



Statement on behalf of OIC by Mr. Umair Khalid, Second Secretary, during Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression at 50th Human Rights Council Session

24 June 2022

Mr. President,

We take note of SR's report and share her concerns about the growing threats to safety of journalists in today's digital age.

We attach great importance to enjoyment of the fundamental right to freedom of opinion and expression, in accordance with Articles 19 of UDHR and ICCPR. The OIC countries have taken wide-ranging measures at the domestic level to advance the safety, wellbeing and security of journalist community.

We wish to draw the SR's particular attention towards the extremely worrying situation of journalists working in situations of foreign occupation, especially in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The killing of Al-Jazeera journalist, Ms. Shireen Abu Akleh, by Israeli occupation forces spotlights this distressing trend.

The OIC reiterates its strong condemnation of the assassination of Ms. Abu Akleh by Israel. This crime is in continuation of Israel's well-documented violent crackdown on media freedom in the occupied territory, as part of its policy aimed at blocking the truth and covering up its daily violations of Palestinian rights.

As publicly stated by the SR, the killing of Abu Akleh, who was clearly performing her duties as a journalist, may constitute a war crime. The OIC holds Israel, the occupying power, fully responsible for this heinous act of violence. The precarious situation of Palestinian journalists is yet another ugly symptom of Israel's military oppression, and denial of Palestinian people's right to self-determination.

The OIC reiterates its call on the international human rights system to take immediate action to ensure justice, hold Israel to account, and provide the necessary protection to journalists working in OPT, in accordance with international law. Thank you.