the media. The year 2015 had a painful and outrageous beginning with the attack on *Charlie Hebdo*. Terrorists are increasing their scope of action. The reason that terrorist groups have chosen the press is clear: they abhor pluralism and try to impose themselves using coercive means. Countries such as Spain that have suffered terrorist attacks know from experience that these groups are moved by a totalitarian instinct. Jihadi terrorism uses the Internet and social media as key tools to recruit combatants and obtain financing. Groups such as Daesh use social networks to publicize their activities and to terrorize. In the medium- and long-term, the best way to combat jihadist propoganda is through truthful information about the real face of terrorism. The testimony of the Yazidi girls that managed to escape Daesh in Iraq and the Nigerian girls who were recently freed from the inhumane imprisonment of Boko Haram are telling examples.

We owe a great deal to the media. In contrast, our tools to ensure their protection are very limited. Let me just mention some measures that can be used to improve the conditions in which they conduct their very difficult work. It is necessary to publicly acknowledge the work carried out by the media and to reiterate our commitment to their protection. Open debates such as today's are an excellent opportunity to do this. The work of the Security Council also offers opportunities such as adopting draft resolutions and press statements or even imposing sanctions.

States should actively promote the establishment of a secure framework so that journalists can exercise their profession free of coercion and intimidation. That begins with the ratification and implementation of the relevant international instruments in the area of international humanitarian law and human rights, including the 1977 Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, or mechanisms such as the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, the Human Rights Council and the Special Rapporteur of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. It is also essential to support the work Representative on Freedom of the Media of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

It is essential that we take into account the views of the media themselves as we identify activities to protect their security. No one is better placed than professionals of the press to contribute to this debate. Before coming to New York, I had the opportunity to meet in Madrid with professional associations of the Spanish press, including Reporters Without Borders, and to hear their views. I heard very interesting proposals, some of which I would like to highlight here.

One was a proposal for the prosecution of crimes against journalists as war crimes, pursuant to various considerations. I have already mentioned the important role of the media in armed conflict. Journalists, given the specific nature of their work, are particularly exposed to threats and dangers. The abduction and execution of journalists are instruments of propaganda, intimidation and terrorism used by terrorist groups to influence public opinion. There is a high level of impunity for crimes against journalists, as has been

highlighted in the briefings today, which calls for enhanced cooperation between the Council and the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court.

It would also be useful — again I am conveying a proposal by the media in Spain — to receive a report from the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression on the increasingly frequent and worrisome phenomenon of the forced exile of numerous journalists. According to Reporters Without Borders, in 2014 139 journalists and 20 bloggers had to seek exile, almost twice the number of the previous year. The main reason was the threat of violence or imprisonment related to the issues under their investigation. Only 5 per cent returned to their countries of origin, and the remaining 95 per cent remain vulnerable even in exile.

I would now like to refer briefly to Spain's three priorities of significant importance bearing on the subject of today's debate.

First, on gender equality, the communications media are essential both to prevent violence against women and to articulate their participation in peace processes. The radio station Okapi in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, a partner of the United Nations with 14 million listeners, is an excellent example of this. Last year, Spain awarded its most prestigious award, the Princess of Asturias Award for Concordia, to journalist Caddy Adzuba for defending human rights and freedom of the press. We would point to such concrete measures as the inclusion in the sanctions committees the designation criteria related to the violation of the rights of women, including the many women journalists who champion them.

Second is the review of peacekeeping operations. We believe that the role of the media should be given priority attention in defining the terms of reference of United Nations political missions and peacekeeping operations. Resolution 2222 (2015), which we adopted today, emphasizes the importance of that factor.

Third is the factor against terrorism. The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy underscores the media's important role in curbing the spread of extremist ideologies. The review to take place in 2016 will give us the opportunity to strengthen that perspective. Moreover, for our part, during the meeting of the Counter-Terrorism Committee in Madrid in July, we will address the role of the media in a panel dedicated to the identification and prevention of the recruitment of foreign fighters.

I should like to conclude with another proposal. The United Nations has an extensive network of agencies and institutions that could contribute to improving the security of journalists, as reflected in the United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, approved by UNESCO in 2012. It would be a good idea to assess its impact and to transmit its findings to the relevant bodies of the United Nations system. The tenth anniversary of resolution 1738 (2006) in 2016 will be an excellent opportunity for that, and to strengthen cooperation in this field between the United Nations and regional organizations.

Finally, I should like to express my admiration and gratitude to the professionals of the press, particularly those who risk their lives in situations of conflict, for their noble commitment to give voice to witnesses. Their stories are critical to keeping our consciences awake and helping us to respond to crimes and abuses. On behalf of Spain, I pay tribute to them.

Ms. Power (United States of America): I thank you, Mr. President, for presiding over this meeting and for Lithuania's consistent effort to integrate the issue of press freedom and the threats to it across the work we do at the Council., I would also like to thank our guest briefers, Mr. Deloire and Ms. Pearl, for their powerful words today and for the tremendous work they are doing to advance this most critical cause. Ms. Pearl has been a tremendous force for good in the world. As a mother and former journalist, I am in awe of her strength. I offer a special thanks to her son Adam for being present today; he is the best reminder of why we need to do more to protect journalists.

Nearly two years ago in July 2013, when the Council last met to discuss the issue of the protection of journalists (see S/PV.7003), the United States raised the case of Mazen Darwish, the Head of the Syrian Centre for Media and Freedom of Expression. Darwish had been held incommunicado since February 2012, when he was detained by regime officials along with several colleagues. Today, he remains behind bars along with two fellow staff members, Hani Zaitani and Hussein Ghreir. On 13 May, earlier this month, their trial was suspended for the twenty-fourth time, which is little surprise, given that their only crime was to report the truth about the Al-Assad regime's atrocities. Since the beginning of this month, the whereabouts of

the three men have been unknown. Mazen's brave wife Yara Bader, who has led the Centre since his arrest and campaigned around the globe for his release, is with us in the Chamber today. I thank Yara for all she is doing. Darwish's case exemplifies the first of three challenges I want to highlight today with respect to the protection of journalists.

How does the international community protect journalists from parties that deliberately target them? In the four plus years since the Syrian conflict began, more than 80 journalists have been killed and at least 90 more abducted, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists. Countless more have been threatened, attacked, wounded, barrel-bombed or disappeared. They have been targeted by both the Al-Assad regime and violent extremist groups like Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), whose grotesque executions of journalists alongside humanitarian aid workers, foreign soldiers and people of different religions or political beliefs seemed aimed both at using their victim's suffering as a recruiting tool and at dissuading other journalists from covering the conflict.

Unfortunately, their tactics seem to be working, as the videos of their executions are widely disseminated on social media, while both international and national coverage of the Syrian conflict itself has declined dramatically. What the Al-Assad regime, ISIL and other State and non-State actors like them that target journalists have in common is that they do not want people to see them for what they really are — whether that is a regime willing to torture, bomb, gas and starve its people in order to hold onto power or a group masquerading as religious that routinely desecrates the basic dignity of human beings. That is why the Mazen Darwishes, James Foleys and Daniel Pearls of the world are so dangerous to those groups and Governments. Their reporting strips away the façade and shows us what lies beneath.

That brings me to the second challenge. How do we protect journalists, and more broadly, press freedoms in situations in which violence is escalating and there is a risk of mass atrocities? That is important, as we know that a robust press can play a key role in helping to prevent crises from metastasizing into full-blown conflicts and mitigating the conditions in which grave human rights violations tend to occur.

We are seeing that right now in Burundi. After the ruling party's announcement of the candidacy of President Nkurunziza for what would be his third term, despite the explicit two-term limit set by the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi, there were large public protests. The Government responded by shuttering the country's most important media outlets. Not long after members of the military attempted to oust the current Nkurunziza Government, the offices of at least four independent radio stations, which have generally been critical of the Nkurunziza Government, were attacked and their equipment destroyed. Since the unlawful attempt to seize power was quashed, several independent journalists report being told that they are on a list of people to be arrested, and many more reportedly have been threatened with death, torture and disappearance, forcing them to go into hiding. One Burundian journalist said in an interview: "No journalist feels safe enough to look for information". That is right now, in Burundi.

Even in countries that are not experiencing conflicts or at imminent risk of sliding into unrest, the erosion of press freedoms is often a harbinger of the rolling back of human rights that are critical to healthy democracies. This is the third challenge that I would like to raise: how do we — and by "we" I mean the United Nations, bodies such as the Security Council and our individual Member States — push back against the erosion of press freedoms by Governments intent on silencing critical voices and other key outlets of free expression. Look to any region and you will see alarming warning signs of how the crackdown on press freedom is coupled with a broader crackdown on civil and political rights.

Take Ethiopia, where nine journalists, six of them bloggers from the collective Zone 9, which covers political and social news, have been imprisoned since April 2014 under Ethiopia's anti-terrorism proclamation. After 20 administrative hearings, their trial finally began on 30 March. If convicted under the proclamation, they could face up to more than a dozen years in prison.

