Why is the Colombian press strengthened by the reparation measures of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (I-A Court)?

On October 18th, 2021, the I-A Court released a historic judgment* related to the analysis of sexual violence as a way to silence female journalists. The court found the Colombian State responsible for not guaranteeing the rights of journalist Jineth Bedoya Lima. In 2000, Jineth was a victim of kidnapping, torture and sexual abuse while she was researching human rights violations inside the La Modelo prison in Bogotá.

The court noted the persistence of the context of violence against the press since the 90’s. Since attacks against journalists are therefore sadly predictable, the State must adopt and ensure prevention measures.

The I-A Court pointed out serious, precise and consistent evidence about the participation of the Colombian State in the criminal events against Jineth.

There is a more severe risk for female journalists. Sexual violence is a persistent practice to silence the press.

The Colombian State did not diligently investigate the threats and sexual violence against Jineth. Such impunity has consequences for Bedoya and for the Colombian press in general.

* Compliance with I-A Court judgements is compulsory for Member States.
COLLECTIVE MEASURES DEMANDED BY THE JUDGMENT

To create a fund to sponsor protection, prevention and assistance for female journalists who are victims of any type of violence. Disproportionate impacts on female journalists must be recognized and mitigated by necessary and integral policies.

To create a civil servant training and awareness program regarding cases involving violence against women, in order to offer suitable attention for women at risk, avoid re-victimization, and reduce impunity in crimes against the press.

A database to compile all information about violence against journalists, including gender-based violence against female journalists, in order to monitor the phenomenon of violence against the press and to promote improvements in public policies.

The No Time For Silence Memory Center - the first memory center in the world dedicated to victims of sexual violence. It will also honor the work of female journalists.