UNESCO’s Judges’ Initiative
Our Mandate: UNESCO Fosters Freedom of Expression

- **A foundational mandate**: Specialized UN agency with the mandate to promote freedom of expression and its corollaries, *access to information* and *press freedom*.

- The freedom of expression and the right to access information runs parallel to the *rule of law* and *the functions of court*.

- Judiciary systems complement efforts to grant freedom of information through the *enactment and enforcement* of laws and policies.

- Access to information allows for more *transparency* and *accountability* from national institutions, including courts and other legal bodies.
Judicial actors trained across Africa, Latin America, and the Arab region since 2013

17,000 judicial actors
• **Goal:** Reinforcing capacities and knowledge of judges, prosecutors, lawyers and other actors of judicial systems on international and regional standards on freedom of expression issues.

• Through on-the-ground trainings, trainings of trainers’ workshops at regional or national level and a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) for judiciary members and civil society representatives.

• Access to information is a key component of UNESCO-led training activities for judicial actors: *As guarantors of the right to access information, judges, prosecutors and judicial operators also fall under the obligation to act in full transparency themselves.*
Cooperation with Public Prosecutors

Establishment of institutional frameworks with prosecutors’ networks to foster cooperation.
Memoranda of Understanding with:
• Ibero-American Association of Public Prosecutors (AIAMP)
• International Association of Prosecutors (IAP)

Launch of Guidelines for Prosecutors on Cases of Crimes against Journalists
• Developed in partnership with the IAP.
• Will be available in the 6 UN official languages as well as Amharic, Bahasa Indonesia, Dari, Pashto, Portuguese, Somali, Swahili and Ukrainian.
Training of Security Forces
Training security forces and the judiciary on freedom of expression

8,500 security forces trained across Africa, Latin America, Europe and the Arab region.

- To promote freedom of expression and the safety of journalists, particularly during election periods.

- Security forces must be trained to guarantee access to quality and reliable information, facilitating the right to vote for all citizens.
Capacity-building programmes: Latin America

Section for Freedom of Expression and Safety of Journalists - Communication and Information Sector

• UNESCO and partners implemented a series of training programmes, including MOOCs, to reinforce knowledge of judicial actors on legal standards related to freedom of expression.

• Courses offered modules on international law - relevant to public access to information through in-depth study of existing laws, challenges to their implementation, and transparency in judicial cultures.

• National-level training and on-the-ground workshops organised; Toolkit in English and Spanish for judiciary disseminated widely.
In Africa, two MOOCs and a Toolkit for the judiciary in Africa (in French and English, upcoming in Portuguese) with further training on legal standards related to freedom of expression and access to information.

Includes a comprehensive module on the **Right to Access Information**:

- Importance and scope of the right;
- Legal framework on the right of access to information and jurisprudence in the region; and
- Impact of the internet and elections.
UNESCO, in partnership with the Bonavero Institute of Human Rights of Oxford University, is currently developing a global Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) for members of the judiciary, which will be launched in April-May 2021.

The MOOC will include jurisprudence from the African region, as well as key speakers from the African Court of Human and Peoples’ Rights. Given its foreseen outreach, a great number of participants from the African continent are expected to register.

A Global toolkit for judicial actors is also being developed and will be disseminated among UNESCO’s judicial networks and judicial training institutes across the continent.
Ongoing and upcoming activities

• **Module training for prosecutors**, and organization of a specialized workshop for prosecutors (Fall 2021).

• Strengthening the **training of security forces**, notably in the **context of elections**.

• Partnership with **Columbia University Global Freedom of Expression** Judicial decisions Database

• Organization of a **Training of Trainers** for facilitators of judicial training institutes in Africa **supported by the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs**.
Thank you

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