Take Azerbaijan, where Khadija Ismayilova, a contributor to Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty's (RFE/RL) Azerbaijani service, remains incarcerated on charges widely viewed as politically motivated. Ismayilova is known for her reporting on corruption. After arresting her in December 2014 on charges of inciting a man to commit suicide, authorities raided RFE/RL's Baku office, interrogated its staff, confiscated reporting notes and sealed the newsroom. New charges have been added to Ismayilova's case as

she awaits her trial, including embezzlement, illegal business and abuse of power.

It is worth noting that all around the world, for every individual or group targeted through prosecution, attacks and threats, there are countless more impacted: people who, seeing the risks, either begin to self-censor, go into hiding or flee the countries that so desperately need their independent voices.

Given the critical importance of press freedoms in advancing so many of the goals of the Council, let me make four recommendations in closing as to how we can meet these challenges.

First, we must condemn the Governments and non-State actors that attack journalists as well as the overly restrictive laws and regulations that undermine their freedom. It is much easier to prevent these spaces from closing than it is to fight to reopen them.

Secondly, we must give journalists the tools they need to protect themselves, particularly when working in conflict zones and repressive societies. The $100 million that the United States has invested in training more than 10,000 at-risk journalists and human rights defenders in digital safety and in providing them with anti-censorship tools is one example. Another is the training provided by civil-society groups such as the Institute for War and Peace Reporting, whose director in Iraq, Ammar Al-Shahbander, was killed by a car bomb on 2 May, a devastating loss for his family, the community of journalists he mentored and his nation.

Thirdly, we can ensure that the people who attack journalists are actually held accountable for their crimes. The failure to effectively investigate and prosecute such crimes sends a clear message to perpetrators that they can continue to commit them without any consequences.

Fourthly and finally, we can help create programmes to protect journalists operating in conflict zones, particularly those targeted for their work. Colombia shows how this can be done. The national protection unit established by the Government in 2011 is empowered to protect 19 vulnerable groups, including journalists and human rights defenders. As of last year, more than 80 journalists — and this is extraordinary — were receiving protection measures ranging from cell phones and transport subsidies to bodyguards and armoured cars. The programme has an annual budget of $160 million, which speaks to Colombia's commitment to protecting these individuals and the country's recognition of the crucial role that these groups play.

One of the journalists who has received protection is Jineth Bedoya Lima. In 2000, when Bedoya was 26 years old, she was heading into one of the country's most dangerous prisons to report on paramilitary groups when she was abducted, drugged and driven to a hideout, where she was raped and beaten by three men. As they were abusing her, one of her captors told her, "We are sending a message to the press in Colombia". Later they left Bedoya bound, by a trash dump. She fled the country soon after. Today Bedoya is back in Colombia, reporting stories with the protection of bodyguards from Colombia's unit. She still feels fear but perseveres, driven by a commitment to telling the stories that otherwise would go untold, and that includes her own.

In speaking out about her own experience, Bedoya has helped make the serious and seriously underreported problem of sexual assault in Colombia's long-running conflict more visible, and she has become a leading advocate of accountability even as several of her own attackers continue to roam free. Bedoya also led a countrywide campaign to establish a national day for the dignity of women victims of sexual violence, which last year Colombia's President, Manuel Santos Calderón, agreed to establish. Colombia just honoured the day for the first time two days ago, on Monday, 25 May.

There are few greater living testaments to the value of protecting journalists than Bedoya's story. We must not allow voices like hers to be silenced.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): I should like to thank you, Mr. President, for having organized this debate, which is today more necessary than ever. I would also like to thank the Deputy Secretary-General for his statement as well as Ms. Pearl and Mr. Deloire for their important testimony, which allows us better to understand the challenges that journalists encounter on the ground and to identify concrete actions to better protect them. We will never forget Daniel Pearl or any one of the journalists who paid with their life for their commitment to the freedom of information. Their tragedy represents an obligation for all of us. I wish to say to Mariane Pearl that her commitment is a source of inspiration for all of us, and I wish to welcome her son, who will celebrate his birthday tomorrow.

I would also like to commend the tireless work carried out for many years by Reporters Without Borders to draw attention to the situation of journalists under threat and to find concrete ways to improve the situation.

On 7 January, in the heart of Paris, two terrorists attacked the headquarters of Charlie Hebdo with heavy weapons. They killed 12 people and wounded 11 others. By attacking that newspaper, terrorists killed not only individuals. When a journalist is killed, it is the freedom of expression that is targeted. As emphasized in resolution 2222 (2015), adopted by the Council today, a free and independent press is one of the essential foundations of our democratic societies. Even before the murderous attack on Charlie Hebdo, journalists everywhere have been the victims of violence and paid with their lives for the freedom of expression.

In 2014, as has been noted, some 66 journalists, 11 assistants and 19 citizen journalists were killed. Over 350 of them were placed in detention. Thousands more were the victims of harassment, arbitrary arrest and freedom-destroying legislation. This trend continues in 2015; 25, including many local journalists, have already lost their lives this year. Everywhere journalists are subject to persecution by authoritarian regimes that attempt to silence them. Thus some 100 journalists, professionals and non-professionals both, have been killed in Syria since the beginning of the conflict there, including four French citizens. They paid with their lives for their determination to show to the world the reality of the indiscriminate repression affecting the Syrian people. In addition to persecution by the regime, there is also the barbarity of Daesh. This terrorist group does not hesitate to use the media to show the execution of journalists, staged in a macabre way that deeply shocks the human conscience.

The terrorists attack journalists because they represent everything that Daesh hates and tries to eradicate: freedom, pluralism, culture and democracy. In Iraq as in Syria, they are trying to create a black hole from which information cannot escape and where obscurantism and darkness reign supreme. These terrorists should know that their barbaric actions will only strengthen our collective determination to fight them.

Everyone agrees today that the challenge of protecting journalists is still far from having been taken up. It is first and foremost the responsibility of Governments to protect journalists and to allow them to carry out their duties independently and without hindrance. That necessarily involves the fight against impunity for those who commit acts of violence. States must systematically investigate, apprehend and try the perpetrators. Currently, 90 per cent of the murders of journalists go unpunished, which promotes further acts of violence. That situation is unacceptable. The International Criminal Court can also play a role. According to the Geneva Conventions, journalists are civilians. Their murder can therefore constitute a war crime under the Rome Statute. The texts exist. They need to be applied.

It is up to the international community, in particular the Security Council, to consider this situation and to act to protect journalists. We should recognize the vulnerability of journalists in conflict zones and should more methodically and systematically ensure that peacekeeping operations guarantee their protection as civilians at risk. Peacekeeping operations should also report to the Council on human rights violations that target journalists.

As Mr. Deloire reminded us, violence against journalists is not confined to situations of armed conflict. Most attacks take place in countries at peace, most often when journalists are investigating cases of corruption or organized crime. In that regard, the United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, developed under the auspices of UNESCO in 2012, is an excellent initiative. It should now be fully implemented by the United Nations system as a whole, in cooperation with Member States and civil society. It would also be important, as Mr. Deloire has urged, to consider ways to improve the coherence, effectiveness and visibility of United Nations efforts on the issue of the protection of journalists.

The freedom to provide information lies at the heart of every democracy. It is in the DNA of France and is one of our highest priorities, both internally and outside our borders. Every day, journalists, bloggers, war reporters and associated staff help us better understand the world and its changes. We can all see that the first reflex of the enemies of freedom is to gag the press, and that the first defenders of democracy are the independent media. Freedom of expression should be respected everywhere. It is our collective responsibility, including here in the Security Council, to work to ensure the full exercise of that freedom. Let us make that our shared fight.

Mr. Cherif (Chad) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to welcome you, Sir, along with the other ministers joining us today. I would also like to thank the Lithuanian presidency for organizing today's open debate on the protection of journalists in situations of armed conflict. I also thank Mr. Jan Eliasson, Deputy Secretary-General; Mr. Christophe Deloire, Director-General of Reporters Without Borders; and Ms, Mariane Pearl, of the Daniel Pearl Foundation, for their briefings.

The armed conflicts currently taking place around the world expose the suffering of civilians, especially that of women, children and vulnerable individuals. The eyewitness accounts of journalists in situations of armed conflict have become essential. Thanks to their presence, we receive information in real time about the numerous violations and abuses committed against innocent civilians, which has often enabled the international community to take important decisions. Not only do the men and women of the press work under difficult conditions, but they are increasingly the target of deliberate attacks in conflict zones. They are often abducted or kidnapped for ransom, if not tortured or executed in the absence of any legal proceedings. Women journalists and their female associates are not spared and are even, at times, deliberately singled out. When the terrorists of Daesh, Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, other Al-Qaida affiliates and other armed groups make them a favoured target, our obligation must be to offer immediate help by strengthening their protection. The effective pursuit of the perpetrators of such acts is a way to dissuade non-State actors who do not consider themselves bound by international instruments to protect journalists.

