

Resolution adopted by the Organization of American States at its general assembly in Caracas, Venezuela, on June 2, 1998.

ASSAULTS UPON FREEDOM OF THE PRESS AND CRIMES AGAINST JOURNALISTS

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

HAVING SEEN the request of the Secretary General that the item "Crimes Against Journalists" be included on the agenda for the twenty-eighth regular session of the General Assembly;

BEARING IN MIND that Article 3.1 of the Charter of the Organization of American States establishes as one of its principles that "the American States proclaim the fundamental rights of the individual without distinction as to race, nationality, creed or sex";

RECALLING:

That Article I of the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man states that "every human being has the right to life, liberty and the security of his person,"; and

That Article IV of the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man provides that "every person has the right to freedom of investigation, of opinion, and of the expression and dissemination of ideas, by any medium whatsoever";

REAFFIRMING that Article 4 of the American Convention on Human Rights provides that "every person has the right to have his life respected";

REITERATING the full validity in every democratic society of freedom of expression, which should be subject not to prior censorship but, rather, to subsequent liability arising from the abuse of that freedom, in accordance with the domestic law legitimately enacted by states to ensure respect for the rights or reputation of others, or to protect national security, public order, health or public morals;

BEARING IN MIND that, at the Second Summit of the Americas, held in Santiago, Chile, in April 1998, the heads of state and government expressed their support to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights in this area, in particular the recently established position of Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression;

CONSIDERING that, at the same Summit of the Americas, the heads of state and government reaffirmed in Santiago "the importance of guaranteeing freedom of expression, information and opinion"; and

CONSIDERING that, inter alia, the Hemisphere Conference on Unpunished Crimes Against Journalists, held in Guatemala in 1997, reported that in recent years, assaults have been made upon the right to life of media professionals in the performance of their duties,

RESOLVES:

1. To condemn vehemently assaults upon freedom of the press and crimes against journalists.
2. To urge member states to strengthen the measures needed for the investigation and punishment, in accordance with their domestic law, of assaults upon freedom of expression and crimes against journalists.
3. To reaffirm that the communications media make an indispensable contribution to strengthening democratic systems in the Hemisphere.
4. To urge the member states to support the work of the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression, whose position was recently established by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.
5. To instruct the Permanent Council to study the advisability of preparing an Inter-American Declaration on Freedom of Expression.
6. To request the Permanent Council to report in due course to the General Assembly on the implementation of this resolution.