

Fraternal Greetings

The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), the Federazione Nazionale della Stampa Italiana, National writers Union of USA and Journalists Association of Korea sent messages of greetings to the Indian Journalists Union (IJU) on its 9th Plenary at Amritsar.

The **IFJ President Philippe Leruth** said: “It’s very comforting for me, as IFJ President, to know you are holding a two-day Plenary gathering with so many delegates from across India. This shows IJU’s vitality. But this shows to me foremost our wonderful profession has many defenders in India. This is very important, as press freedom has ever to be defended, even in the world’s biggest democracy.”

“Journalists’ unions are more than ever necessary as pressures on our profession come from all parts. Safety is on top of IFJ’s agenda, as every year journalists pay with their life for their dedication to free information. Every single journalist’s death is a scandal, but the biggest is their murderer’s impunity: nine of ten journalists’ murders in the world remain unpunished.” “For this very reason, last week, an IFJ delegation submitted to a general meeting of the UN a draft International Convention on Safety and Independence of Journalists and other media professionals. The reason for a Convention is that existing laws fail to acknowledge journalists face greater risks than ordinary civilians, because there is always a strategic advantage to be gained for targeting the media. They fail to take into account the specific risks associated with the profession and don’t reflect the systemic effect of these attacks on societies: every time a journalist is killed, self-censorship is growing.”

“This Convention will be the big work of the IFJ Executive Committee, which I have the honour to preside with your colleague Sabina Inderjit as one and only female Vice-President on my side.” “The IFJ is fortunately not alone in its fight; many NGOs fight with us for same goals. But unlike many, the IFJ, its member unions know that press freedom is not guaranteed once protected by Constitution of law: we know a journalist can only be free when she/he receives a decent pay for doing their job. All this is never granted, and is reason why journalists’ unions are so badly needed, why your Plenary is so vital, why it is so important that you agree on a working program and elect a strong new leadership. Because the fight must be fought further.”

In a rapidly changing world, where on the web everyone can pretend to be a journalist. This is a reason why Internet can be a danger for journalists as it also allows rapid dissemination of fake news and media’s enemies to spread mistrusts against journalists. The most famous of these enemies lives presently in Washington’s white House, but he has alter egos in many countries, and they target journalists because they know free press is essential to democracy. The web is a huge challenge we have to face.”

In conclusion he said “I’m convinced IJU will be strong, because it has wide basic support. wishing you fruitful debates, outcome and assuring you all IFJ resolute support, as solidarity has no frontiers.”

The **President of Journalists Association of Korea (JAK) Jung Kyu Sung** in his message congratulated the IJU for holding its 9th Plenary at Amritsar. He said “IJU has tried to win freedom of speech, safety of journalists, welfare measures for journalists. JAK always supports its efforts to insure those measures for Indian Journalists. I hope IJU will secure freedom of speech through cooperation. JAK supports IJU with enthusiasm.”

Larry Goldbetter, President, National Writers Union (US) greeted the delegates of the 9th Plenary of the Union and said “we applaud your efforts at defending a free press, the public’s right to know, and the safety and independence of journalists and media workers. Good luck in your deliberations.”

The **President of Federazione Nazionale della Stampa Italiana, Raffaele Lorusso** greeted the plenary and extended solidarity in its struggles.