Journalists present in situations of armed conflict enjoy the same protections as other civilians in the application of international humanitarian law in accordance with the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols. The adoption of resolution 1738 (2006), which demands the protection of journalists in war zones, raised great hopes and was cause for rejoicing within the profession, even if its implementation did not meet expectations. Despite the obligations derived from the Geneva Conventions and resolution 1738 (2006), attacks against journalists have not diminished. According to the concept note (S/2015,303, annex) provided by the Lithuanian presidency, in 2014 alone, 61 journalists were killed, 87 per cent of whom were local, while 221 others were imprisoned. The problem of protecting journalists in situations of armed conflict is therefore more closely tied to insufficient or absent political will on the part of warring parties with respect to their obligations, than to the lack of a legal framework.

We hope that the resolution we have just adopted (resolution 2222 (2015)) marks a new phase in the commitment of States to fully assume their obligations with respect to the protection of media professionals in armed conflict and sends a strong message from the Council that unjustified attacks on journalists around the world will not go unpunished. In that light, it is urgent to stress practical, effective measures that will help prevent and reduce the attacks that currently target men and women in the media. While recalling the primary responsibility of warring parties, especially States, to protect journalists, we would do well to highlight the contribution of international, regional and subregional organizations to bolstering compliance. Raising awareness among those concerned and providing technical assistance to developing countries with respect to protection will also contribute to promoting cooperation on the issue. In that regard, we welcome the specific attention that UNESCO and the Human Rights Council have devoted to the matter of protecting journalists.

We commend the immensely important role of journalists and associated staff in the protection of civilians caught up in situations of armed conflict and their contribution to establishing democratic societies. We stress the fact that their training and rigorous adherence to professional codes of ethics will help some of them avoid the pitfalls of disinformation and the calls to hatred that risk exacerbating conflicts. In that regard, journalists should respect the principles of impartiality and objectivity in the exercise of their profession. We also remind those in charge of media outlets to carefully weigh the risks before sending journalists and associated staff into conflict areas, in order to avoid subjecting them to the indiscriminate terror that all too often targets them today.

In conclusion, allow me once again to honour the memory of all those who have been unjustly executed and to pay homage to those still in the hands of armed groups and terrorists. We join with others in calling for their immediate and unconditional release, and in demanding that the perpetrators of those crimes be pursued and brought to justice. Impunity for those who kill journalists must be stopped.

Mr. van Bohemen (New Zealand): Mr. President, I would like to welcome you and the other Foreign Ministers who are taking part in today's debate, and to thank Deputy Secretary-General Eliasson for his briefing. I would like to commend the thought-provoking briefings we have had from Mr. Christophe Deloire and Ms. Mariane Pearl, particularly Ms. Pearl's reflections on the changing nature of journalism, the need for reflection on the balance between reportage and entertainment, and her analysis of the threats posed — by terrorist organizations, other non-State actors and, sadly, Governments that are Members of our Organization — to those who take on the demanding challenge of reporting the news.

It has been almost nine years since the Security Council adopted resolution 1738 (2006), on the protection of journalists in armed conflict. The intervening years have been particularly dangerous and bloody, as we have heard today. More than 60 journalists have been killed each year since the adoption of resolution 1738 (2006). Most, but not all, of those fatalities have been conflict-related, and many more deaths go unreported. Already this year 25 journalists have been killed. New Zealand therefore welcomes the opportunity this debate gives us to reflect on the protection of journalists in armed conflict, and we commend Lithuania for taking that initiative.

Today I wish to focus on four challenges to protection. The first is tackling impunity. In nine out of 10 cases, the perpetrators of attacks on journalists are never prosecuted. That remains first and foremost a national responsibility. While it may pose particular challenges for fragile and conflict-affected States, there are tools available to assist them with it, including through regional organizations. States should be better at asking for help. Today's resolution 2222 (2015) strengthens standards in that area.

Secondly, New Zealand welcomes the increased monitoring by the United Nations of the protection of journalists, including in the Secretary-General's thematic report on the protection of civilians (S/2013/689) and in country-specific reports. Such reports should reflect on the work of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and of the various special rapporteurs and envoys who raise concerns about attacks on journalists in connection to their own mandates. That will provide more clarity, at the national level and across the United Nations system, for improving the implementation of resolution 1738 (2006) and now resolution 2222 (2015) as well.

Thirdly, we recognize the particular vulnerabilities faced by local journalists, who represent a majority of the victims. Local journalists often lack access to the kind of equipment and resources that can help them to keep safe. In that regard, we urge media organizations to take responsibility for all their staff, regardless of their national status. We also urge United Nations personnel in the field to remain alert to the protection challenges facing local journalists.

Finally, there is the transformative effect of technology and the rapidly evolving media landscape. Anyone with a pen and notepad, a smart phone and a Twitter account can contribute to the discussion through the Internet and social media. That has led to the rise of citizen journalists, who are often the only source of information in areas controlled by terrorists and other non-State actors. The importance of such changes cannot be ignored. Citizen journalists are often exposed and at risk. That has been grimly demonstrated in Syria, where credible reports indicate that at least 130 Internet and citizen journalists have been killed since the start of the conflict.

Journalists remain a vital part of our work here in the Council. We have been reminded graphically today of many of the horrible incidents involving the persecution of journalists in Syria and elsewhere. We value the close relationship we have with the representatives of the media who follow the work of the Council both here and in conflicts abroad. The story of what is happening on the ground and behind the scenes must be told. The people of Burundi, Syria, South Sudan, Ukraine, Yemen and elsewhere need a voice.

Mr. Zagaynov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We welcome the opportunity for the Council to once again address the issue of the protection of journalists, which is such an important aspect of the problem of the protection of civilians in armed conflict.

In the context of the various ongoing armed conflicts, journalism remains one of the most dangerous professions. Only last week we received the news of another tragic death of a representative of the press, the Iraqi television journalist Firas Al-Bahri, executed by the Islamic State. Journalists who fall into the category of civilians under international humanitarian law are protected accordingly under the code for armed conflict, and that is entirely proper.

Against the backdrop of the growing role that the media plays in the world's political and social life, issues related to journalists' activities are increasingly included on the agenda of various international institutions and organizations, especially UNESCO, the Human Rights Council, the General Assembly and the Security Council. We view today's resolution 2222 (2015) as a continuation of resolution 1738 (2006), the Council's foundational document on the subject. The topic of protecting journalists' safety should continue to be seen as a priority in the work of those bodies, while of course taking into account their mandate and purview. At the same time, attempts to expand the interpretation of the category to include practically anyone and everyone who uses the Internet, even if they are not involved in professional journalism, will not improve its effectiveness. Blurring the concept of what a journalist is will not help the situation.

Despite the measures that the international community has taken, the situation regarding the protection of journalists leaves much to be desired. Their rights are sometimes grossly ignored and their lives and health threatened. The number of journalists killed increased in 2014. News of the deaths of or injuries to journalists in Syria, Iraq and Libya and other countries continues to reach us with alarming regularity. Employees of the media working in hot spots have become victims of intimidation, attacks, searches, arbitrary detentions and expulsions. The kidnapping of journalists by the Islamic State and related terrorist organizations is extremely worrying. We all know about cases in which the equipment that journalists need in order to carry out their professional tasks has been intentionally destroyed or confiscated.

We are particularly concerned about the situation in Ukraine, where journalists, especially those representing Russian media, are not only endangered for doing their job, but are also forced to work in conditions of open discrimination. Russian journalists are periodically captured by members of the Ukrainian special services. Some representatives of Russian and foreign media have paid with their lives for their efforts to work in a war zone and report the truth about what is happening there. Unfortunately, such cases have not only gone unpunished, they have not always come to the attention of the relevant international entities and human-rights organizations.

One of the aspects of modern armed conflict is what is known as the information war. Winning it involves employing a wide-ranging arsenal of weapons, which include, in particular, some States' decisions to ban broadcasts or impose sanctions on media they do not like. We should also include in this type of warfare the spread of incitements to intolerance and the rhetoric of hatred. In that regard, it is important to recall the responsibility that journalists have to society.

We agree with the provisions of the concept note prepared for today's meeting (S/2015/307, annex) on the need to ensure the proper training of journalists working in armed conflict situations and to minimize the risks involved in such work. The growing number of victims among journalists clearly points to the need to step up efforts to ensure their protection in areas of armed conflict. The main responsibility for ensuring the protection of civilians, including journalists, lies with the parties to the conflict.

We strongly condemn any acts of violence against journalists and call on the authorities of all States on whose territory armed conflict is unfolding to make every possible effort to investigate and prosecute such crimes, in particular those against media professionals, and to bring to justice those responsible.

Mrs. Adnin (Malaysia): On behalf of the Malaysian delegation, I wish to thank Mr. Linkevičius, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Lithuania, and Lithuania for convening this timely debate on the important issue of the protection of civilians, particularly journalists, in situations of armed conflict. We believe that his presence here today demonstrates the great importance he attaches to the issue, and we commend Lithuania's leadership in taking this agenda forward.

