



**FRONTLINE  
CLUB** *London*

**acos**  
ALLIANCE

**Press Release  
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The Frontline Club, Frontline Freelance Register and the ACOS Alliance have launched the Minimum Standard in Safety Training for Freelance Journalists Initiative.

News organizations increasingly rely on freelancers and local journalists to maintain their foreign news output, particularly to cover stories from places that are difficult to access and report from. Safety training is now considered essential best practice for journalists working on challenging stories. However, the absence of industry-wide standards on safety training leaves both journalists and outlets at a disadvantage: it discourages freelancers from investing in their own safety skills and, at the same time, it is difficult for news organizations to assess whether a freelancer has done a course that meets their requirements.

This initiative seeks to address these issues by working with key stakeholders to identify safety training courses which meet minimum requirements that will be widely recognized by the news media industry. This will encourage freelance and local journalists to make informed decisions about their safety training choices and opportunities. And news organizations will be able to identify freelance and local journalists who have completed safety training that meets their safety standards and duty of care.

The wider objective of the initiative seeks to raise standards and consensus around best practices for safety training, promote professionalism and duty of care in the news-gathering community, and contribute towards creating a culture of safety.

The initiative was launched at a meeting at the Frontline Club on October 10 that brought together key stakeholders from news media organizations, training providers and NGOs.

Vaughan Smith, co-founder of Frontline Club and chair of FFR, noted, "I have been pushing this initiative for many years, and in that time I have encountered many people who have seen its

difficulties but never anybody who thinks it's a bad idea. It will save lives and support freelance journalism, and will benefit the news industry as a whole.”

Senior Vice President of Worldwide Newsgathering of NBC News, David Verdi, who took part in the meeting, said “NBC News has a proud history of supporting freelance journalists around the world in their pursuit of the truth. We are pleased to work with the Frontline Club, FFR and the ACOS Alliance in developing new tools that will enable current and future freelancers to prepare and work safely in some of the harshest environments.”

During the first phase of implementation, we will be working with key stakeholders in shaping and rolling out the initiative. The next stage will be sharing an online resource setting out the initial minimum requirements for safety training as agreed at the London meeting, which key stakeholders are currently discussing and outlining.

We call on news media organizations, training providers and media NGOs not only to endorse this initiative but to collaborate with us for its successful implementation.

For more information or to be involved, please contact:

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