

**PROTECTION OF JOURNALISTS ON DANGEROUS
MISSIONS IN AREAS OF ARMED CONFLICT**

In its January 1971 issue, the *International Review of the Red Cross* published on this subject an article by Mr. Claude Pilloud. In the course of its 27th Session held in Geneva from 22 February to 26 March 1971, the Commission on Human Rights, in accordance with the request of the United Nations General Assembly formulated in its resolution 2673 (XXV)¹, examined the possibility of preparing a draft international agreement ensuring the protection of journalists engaged in dangerous missions. The text of the preliminary draft of such an agreement was submitted to the Commission by the French delegation, jointly with Austria, Finland, Iran, Turkey and Uruguay.

The Commission on Human Rights did not have sufficient time to consider this draft in detail, but it unanimously adopted a resolution with regard to procedure, the text of which is given here below. It will be observed that the ICRC has been invited to be closely associated with the studies to be pursued on this problem within the United Nations.

15(XXVII)

THE POSSIBILITY OF PREPARING A DRAFT INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT ENSURING THE PROTECTION OF JOURNALISTS ENGAGED IN DANGEROUS MISSIONS AND PROVIDING, *INTER ALIA*, FOR THE CREATION OF A UNIVERSALLY RECOGNIZED AND GUARANTEED IDENTIFICATION DOCUMENT²

The Commission on Human Rights,

Recalling *resolution 2444 (XXIII)*, in which the General Assembly invited the Secretary-General, in consultation with the International

¹ See *International Review*, February 1971, p. 104.

² Adopted at the 1135th meeting on 24 March 1971.

Committee of the Red Cross and other appropriate international organizations, to study:

(a) *Steps which could be taken to secure the better application of existing humanitarian international conventions and rules in all armed conflicts;*

(b) *The need for additional humanitarian international conventions or for other appropriate legal instruments to ensure the better protection of civilians, prisoners and combatants in all armed conflicts,*

Recalling further resolution 2673 (XXV), in which the General Assembly invites the Economic and Social Council to request the Commission on Human Rights to consider the possibility of preparing a draft international agreement ensuring the protection of journalists engaged in dangerous missions and providing, inter alia, for the creation of a universally recognized and guaranteed identification document,

Noting that, in the same resolution, the General Assembly invites the Commission on Human Rights to consider this question as a matter of priority at its twenty-seventh session in order that a draft international agreement may be adopted as soon as possible by the General Assembly or by some other appropriate body,

Noting that the General Assembly has also requested the Secretary-General, in consultation with the International Committee of the Red Cross and other appropriate international organizations, to submit a report on this question to the General Assembly at its twenty-sixth session,

Noting also that the General Assembly has decided to give the highest priority to the consideration of this question at its twenty-sixth session,

Considering that without prejudice to the application of the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 it is desirable to guarantee for all categories of journalists, in view of the present-day requirements of their profession, effective protection when they carry out dangerous missions,

Convinced of the urgent need to examine this question, both on humanitarian grounds and in order to enable journalists with due respect for the law to seek, receive and impart information fully, objectively and faithfully in the spirit of the purposes and principles

MISCELLANEOUS

of the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in particular article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights concerning freedom of information,

Considering that at the current session the Commission did not have sufficient time to consider in detail the draft Convention contained in document E/CN.4/L.1149/Rev.1,

Anxious to act in this matter in close co-operation with the Secretary-General and the International Committee of the Red Cross,

1. *Recommends the Economic and Social Council to consider and transmit to the General Assembly the draft international convention on the protection of journalists engaged in dangerous missions, set forth in document E/CN.4/L.1149/Rev.1 together with the relevant records of the discussions held in the Commission on Human Rights and in the Economic and Social Council, as a valid basis for its discussions on this subject at its twenty-sixth session ;*

2. *Requests the Secretary-General to communicate the same documentation to the Governments of States Members of the United Nations or members of a specialized agency or of the International Atomic Energy Agency or parties to the Statute of the International Court of Justice and through the International Committee of the Red Cross to the parties to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 inviting them to send in their observations so that the General Assembly may have them before it as far as possible at its twenty-sixth session ;*

3. *Requests the Secretary-General to transmit the draft convention as well as the relevant records of the discussions held in the Commission on Human Rights and in the Economic and Social Council to the Intergovernmental Conference of Experts of the International Committee of the Red Cross to be held in May 1971, requesting the Conference to make its observations on the draft convention so that the General Assembly may have them before it at its twenty-sixth session ;*

4. *Requests the Secretary-General to establish a group of not more than seven experts which shall include in particular a consultant jurist, persons nominated by national professional organizations of journalists from different geographical regions and a representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross, for the purpose, in particular, of :*

(a) *Considering the appropriate composition for an international professional committee for the protection of journalists engaged in dangerous missions, as envisaged in article 3 of the draft convention ;*

(b) *Considering the conditions, procedure and the criteria for the issue and withdrawal as well as the procedure for the recognition of the safe-conduct card ;*

(c) *Submitting to the General Assembly, so that it may have them before it as far as possible at its twenty-sixth session, its conclusions and recommendations together with a draft protocol, annexed to the draft convention prescribing the composition, duties and methods of the international professional committee provided for in article 3.*

COMMISSION MÉDICO-JURIDIQUE DE MONACO

The sixth session of the *Commission* was held in the palace of the Prince of Monaco from 15 to 17 April 1971. The ICRC was represented, with observer status, by Mr. Jean Pictet, its Vice-President and Chairman of its Legal Commission.

The first item on the agenda concerned humanitarian missions. A project for the founding of a body to co-ordinate government relief in natural disasters will be submitted, in the form of a recommendation, to the United Nations, the League and the ICRC.

The *Commission's* second item was a set of draft rules for the implementation of the 1949 Geneva Conventions. This will shortly be sent to the ICRC for submission to the government experts meeting in Geneva towards the end of May.

For the agenda of its next session, the *Commission* decided on the following items: 1) relief by air; 2) the status of humanitarian mission personnel; 3) respect for the combatant's legal status.