We are pleased to have co-sponsored and joined the consensus on resolution 2222 (2015), which the Council has just adopted.

My delegation thanks Mr. Jan Eliasson, Deputy Secretary-General; Mr. Christophe Deloire from Reporters Without Borders; and Ms. Mariane Pearl of the Daniel Pearl Foundation for their respective briefings, to which we have listened with much interest.

In our view, resolution 2222 (2015) makes a positive contribution towards strengthening existing international norms and standards on the protection of civilians, particularly journalists operating in situations of armed conflict. Malaysia take this opportunity to honour those brave souls who have risked life and limb — and in some cases have paid the ultimate price — while pursuing their calling, that is, shedding

light on the human dimension of conflicts, including the underlying causes and the narratives of those caught in circles of violence.

We underscore that in situations of armed conflict, the responsibility to ensure the protection of civilians, including journalists, rests on the parties to the conflict, without regard to whether such conflict occurs at intra- or inter-State level. Indeed, such responsibility on the part of the parties to a conflict is clearly enshrined in the applicable international instruments on international human rights law, international humanitarian law and international criminal law. We view with serious concern the increasing trend of journalists being deliberately targeted by parties to a conflict. The statistics are all the more troubling as they seem to indicate that journalists are being deliberately targeted, particularly by non-State actors, including terrorist groups and affiliated individuals.

Just over a week ago, on 20 May, reports emerged about the abduction and subsequent execution of journalist Feras Yasin by Daesh, in Mosul, Iraq. Scarcely a month earlier, on 27 April and also in Mosul, the body of Thaer Al-Ali, Editor-in-Chief of the newspaper *Rai al-Nas,* was found. He, too, was abducted before being executed, also by Daesh. Their crime? They shed light on atrocities committed by the group.

All the more chilling are the recent and ongoing atrocities committed by Daesh and its affiliates in cynically manipulating their acts of the torture, mutilation and murder of journalists — including James Foley, Kenji Goto and Steven Sotloff — as propaganda tools in pursuit of questionable political goals. Against such developments, the international community and the Council must stiffen their collective resolve towards ensuring that no more journalists will suffer the fate of those brave individuals.

The prevalence of a culture of impunity and the absence of rule of law, good governance and the attendant institutions of law and order are among the key factors that negatively affect the safety and security of civilians in conflict situations, including journalists. We fully subscribe to the principle that where violations and abuse of civilians occur, the perpetrators must be held accountable, including through punitive action.

In that regard, we note with concern the Secretary-General's report (A/69/268), which, inter alia, underscored the absence of accountability for attacks against journalists. The figures cited are worrying. In this year alone conflict situations around the world have claimed the lives of at least 13 journalists. Since 1992, 377 journalists and media professionals have lost their lives due to violent conflict or while on a dangerous mission. Malaysia suffered its first casualty some three years ago when Mr. Noramfaizul Mohd Nor, a cameraman traveling with a humanitarian convoy in Somalia, was killed in a crossfire incident.

Malaysia reaffirms that the role played by journalists in situations of armed conflict is crucial and indispensable. Taking a broader perspective, journalists also play a positive role in contributing to the protection of civilians, including by reporting on alleged atrocities or documenting violence in the search for justice for the victims. Bearing in mind the risks that these brave individuals assume in extracting information from situations of violence and conflict and ensuring that such information reaches those in a position to address the situation — including this Council — necessitates a corresponding response to promote their continued safety, security and well-being while operating in such harsh conditions.

In the context of situations of violent and armed conflict, journalists perform a critical role through their exercise of the right to freedom of expression and opinion. As we have all seen, many journalists have paid a steep price, and many will continue to pay unless all concerned parties take clear measures to ensure their safety and security in such situations. My delegation believes that the Council must continue to advocate for the safety and protection of journalists in situations of armed conflict. Malaysia remains fully seized of and committed to that undertaking, alongside other Council members.

Mr. Omaish (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): The Jordanian delegation expresses its warmest gratitude for the opportunity to discuss the very important topic of the protection of journalists in conflict situations. We thank the Deputy Secretary-General and Mr. Christophe Deloire and Ms. Marianne Pearl.

Significant progress has been achieved in developing legal criteria on the protection of journalists and media professionals in armed conflict since the adoption of the Hague conventions of 1899 and 1907, the 1949 Geneva Conventions and their two Additional Protocols of 1977, and General Assembly resolution 2677 (XXV) of 1970. Those actions comprise decisive steps in ensuring the protection of journalists in situations of armed conflict.

However, in spite of such efforts, we continue to witness unprecedented increases in the number of victims among international journalists and media professionals. The year 2014 witnessed the deaths of 67 journalists and the abductions of 119, as well as the exile of 139 journalists and the imprisonment of 221. In 2015, 25 journalists have already been killed. Many women journalists have been victims of the worst forms of sexual and physical violence.

Such organized and methodical targeting of journalists and other media professionals is a violation of international humanitarian law. The reason for such attacks is the very nature of journalists' work and their attempt to cover conflicts and wars, most of which are no longer traditional conflicts and in which at least one of the parties is a non-State actor. That has led to a significant increase in the level of violations committed against journalists and has strengthened impunity for those responsible.

One of the most significant challenges the international community faces is ensuring accountability and fighting against impunity for those responsible for violence and crimes against journalists and media professionals and their headquarters during a conflict. We would like to reiterate, in this context, the need for the United Nations to help the States experiencing armed conflict to establish and rebuild national legal institutions and witness-protection programmes so that States can prosecute those responsible for attacks against civilians, including journalists. In certain conditions, and to guarantee accountability and protection for such individuals, the international community must set up commissions to investigate, monitor and gather information on crimes committed against journalists and media professionals during armed conflict.

Jordan believes that the time has come to consider once again a draft international convention on the international protection of journalists and those in other dangerous professions. Such a convention would include provisions and mechanisms to protect journalists and media outlets during armed conflict in order to ensure that they are provided with the highest possible protection. In the same vein, in terms of combating violations and crimes against journalists and media professionals, those responsible for such acts who have enjoyed impunity must be prosecuted. That must be a priority for the United Nations. Peacekeeping operations should therefore also work with State institutions and parties to the conflict to raise awareness among them of the legal protection that journalists benefit from during armed conflict and the risks that such attacks pose for them. More pressure needs to be exerted to ensure greater protection for journalists and prosecution of those responsible for attacks against them.

The goal of the journalists and media professionals working in conflict zones is to have direct access to events as they unfold in order to shed light on the facts and communicate them in a frank, objective and complete manner. We would like to reiterate what has already been stated today, namely, the need for media organizations to offer training programmes for journalists and media professionals who are covering events in conflict areas. It is essential to bolster their ability to deal with the kind of dangerous situations that they could face and to ensure their physical protection in carrying out their job. Along the same lines, efforts must be promoted to ensure the highest quality medical service to journalists and media professionals who are victims and to offer them the necessary psychological, social and legal support when they are wounded in the course of their work.

Finally, allow me to reiterate Jordan's support for the protection of civilians, including journalists and media professionals in armed conflict. We pay tribute to those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice in trying to shed light on the facts during armed conflict and thus promoting international peace and security.

Mr. Rycroft (United Kingdom): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this open debate. I welcome the adoption of resolution 2222 (2015) — the first in nine years on this important issue — and congratulate you, Sir, on the leadership Lithuania has shown in moving the issue forward.

I would like to thank the Deputy Secretary-General for his insightful briefing and Director-General Deloire and Ms. Pearl for their moving testimony today. I pay tribute to them and their colleagues for their work in truly difficult circumstances. I was particularly struck by the individual stories of bravery that we heard regarding the journalists with moral courage who gave their lives in pursuit of their profession so that all of us may have a better understanding of the truth than the terrorist organizations or oppressive regimes would like us to have.

The protection of journalists, both in conflict and in peace, is an essential tenet of any functioning society. The freedom of journalists to report unhindered and

unharmed is a vital tool to help hold authority to account. It is a building-block of an open society and an effective democracy. Sadly, this year we have seen 25 journalists killed around the world, and we are not even halfway through the year. To that number, we can add countless more who have been intimidated, injured, detained or kidnapped. The numbers keep growing. Only last week, in South Sudan, Pow James Raeth, a young talented radio journalist, was shot and killed with his friend Yohanes Pal Kwek as they crossed the street in Akobo. We offer our condolences to their friends and family and to those of all the journalists who have lost their lives this year.

We are also concerned by growing levels of harassment of journalists. Recent reports of intimidation and attacks on radio stations and newspapers in Burundi are a worrying example. We call on the Government there to promote an environment where journalists are free to report on political developments without fear of reprisal. The current media blackout will only serve to increase uncertainty and tension in an already fragile environment.

