

# call for **better protection** for **environmental** journalists

**Media and press freedom organisations** call on the world's leaders to reaffirm their pledge to Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration and Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and urge all governments to practice transparency in access to information and to protect journalists reporting on environmental issues and climate change.

Under Principle 10 of the **Rio Declaration**, adopted at the Earth Summit in 1992, world leaders pledged to adhere to the principle of citizens' access to information and participation in decision-making. In 1998, the Aarhus Convention put Principle 10 into practice, recognising that sustainable development can only be implemented if everyone is involved. Both of these international agreements stress that information is important to empower citizens to make collective or individual choices to fight global warming.

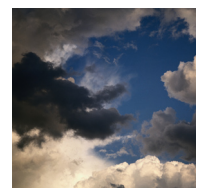
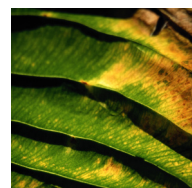
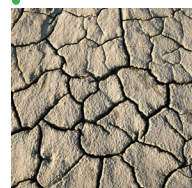
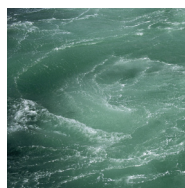
The media are needed to find and disseminate information to the public. With regards to the **challenges of climate change**, the media help to establish reliable, independent diagnoses of the state of our planet. Their analyses are crucial in helping decision-makers such as those meeting in Copenhagen adopt policies and regulations that will lead to lasting change.

Journalists and bloggers are needed to **expose the corruption, nepotism and negligence** that obstruct efforts to protect the environment. Without a free press, efforts to combat global warming will be in vain. If the media cannot freely cover environmental issues, if journalists are prevented from accessing all the facts on all the various forms of pollution, the international community's attempts to protect our planet will not succeed.

Without a free press, the **public's awareness will be stifled** and behaviour will not change. Without a free press, the most recalcitrant governments and corporations will not be compelled to join the fight against global warming.

Efforts to combat pollution will be severely weakened if environmental journalists and activists are not free to investigate. Illegal logging will not be revealed, much less halted, if **reporters are arrested** when they take an interest in the story. Likewise, limiting and monitoring CO2 emissions will be difficult if not impossible if the media are not independent of vested interests and hidden agendas.

More and more journalists are nowadays being killed, imprisoned, harassed, censored or intimidated because of their coverage of environmental issues. Yet **they are the Earth's guardians**, the eyes and ears of our fight to preserve our planet.



Today in Copenhagen, we urge governments, international organisations and corporations to undertake to show more respect for the work of environmental journalists and to do more to protect them. **We call for the release of all journalists** and, on the occasion of the UN Conference on Climate Change in Copenhagen, for a clear commitment to release journalists covering key issues of environment and climate change.

## Copenhagen 11 December 2009 Call to action Signatories

International Federation of Journalists  
International Press Institute  
Reporters Without Borders  
International News Safety Institute  
Internews  
International Media Support  
International Institute for Environment and Development  
Institute for War & Peace Reporting  
FreeVoice  
Open Society Institute  
The Rory Peck Trust  
Global Forum Media Development  
Fojo Media Institute, Sweden  
The Southeast Asian Press Alliance (SEAPA)  
Media Foundation for West Africa  
The Regional Press Institute, Sankt Petersburg  
Cameroon Association of Media Professionals  
Center for Independent Journalism, Bucharest, Romania  
Fundación Nuevo Periodismo Iberoamericano (FNPI)  
Frontline Club  
Instituto Prensa y Sociedad de Venezuela  
Lithuanian Journalism Centre, Vilnius, Lithuania  
Pakistan Press Foundation