

RECOMMENDATIONS

We, the participants at the IFJ/EFJ Conference “10 years after 9/11, Journalism in the Shadow of Terror Laws”, held in Brussels on 10th-11th September,

Noting that since the September 11th terrorist attacks on the United States, the response by governments to the threat of terrorism had been massively disproportionate, resulting in

- fundamental rights being routinely violated and undermined,
- a raft of mass surveillance measures targeting journalists and media organisations being introduced,
- laws and regulations that undermine almost half of the minimum standards set out in the 1948 UN Universal Declaration on Human Rights being enacted by governments, often in the absence of scrutiny and debate, and
- media and independent journalism suffering in a “pervasive atmosphere of paranoia” which is leading to dangerous levels of self-censorship,

Recognising that these laws, when adopted in democratic states, are used by authoritarian regimes to reinforce their oppressive systems, and in most instances have served to restrict dissent inside and outside media and to curtail free speech,

Believing that all forms of indiscriminate violence and terrorism are unacceptable and threaten journalism and press freedom,

Concerned that the majority of counter-terrorism measures adopted by states over the past decade have helped usher in a ‘surveillance society’ with new high-tech forms of ‘dataveillance’ been used to monitor journalists’ activities, with spies and undercover agents been active in newsrooms, and with phones and computers been tapped and movements recorded,

Rejecting the message that fundamental rights can be sacrificed to fight terrorism and further concerned that ‘national security’ interest continues to enable governments to withhold information or override the constitutional and legal protections that should be afforded to citizens, journalists and whistleblowers alike,

DECLARE

1. That governments must not sacrifice civil liberties under the pretext of security;
2. That all counter-terrorism and national security laws, among them those hastily enacted immediately after September 11, should be reviewed to ensure compliance with international human rights and freedom of expression norms and prevent the misuse of anti-terror laws against journalists;

- 3.** That mandatory data retention regimes must be repealed, and that restrictions and controls on the use of surveillance powers and new security technologies, as well as robust new mechanisms to protect personal privacy be established;
- 4.** That journalists and editors must maintain editorial independence and guard against self-censorship, and that media need more than ever to be active in the scrutiny of the actions of government;
- 5.** That independent journalism's vital role in investigating and exposing the impact of changes in national and global security policy on society at large is crucial to the future of democratic society;
- 6.** That independent organisation of journalists in unions and associations is an essential safeguard for press freedom, self-regulation and editorial independence;
- 7.** That all forms of violence against media and targeting of media workers are completely unacceptable;
- 8.** That all restrictions on journalists' freedom of movement, pressure on them to reveal sources of information, and manipulation of media by political leaders on security issues are unacceptable,
- 9.** That the IFJ/EFJ should
 - a) strengthen their campaign among journalists' unions everywhere to raise awareness of security policies and their impact on the right to report,
 - b) reiterate IFJ policy on the importance of pluralism, diversity, press freedom and open government at national and international level, and the need for tolerance in journalism, as adopted at the Bilbao international conference in 1997, and reiterated in 2005,
 - c) build the wider coalition with other trades unions, human rights campaigners, employers whenever appropriate, other media organisations and relevant civil society groups against further attacks on civil liberties and democratic rights,
 - d) advocate for the introduction of freedom of information laws that guarantee citizens the right of access to public information and restrict the application of national secrecy provisions and for the elimination of all laws that criminalise journalism, or restrict the protection of sources,
 - e) promote debates at national and international level on the need for professional vigilance, ethical conduct and improvement of journalists' capacity to

work and investigate without undue pressure from whatever source, and the need for tolerance in journalism.