

statement late last year on the closure of media outlets in Hong Kong, and we have had a statement on media freedom and safety of journalists in Myanmar.

But, in addition to issuing statements, we also engaged directly on the ground on specific cases or issues of concern. Countries can issue local statements in a country, for example, in reaction to a trial that has taken place, or we can also do *démarches* on our own individual members or collectively as members with governments, and really, we see this can be more productive. It depends on the context, but in certain countries, quiet diplomacy can be more effective, for example, in seeing journalists who are unjustly imprisoned released. It can be more effective than megaphone diplomacy. But we look at both, and as we mature as an organization, we are getting a better sense of when it is good to speak loudly and when it is better to speak softly.

I think the key point that I want to make for this panel is that international law is the foundation on which we engage. On our website, you can look at the statements. I am not going to say that we never resort to emotional or logical appeal, but really, the leverage that we have is because countries need to meet their international legal obligations with regard to media freedom and with regard to human rights writ large, so Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, but also other human rights law, for example, on arbitrary detention. If you look at the recent Hong Kong statement, you will see reference to the need for China to respect the basic law and the Sino-British Joint Declaration.

Finally, the High Level Panel of Legal Experts has been doing excellent work in supporting the Coalition. They have issued a number of extremely well-researched and comprehensive reports with specific recommendations for states on how to increase protection for media freedom through new tools in the areas of sanctions, special visas, consular assistance, and investigative mechanisms.

To conclude, I would say it is a young coalition, and we do face challenges. But I think we are coming into our own, based on strong partnerships and, sadly, with the proliferation of new phenomena such as disinformation, a growing need for the work that we are trying to do around the world and support media freedom.

CAN YEGINSU

Jeffrey, thank you very much, indeed. I want to pick up on one of the areas: safe refuge for journalists at risk. We identified this as a Panel as a real priority in the context of the safety of a journalist under the leadership of Amal Clooney. It is one of the areas that I have spent a lot of time working on with people, including with Hina Jilani.

Hina, I wondered whether you could just explain the nature of the issue and why it is an important component to protecting media freedom, this issue of safe refuge for journalists at risk.

REMARKS BY HINA JILANI

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Thank you very much, Can. I think it is a very good question that you had and an important issue that you raise. Coming from Pakistan, I have a lot to say on this subject because, obviously, as a human rights defender and a human rights lawyer, I have to deal with individual cases as well as the whole broader concept of safety for journalists in a country that is now declared as one of the most dangerous for journalists and for media to have freedom.

Journalists have been killed, abducted, taken hostage, subjected to torture in forced disappearances, and put under surveillance. They have been attacked in their homes and in their places of work. Their rights have been violated, and confidentiality of their sources has been jeopardized,

and their communication devices confiscated or destroyed. Now, these are many issues that have led to a situation that is extremely threatening for journalists and the work that they do.

The threat of harm to these journalists has risen to such a level in certain situations that many journalists are either forced to submit and resort to self-censorship or to flee their countries and live in exile. Both within the country where they work and when they are able to leave, when the threat level has risen to an extent where they cannot survive in that particular environment, we need to institute initiatives at the international level so that we can give refuge to these journalists.

I think it is also important to understand that safety of journalists and their freedom of expression is imperiled, not just by the state, but also by non-state actors such as organized gangs, terrorist organizations, militant groups with extremist ideologies, and other negative elements in the society. This whole question of protection of journalists and safety of journalists has to be a very comprehensive one and a broad framework needs to be adopted.

There are two or three points that I want to make in addition to this. It is very important for somebody either at the non-state level or at the level of intergovernmental engagements to understand who are the journalists who are mostly at risk. Obviously, those are the journalists who report on politics, corruption, organized crimes, et cetera—the journalists who are covering war zones, areas of internal land conflict or civil strife, foreign journalists reporting on international affairs and respect for human rights in countries where authoritarian regimes and poor rule of law observance are there. Local journalists who work in remote areas are more vulnerable because of their relative invisibility, particularly those who report on violations of social and economic rights of rural communities by the state or by powerful national and multinational corporations.

In addition to all the risks that journalists faced, we have to look at the situation of women journalists today. They face gender-specific safety risks, such as sexual harassment. Especially with this digital space, the threat to women journalists has risen to an extent where we really need to become much more sensitive.

I, therefore, think that an essential aspect of the duty to protect is compliance with international norms, human rights, and humanitarian law that are relevant to protection of journalists. What you have just said is very much linked to what I am saying because cooperation with international initiatives established for journalist safety is very important. If we are to establish a media freedom coalition, then an essential part of their thinking has to be concentrated on how to protect these journalists, either in their national environments or even when they are living abroad, and what kind of dignified existence they can have, which allows them to continue with their work as journalists and at the same time protects them.

CAN YEGINSU

Thank you, Hina. These pathways to safety that you and I and other members of the Panel have been working on, of course, have to be practical and they have to be effective. They cannot just be on paper.

I want to follow up with David McCraw. Hina Jilani mentioned the importance of protecting foreign journalists but also local staff. David, I think you are going to have a perspective on this from your vantage point.

REMARKS BY DAVID MCCRAW

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Thank you so much. Just to drive home how practical this work is, twice in the last twenty-four hours, I have been involved in moving journalists out of two separate countries because of risk.