Today, journalists face new threats. The emergence of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and other violent extremist non-State actors has created new risks, both in conflict areas and in areas that were once seen as bastions of journalistic freedom. This has not been seen more clearly than in the brutal and senseless murder of 10 employees of *Charlie Hebdo* in Paris in January. Because of that single day of barbarism, more journalists have now died in France than any other country this year. Together with the high-profile killings of Steven Sotloff, Kenji Goto, James Foley and many others, it is clear that journalists have become even greater targets for terror, whether they are in a conflict area or not.

We must end impunity for those who target journalists. In 90 per cent of cases of murdered journalists, there are no convictions. That is not acceptable. Those who commit such crimes must be held to account, whoever they are. The failure of States to do so only perpetuates the culture of impunity and so precipitates further attacks. We welcome the fact that today the Council unanimously adopted the resolution urging Member States to conduct impartial, independent and effective investigations to bring perpetrators of crimes against journalists to justice.

As we implement resolution 2222 (2015), we must update our concept of journalism for the twenty-first century. In this world of Twitter and YouTube, there have been great changes to the way in which people receive news. We need to ensure that we also work to protect bloggers and social media activists. In Bangladesh, three secularist bloggers have already been murdered this year. The latest, Ananta Bijoy Das, was killed outside his home earlier this month. These deaths have created a culture of fear that has closed down the space for free speech in Bangladesh.

The United Kingdom is supporting countries to keep that space open. In the Sudan, we have funded 75 community correspondents in Kassala, El Gezira and Blue Nile states. They will help raise awareness of social issues and ensure that communities have a voice. In Tunisia, we are supporting the Government and media institutions in strengthening the legal and regulatory framework that protects media freedom. We call on all Member States to support journalists in whatever ways they can.

Resolution 2222 (2015) recognizes not only the need to protect journalists, but also the contribution that journalists can make to protecting others. Journalists risk life and limb to bring focus to some of the world's most pressing problems, and bring them to the attention of the world at large. Would we know the true horror of the Syrian conflict without the bravery of journalists willing to work in the region? They and so many others give voice to those who have lost their own.

It is therefore in the interests of us all to protect journalists and the work that they do. Through their investigations and reporting, the media can bring to light human rights violations. They can act as an early warning mechanism for impending conflict, atrocities or humanitarian disaster. Their insights from difficult and inaccessible places have spurred the international community to action on issues that otherwise might have been missed. Protecting journalists so that they can carry out this role in future is therefore a vital part of the work of the Council. Through resolution 2222 (2015) today, I believe that we have taken an important step towards recognizing that.

Mr. Gaspar Martins (Angola): My delegation commends the Lithuanian presidency for holding this open debate on the protection of journalists in conflict situations. We welcome you, Sir, and thank you for coming to New York to participate in this important debate. We also thank Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson. We welcome the presence here of Mr. Christophe Deloire and Ms. Mariane Pearl of the

Daniel Pearl Foundation and thank them for briefing the Council, and especially for sharing with us their very insightful remarks, which are an important contribution to our debate this morning.

While States bear the primary responsibility for the protection of civilians, including journalists, as highlighted in resolution 1738 (2006), the international community has a subsidiary but very important role to play in addressing this very serious problem. Journalists face risks in conflict zones: abduction, hostage-taking, harassment, intidimidation, forced disappearance, arbitrary detention, torture and illegal arrest, in clear violation of international humanitarian law. According to Reporters Without Borders, in 2014 alone 69 journalists were killed in the discharge of their honourable duties. This year, 25 have been killed, 13 of them in countries on the Security Council's agenda: five in South Sudan, two in Iraq, two in Yemen, two in Ukraine, and one each in Syria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

While the majority of victims are male journalists, women are increasingly subject to violations of their integrity while performing their duties in conflict situations. Women journalists face additional risks related to, among other things, gender-based prejudices, sexual harassment and intimidation, and sexual violence and abuse in detention. This implies that there is a need for a gender-perspective approach when considering measures to address the issue of violence against journalists.

Nowadays, threats are not faced exclusively by traditional journalists. Those engaged in social media — bloggers and others using modern information technologies to communicate, disseminate information and express points of view — also frequently find themselves in danger.

Angola, my country, attaches great importance to the protection of civilians in conflict situations, and particularly to the protection of journalists, in accordance with the Geneva Conventions, including the 1949 Geneva Convention Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War and the Additional Protocols of 1977, in particular article 79 of Additional Protocol I regarding the protection of journalists in areas of armed conflict. In Angola, the freedom of information and expression is granted by the Constitution, which recognizes the right of all citizens to express, disseminate and freely share their thoughts, ideas and opinions by word, image or other means of communication. The Constitution also recognizes the right to freedom of information as the basis of a plural society in which the fundamental rights of citizens must be respected within the primacy of the law.

Journalists often draw attention to and witness grave violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, especially by reporting on situations that often amount to threats to international peace and security. We value the United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, approved in 2012 by UNESCO, which has helped States to develop specific legislative mechanisms regarding the freedom of expression.

Despite the increased attention given by the international community and the States Members of the United Nations, and the Security Council's action on the issue, including the adoption of resolution 1738 (2006), violence against journalists persists. The most recent report of the Secretary-General on the protection of civilians (S/2013/689) highlights the fact that accountability for the perpetrators of attacks against journalists is virtually non-existent. This is a situation that cannot prevail. Those responsible for violations and attacks against journalists must be held accountable. We believe that combating impunity is an important means of ensuring greater safety and protection for journalists in conflict zones. It is with dismay that we witness the current trend of threats against journalists,including the terror tactics of war used by some terrorist groups, such as the recent beheading of journalists in Syria by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham.

To conclude, we reiterate the important role that regional and subregional organizations can play in ensuring the protection of journalists and associated personnel in armed conflict, and the need to render more effective the cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations. We are convinced that journalists can play a very important role when reporting events with objectivity and professionalism. The Security Council should continue to pay more attention to the protection of journalists, and the Secretary-General could include more detailed information on the situation of journalists in conflicts zones, both in his reports on the protection of civilians and in his country-specific reports.

With respect to our adoption today of resolution 2222 (2015), which Angola co-sponsored, we think that the Council is pointing in the correct direction by acting on an area that has not yet been sufficiently covered.

For that, we again thank the Lithuanian presidency for bringing it to the Council.

Mrs. Ogwu (Nigeria): The Nigerian delegation warmly welcomes you, Mr. President, as well as other ministers present here today. We are especially indebted to the delegation of Lithuania for organizing this important debate on the protection of journalists in conflict situations and for the concept note provided to guide our discussions (S/2015/307, annex). We thank the Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Jan Eliasson, for his briefing. Mr. Christophe Deloire and Ms. Mariane Pearl have inspired us with their remarkable testimonies, and we are eternally grateful.

It is widely acknowledged that journalists play a vital role in keeping the international community informed about developments in situations of armed conflict. They sometimes do this at great risk to their lives. Journalists have been kidnapped, tortured and killed while reporting wars, riots, demonstrations and other civil disturbances. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, more than 1,129 journalists have been killed since 1992. Many others have been imprisoned or have disappeared. This underscores the grave dangers that journalists face in the line of duty and the need for the international community to continue to pay attention to issues that pertain to their protection.

Journalists in different and complex situations are offered the same level of protection under international humanitarian law as civilians. However, the reality on the ground is vastly different. It is evident that international norms have not been able to adequately protect journalists working in situations of armed conflicts. Clearly, then, much more needs to be done in order to ensure that these norms are upheld in order to grant journalists the protection that they deserve.

States bear the primary responsibility to protect journalists in conflict situations, and they must take decisive action in consonance with their obligations under international humanitarian law. Lack of action creates room for impunity on the part of offenders and increases the risk to journalists working in conflict zones. We do acknowledge, however, that conflicts often occur in an atmosphere of lawlessness where governance structures are weak and State authority is absent. It is in this political and security vacuum that terrorists, extremist groups and criminal networks present a major challenge in the protection of civilians, including journalists. These groups generally act with total disregard for human rights and international humanitarian law. This can be clearly seen in grave crimes being committed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham, Al-Qaida, Boko Haram and other terrorist and extremist groups.

Nigeria acknowledges the importance that the Security Council attaches to the protection of journalists in conflict situations. The adoption of resolution 1738 (2006) was a milestone in the annals of the Council. Resolution 2222 (2015), which the Council adopted this morning, builds significantly on resolution 1738 (2006). It provides a framework for the United Nations and the international community to ensure the protection of journalists in situations of violent conflict.

Of particular significance is the request in the resolution that the Secretary-General include in his reports the issue of the safety of journalists as a sub-item of the protection of civilians in armed conflict. We believe that this will raise the profile of this important subject in the context of the Security Council's engagement with the United Nations Secretariat. It will also allow the Council to closely monitor developments in conflict situations on its agenda and to assess the extent to which its resolutions pertaining to the protection of journalists are being implemented.

As a country steadily but resolutely consolidating its democratic institutions, Nigeria is committed to the rule of law. Indeed, Nigeria respects and upholds the rights of journalists to perform their duties without hindrance. Our Constitution guarantees freedom of expression, freedom of the press and freedom of thought. On 27 May 2011, the Nigerian National Assembly passed the Freedom of Information Bill, which the President signed into law the following day. The act reinforces the civil liberties enjoyed by journalists and promotes transparency and accountability in governance.

At the multilateral level, Nigeria has demonstrated its preparedness to collaborate with other States in the promotion of media freedom in the age of social media. This is especially exemplified by our role as one of the six lead sponsors of the first-ever Human Rights Council resolution on freedom of expression on the Internet (resolution 20/8), adopted by consensus on 5 July 2012 at the Council's twentieth session. The growing importance of the Internet as a means of disseminating and receiving information underscored our decision to work together with delegations of Brazil, Sweden, Turkey, Tunisia and the United States

for the adoption of this landmark resolution. Today's resolution 2222 (2015) firmly builds on that scaffold.

The protection of journalists in conflict situations is a challenge for the international community. It requires a global effort, with all hands on deck. We encourage all United Nations Member States to create conditions suitable for journalists to carry out their essential work. On our part, we assure the international community of our firm and continuing commitment to engage with all stakeholders in furtherance of the protection of journalists.

Mr. Wang Min (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China welcomes the initiative of Lithuania to convene today's open debate on the protection of journalists in armed conflict. We welcome Foreign Minister Linkevičius as he comes to New York to preside over today's meeting. I wish to thank the Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Eliasson, for his briefing. China has listened attentively to the statements of the representatives of non-governmental organizations.

Journalists and media workers in armed conflicts constitute a special group. Devoted to their professional mandates and missions, they provide the public with their first-hand information at risk to their lives in armed conflicts. At the same time, they are defenceless and vulnerable civilians, constantly faced with the risks of being attacked, kidnapped and even deprived of their lives. We pay tribute to these journalists and media professionals who defy risks to their own safety when they venture into the foreground of armed conflict to provide coverage. In the past, numerous innocent journalists and media professionals have been attacked or even killed in armed conflicts. China strongly condemns any and all atrocities committed against journalists and media workers in armed conflicts, particularly deliberate attacks on and murder of journalists. We wish to extend our condolences to fallen journalists, media workers and their families. China calls upon the concerned parties to conflicts to put a true end to deliberate attacks and other atrocities against journalists and media workers. We support the international community in taking effective actions to protect journalists from being harmed in armed conflicts. I wish now to make the following five points.

First, protecting journalists in armed conflict is an important part of the protection of civilians. Journalists not involved in hostilities and conflicts should be protected under international humanitarian law, just like other civilians. The relevant Security Council resolutions and presidential statements on the protection of civilians have set forth the basic principles and created an important framework for protecting journalists from the harm of conflicts and as such they should be effectively observed. The comprehensive implementation of the aforementioned resolutions and presidential statements by the international community is an effective means for promoting the protection of journalists in armed conflicts.

Secondly, parties to conflict should seriously shoulder the important responsibility of protecting journalists in armed conflicts. They should, in line with their obligations under the Geneva Convention and other international law, effectively fulfil their responsibilities to protect journalists and prevent and stop atrocities from occurring. On the other hand, journalists and media workers should observe professional ethics and practice fairness and objectivity in their coverage. They should respect local cultural traditions and customs, the sovereignty and territorial integrity of countries, observe the laws and regulations of host countries and refrain from becoming a party to conflicts. However, under no circumstances is any party allowed to inflict deliberate harm or atrocities upon journalists when they lawfully perform their working duties, no one, by law, is allowed to inflict deliberate harm or atrocities upon them. At the same time, when journalists and media workers enter areas of armed conflict, we hope they adopt an elevated sense of self-protection so as to avoid unnecessary casualties.

Thirdly, the international community should coordinate its fight against attacks and atrocities against journalists. The international community should, on the basis of respect for the judicial sovereignty of the countries concerned, step up its fight against deliberate attacks and atrocities against journalists in armed conflict, as these acts contravene international humanitarian law. A zero-tolerance policy should be adopted against deliberate attacks and atrocities committed against journalists in armed conflict, and perpetrators should meet with severe punishment. The United Nations should also strengthen its cooperation with regional and subregional organizations, taking advantage of their unique strengths so as to form international synergies.

Fourthly, the proper handling of atrocities committed against journalists by terrorist extremist forces is one of the important priorities in protecting journalists in armed conflicts. In recent years, there

have been frequent instances of deliberate killings and atrocities committed against journalists by some terrorist and extremist forces. The international community should attach the highest priority to this problem by intensifying its fight against terrorism. At the same time, it is essential to strengthen coordination and cooperation in order to eliminate the fertile soil in which terrorist activities are bred and from which they are spread so as to eliminate the real threats faced by journalists in their work.

Fifthly, the various United Nations agencies should share out and coordinate their responsibilities and jointly promote the protection of journalists in armed conflict. China appreciates the efforts of UNESCO, the Human Rights Council and other agencies to safeguard and promote the lawful rights of journalists and strengthen their protection in armed conflict. It is hoped that the various United Nations agencies will work according to their respective mandates to form synergies in order to jointly create a safe environment for protecting journalists in armed conflict.

The Security Council shoulders the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, working effectively in the fields of peacekaing, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. It has made positive contributions to attaining the goal of protecting civilians in armed conflict, in particular journalists and media workers. China is ready to work with the international community to push forward the comprehensive implementation of relevant Security Council resolutions and presidential statements and contribute to realizing the goal of protecting journalists and media professionals in armed conflicts.

Mr. Barros Melet (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): We welcome the presence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs and thank the Lithuanian delegation for convening today's debate and the concept note (S/2015/307, annex). We also welcome the briefings by Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson, Director-General of Reporters Without Borders Christophe Deloire, and Ms. Mariane Pearl of the Daniel Pearl Foundation.

Today's debate concerns a central component in the protection of civilians in armed conflict and the need for caution in the application of universal principles and rights. Journalists and media workers require special attention because of the growing dangers and risks they face when they take on the responsibilities of bringing critical information to the community and of amplifying the voices of civil society. Resolution 2222 (2015) adopted today recognizes this concern and stresses the importance of the work of journalists, professionals of the media and associated personnel. Accordingly, my delegation joined in co-sponsoring it.

The year 2014 was marked by the threat, kidnapping and murder of journalists and the media workers in practically all armed conflicts. These attacks must not be understood solely as a violation of international humanitarian law but as a direct attack on human rights that seeks to curtail the right to freedom of expression and the right of citizens to be informed. Impunity for attacks on journalists and on the free exercise of the profession is unacceptable. It limits access to information, discourages work in conflict zones and creates fear of journalistic research and expression, all of which makes political and humanitarian crises invisible in public discourse, hindering an early response to conflict situations.

In addressing these scenarios and ensuring the adequate protection of journalists and media workers, we consider it important to increase international and regional cooperation and coordination through the exchange of best practices and technical assistance. In this regard, the implementation of the UNESCO's United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity is crucial to promoting a safe and free environment for journalists and media workers, particularly in conflict situations, in order to contribute to international peace and security.

The right to freedom of expression, especially freedom of the press, is essential if there is to be an informed and active citizenry committed to the defence of democracy and peace. Similarly, freedom of expression and information facilitates the empowerment of women and their inclusion in various processes and in decision-making, thereby promoting equality.

Developing a catalogue of best practices and lessons learned for disseminating and exchanging experiences with other regions on a voluntary basis is a way to improve the security environment for journalists. On the other hand, in those scenarios where there are peacekeeping operations and special political missions, we call upon them to incorporate, in their periodic reports, monitoring and reporting on violations and abuses committed against them. The Organization can transfer, through its operations, missions and specialized agencies, capacities for adequately protecting journalists in conflict zones.

In conclusion, I reiterate our appreciation to the Lithuanian presidency for bringing this issue back to the Council for consideration, because in protecting journalists and their role, we are promoting conditions conducive to international peace and security, which is priority task for the Council, and strengthening the rule of law and democracy.

Mr. Ramírez Carreño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank you, Sir, for presiding over this open debate and for your presence among us. I also thank the Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Jan Eliasson; Mr. Christopher Deloire, Director-General of Reporters Without Borders; and Ms. Mariane Pearl, representative of the Daniel Pearl Foundation.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela condemns in the strongest possible terms acts violence against journalists covering armed conflict, and calls for full respect for the international humanitarian law that protects them as civilians, in accordance with the provisions of the Third Geneva Convention. In recent years, particularly given the proliferation and strengthening of terrorist groups in various regions of the Middle East and Africa, we have witnessed how the practice of journalism has become more dangerous, claiming the lives of many and, in some cases, with a brutality that has served to instil fear. We need only recall the perversity of the beheadings committed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham and its media savvy to understand the danger facing humankind, including journalists. This practice is a reality that we regret and repudiate, and we call for those responsible for such heinous acts to be brought to justice.

Journalists in armed conflicts incur significant risks by denouncing the atrocities perpetrated by the warring parties, which in many instances makes them the military targets of non-State and State actors, in violation of international humanitarian law. During the 51 days of the Israeli military aggression in the Gaza Strip in 2014, 2,220 civilians were killed, of whom 17 were journalists — 16 Palestinians and an Italian photographer.

Resolution 1738 (2006) helped to address this issue in the framework of the protection of civilians, including journalists. We believe that international humanitarian law provides an appropriate platform for the protection of professional journalists in armed conflicts, in their civilian capacity. Our country will continue to advocate tirelessly for the construction of a democratic environment in journalism with a social service orientation, denouncing the manipulation of information and emphasizing ethics and responsibility in communications as essential foundations for achieving world peace. In that regard, the protection of journalists is our priority.

Venezuela reaffirms the position expressed on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement at its ministerial meeting in Algeria in May 2014, in which it called for the responsible use and treatment of information by the media in accordance with codes of conduct and professional ethics in all their forms. It should be recalled that the world has lived through sad episodes like that in Rwanda, where the irresponsible and politically motivated use of the media fueled mass hatred against other ethnic groups and the radio was used as a tool to accelerate the genocide against the Tutsi under fallacious and discriminatory arguments that only amplified the logic of death.

In 1980, UNESCO published the report entitled *Many Voices One World*, also known as the MacBride report, which set out the basic elements for creating a new world order of communication and information. Its recommendations are now more relevant than ever. They include adherence to ethical principles, the facts and the transmission of truth above the interests of the owners of the media, which are guided more by economic and political interests than by respect for the responsibility to report.

It should be noted that seven global corporations control over 80 per cent of communications throughout the world. This being so, the balanced distribution of information is hindered beyond conflict zones where the interests of the corporate media respond to or coincide with those of major Powers involved politically or militarily in the conflict. In recent history, the corporate media have blatantly distorted reality by making tendentious use of facts in order to influence public opinion on behalf of the political and military interests of certain countries. In the case of Iraq, I recall the resort to the excuse of the existence of weapons of mass destruction that proved in time to be non-existent, and the role of such corporations to justify the invasion of that country in 2003. Unfortunately, that practice has not changed. Today, the same patterns of misinformation are being trotted out in the treatment of conflicts afflicting the Middle East and Africa.

I wish to draw a clear distinction between journalists and the corporate media. We pay tribute to the honest and dangerous work done by professional journalists

who risk their lives in conflict situations for the right and duty to report.

Finally, the work of journalists in conflict zones is key to describing the evolution of events in which civilian lives are subject to the actions of armed actors. Journalists are called on to contribute with the truth to the building of world of peace. Society requires journalism to be practiced in a balanced and impartial manner. We must protect and guarantee the physical safety and lives of journalists so that they can play their full roll in society.

The President: I remind speakers to kindly limit their statements to no more than four minutes in order to ensure that we can complete our work expeditiously. I also appeal to speakers to deliver their statements at a moderate speed so that interpretation can be provided properly.

I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Latvia.

Mr. Rinkēvičs (Latvia): I thank you, Mr. President, for presiding over this very timely debate on the protection of journalists in conflict situations. Let me also thank Mr. Jan Eliasson, Mr. Christophe Deloire and Ms. Mariane Pearl for their informative briefings and tireless work on this very complex subject.

As early as 1946, at its very first session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 59 (I), affirming that freedom of information is the cornerstone of all the freedoms to which the United Nations is committed. The right of freedom of expression depends upon the safety of journalists and media professionals. Furthermore, the work done by journalists contributes to increased accountability, transparency and the rule of law.

Dramatic changes in the media landscape, in particular the introduction of new technologies, have resulted in an unprecedented flow of information, including from conflict settings. The independent voices of journalists and reports from conflict zones give the international community a unique insight into realities on the ground. They serve as a catalyst for rapid and effective response, and are therefore vital to the survival of a conflict-affected society. In this context, it is extremely important not only to safeguard but to strengthen the ability of the media to provide independent and reliable information.

Freedom of expression, both offline and online, and strengthening the independence of media are long-standing priorities of Latvia. We promote them as a part of our presidency of the Council of the European Union and in international organizations, including at the Human Rights Council. At the beginning of May, a conference to mark UNESCO World Press Freedom Day took place in Riga. The resulting Riga declaration underlines our commitment to promote a legal and institutional environment that ensures the safety of journalists, the urgent need to end impunity for crimes against journalists and media workers, and the essential contribution of journalists to the enjoyment of all human rights and the pursuit of sustainable development.

The international community has addressed the protection of journalists in conflict areas on numerous occasions. In 2006, the Security Council adopted resolution 1738 (2006), which calls for urgent action. More recently, the Human Rights Council and UNESCO have made the protection of journalists a top priority. Latvia endorses those efforts, especially the United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, which is not only a statement of ideals, but a tool for change. Unfortunately, today the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity are once again at the top of the international agenda.

Deliberate attempts to target journalists in conflict zones continue to increase in scale and number. Even though journalists working in conflict zones have the status of civilians and enjoy a range of protection guarantees, they continue to face manifold threats, including assassination, harassment, intimidation and kidnapping. Such attacks constitute a clear breach of international humanitarian law. Threats posed by terrorist and radical extremist groups against journalists have also become a major challenge. Nor should we ignore the fact that women journalists are particularly vulnerable and require special attention. For all those reasons, the adoption of the resolution 2222 (2015) today, which addresses the new challenges to the safety of journalists, is of particular importance and we praise this achievement.

While there is clarity on what we would like to achieve, there is uncertainty on how to accomplish it. I believe that there are four elements that are essential. First, there must be clear political will, which is at the heart of any successful Government strategy. Secondly, there must be a comprehensive, coherent and action-oriented approach to the protection of all civilians, including journalists, in conflict situations. Thirdly, there must be a broad strategy for conflict

prevention that includes as its cornerstone the promotion of freedom of expression and access to information and media freedom. Such an approach calls for training programmes for journalists and the active involvement of civil society. And fourthly, there must be an enhanced role for United Nations peacekeeping operations and strengthened international and regional cooperation.

Now is the time when international organizations, Governments, media and others should work together to strengthen the means and mechanisms for protecting journalists and holding accountable those who attack them. If there is one message today's meeting sends to journalists in conflict zones, this is it. Only through our common efforts will we ensure that no journalist in the twenty-first century, offline or online, is attacked, intimidated and/or sealed off from the rest of the world by a new iron curtain.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Azerbaijan.

Mr. Musayev (Azerbaijan): First, I would like to thank the Lithuanian presidency for convening this high-level open debate on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, with a specific focus on the protection of journalists. I also thank your delegation for submitting a concept note (S/2015/307, annex) on the topic. We are also grateful to Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson for his briefing on the matter.

Under international humanitarian law, journalists in armed conflict are classified as civilians, and as such should be afforded the same protection. That norm was recalled in resolution 1738 (2006), the presidential statement of 12 February 2013 (S/PRST/2013/2) and the Council's resolution 2222 (2015), just adopted. It is also widely recognized that the rule according to which civilian journalists engaged in professional missions in areas of armed conflict must be respected and protected as long as they are not taking a direct part in hostilities, constitutes a norm of customary international law applicable in both international and non-international armed conflicts.

Indeed, existing rules as well as other important efforts undertaken at the international level, including in particular by the Security Council, provide a solid basis for protection. At the same time, there is a significant gap between the normative standards and their implementation. The current state of the protection of civilians in situations of armed conflict, including journalists, leaves little room for optimism. Attacks against journalists, media professionals and associated personnel in armed conflicts continue, while impunity for perpetrators remains widespread and represents the biggest obstacle to ensuring the safety of journalists.

We pay tribute to journalists who under dangerous circumstances bravely perform their duties to inform the broader public about threats to international peace and security. The increased brutality of armed conflicts and the changing nature of warfare and terrorist and separatist threats nowadays give rise to the need for greater measures of protection for journalists at the national and international levels. Apart from preventive diplomacy efforts and the earliest peaceful settlement of disputes and conflicts, the best deterrent, is, undoubtedly, ensuring a speedy end to impunity and holding to account those responsible for violations of international humanitarian law. Such violations also give rise to the right of victims to an effective remedy. Moreover, as the Secretary-General notes in his most recent report (S/2013/689), accountability should also be understood more broadly as encompassing the political, legal and moral responsibility of individuals and institutions for past violations.

It is obvious that the problem cannot be addressed effectively unless there is a willingness on the part of States and the broader international community to take all the necessary measures to ensure that the existing norms and rules are fully respected and implemented and that those responsible for violations of international humanitarian law are brought to justice. Commitments to protection efforts must be free of selectivity and politically motivated approaches.

The war waged against Azerbaijan by neighbouring Armenia claimed the lives of tens of thousands of civilians, including a number of journalists who were killed as a result of deliberate attacks when reporting from the conflict zone. In its relevant resolutions, the Security Council condemns the violations of international humanitarian law committed during the conflict, including attacks on civilians and the bombardment of inhabited areas. However, the perpetrators of those violations, among them the members of the political and military leadership of Armenia, continue to enjoy impunity, and such a situation represents a serious challenge both to upholding individual rights and freedoms and to ensuring sustainable peace, justice, truth and reconciliation. Therefore, the international community should play a more proactive role when

national authorities fail to take the steps necessary to ensure accountability.

It is important that the Security Council consistently maintain its focus on the topic and systematically recall its demand that all parties to armed conflict comply fully with their obligations under international law related to the protection of civilians in armed conflict, including journalists, and that they take all the necessary measures to prevent attacks against journalists and to prosecute those responsible for such attacks.

In conclusion, I would like to briefly comment on the remarks made by the delegation of the United States with regard to Azerbaijan.

First, the reference to the ongoing criminal case against Mr. Ismayilova has nothing in common with the topic of today's open debate, which is the protection of journalists in situations of armed conflict.

Secondly, the remarks on the aforementioned criminal case are irrelevant also in the view of the mandate of the Security Council, an organ on which the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security lies.

Thirdly, the reference to individual criminal cases continues interference into the responsibilities of the law enforcement agencies. Attempts to politicize the investigation of such cases represent a challenge to the independence of the judiciary in a sovereign State.

Fourthly, it would be more appropriate, in the context of the topic of today's open debate, if the delegation of the United States would recall the names of other journalists from Azerbaijan, among them Salatin Esgerova, Chingiz Mustafayev, Ali Mustafayev and Osman Mirzoev, who were killed during Armenia's aggression against Azerbaijan while performing their professional duties in the conflict zone. The perpetrators of the crimes committed against those journalists continue to enjoy impunity. We have not noticed that the Government of the United States has ever cared about those cases.

Finally, I would like once again to commend the initiative of Lithuania in convening this high-level open debate to review the implementation of resolution 1738 (2013) and lessons learned.

Mr. De Aguiar Patriota (Brazil): I thank you, Madam President, for having convened this timely debate. I am also grateful to Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson; Mr. Christophe Deloire, from Reporters Without Borders; and Ms. Mariane Pearl, from the Daniel Pearl Foundation, for their informative presentations.

Brazil strongly condemns all deliberate attacks against media professionals, regardless of their motivation. As we know, international humanitarian law enshrines the safeguard of both accredited war correspondents, who are entitled to prisoner-of-war status, and other journalists, who benefit from the same comprehensive rights and protections granted to civilians in situations of armed conflict.

By adopting resolution 1738 (2006), the Council urged States and all other parties to an armed conflict to prevent violations of international humanitarian law against civilians, including journalists, media professionals and associated personnel. In areas controlled by non-State actors and terrorist groups, this issue acquires a special dimension, as pointed out in the concept note presented by Lithuania (S/2015/307, annex). We should redouble our efforts to ensure accountability for perpetrators of crimes against journalists and to bring to justice those who broadcast incitement to genocide, crimes against humanity and other serious violations.

While the safety of all media professionals is a matter of concern, there is a fundamental distinction to be made between, on the one hand, threats to journalists who report from armed conflicts and, on the other, acts of violence against journalists in circumstances that do not constitute armed conflicts.

When media professionals are endangered by a situation that constitutes a threat to international peace and security, the Council has a clear role to play; conversely, other bodies of the United Nations are responsible for promoting a secure environment for journalists in times of peace. Positive examples of the latter domain include the General Assembly, which has proclaimed 2 November as the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists; the Human Rights Council and its resolutions on the safety of journalists; and UNESCO, which plays a key role in implementing the United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity. The Security Council should respect these different initiatives and observe the necessary discipline in this regard.

The safety and security of journalists can also be jeopardized by indiscriminate surveillance of

their professional communication. Media personnel need to protect the privacy, integrity and anonymity of their sources, particularly in conditions of armed conflict. Besides violating fundamental human rights, undermining the foundations of democracy and challenging the sovereignty of States, secret surveillance programmes also endanger those whose very survival may depend on the confidentiality of their identity or sources, such as investigative journalists reporting from war-torn regions or areas controlled by terrorist groups.

Let me recall the latest report (A/69/397) of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, Ben Emmerson. The document underlines the fact that bulk access technology is indiscriminately corrosive of online privacy and therefore poses a direct and ongoing challenge to an established norm of international law.

Brazil commends the Human Rights Council for establishing the post of a Special Rapporteur on the right to privacy, focusing on the challenges arising from the digital age and new technologies. We were honoured to facilitate and introduce Human Rights Council resolution 28/16, which established the Special Rapporteur on the right to privacy.

The first victim of war is truth, and it is always important to distinguish journalism from propaganda. A free, independent and pluralistic media is not only vital to upholding democracy and promoting human rights; it is also an indispensable instrument to disseminate information and alert public opinion to the tragedy of war and its humanitarian consequences. Accomplishing this essential duty requires shielding journalists from harassment and harm. Yet the assignments of media professionals in armed conflicts are increasingly perilous, as highlighted by the latest report of the Secretary-General on the safety of journalism and the issue of impunity (A/69/268), and far too many journalists have been killed in the line of duty.

In conclusion, Brazil reiterates its commitment to the vital endeavour of protecting all journalists and media personnel in situations of armed conflict. We all have a stake in the well-being of journalists, who selflessly risk their lives in order to inform the international community, including the Security Council itself, about the complex realities of armed conflict.

Brazil fully endorses the initiatives of the Security Council, within its Charter responsibilities and in coherence with the efforts of other multilateral bodies, to that end. Allow me to quote the Secretary-General's statement marking World Press Freedom Day, celebrated on 3 May: "Let us honour the memory of those who lost their lives, and intensify our efforts to uphold the fundamental human right to freedom of expression and press freedom".

Mr. Skoog (Sweden): I thank you, Madam President, and once again congratulate Lithuania for its very effective and impactful tenure in the Security Council. I wish also to thank you for holding this important debate on the protection of journalists in conflict situations and thank the Deputy Secretary-General for his valuable briefing and Mr. Christophe Deloire and Ms. Mariane Pearl for their compelling testimonies, each of which underscored the indispensable role that journalists play in bearing witness to conflict and the increasingly heavy price that is paid for conveying information.

Sweden fully associates itself with the statement to be made later by the observer of the European Union.

We remain deeply concerned by the high number of acts of violence against journalists and other media professionals. Freedom of expression is a fundamental human right. It is an essential part of democracy and helps shape our understanding of the world, but is not to be taken for granted; it has to be fought for every day.

We all know that journalists in areas of armed conflict are to be considered as civilians under international humanitarian law and therefore respected and protected as such. Resolution 1738 (2006) recalled this fact and promised increased attention to the issue of protecting journalists in armed conflict. Unfortunately, the safety of journalists is becoming increasingly threatened. Journalists who are reporting from conflict areas, but also human rights defenders and others promoting freedom of expression, including new media, are ever more frequently falling victim to attacks, persecution and abuse.

Syria provides a tragic illustration of, inter alia, the perils associated with reporting from areas of conflict. Swedish journalists were abducted but were recently freed. However, we fully realize that others have been less fortunate, and we are appalled by the number of journalists who have lost their lives, including a

Japanese journalist at the hands of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant earlier this year.

We, the international community, have an obligation to react and to take further steps to prevent violence and to promote a safe environment for journalists and other media actors. I would like to highlight three points in particular.

First, we must continue to demand and explore ways to ensure that the protection awarded to journalists under international law is fully respected and upheld. We welcome the adoption once again by the Third Committee of a draft resolution on the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity, in November 2014, as well as the resolution on the protection of journalists adopted by the Human Rights Council this past September.

The Security Council, as well as the entire United Nations peacebuilding architecture, can also play important roles by including protection of journalists as part of the support to rule-of-law institutions in peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts, and by reacting when violations are being committed.

Secondly, impunity must not be tolerated. It is primarily the responsibility of Governments to protect journalists, human rights defenders and others promoting freedom of expression, including our new media, and to allow them to carry out their work independently, without undue interference and without fear of violence or persecution. But protection alone is not enough and States must ensure accountability when crimes have been committed. The most serious deficiency is not a lack of rules but a failure to implement existing ones and to systematically investigate, prosecute and punish violations.

Thirdly, preventive action is needed in order to promote the safety of journalists and to fight impunity. We also need to address the root causes of violence against journalists. Well functioning and open institutions are fundamental in that regard. In a way, media freedom is a litmus test for any society and its absence can serve as an early warning sign of emerging conflict. The United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, with its focus on national capacity-building, deserves to be highlighted in that context. We of course encourage its full implementation.

The President: There are still a number of speakers remaining on my list for this meeting. Given the lateness of the hour, I intend, with the concurrence of the members of the Council, to suspend the meeting until 3 p.m.

The meeting was suspended at 1 p.m.