

The Importance of Access to Information and Freedom of Expression

The 1995 IFLA General Conference in Istanbul affirms its commitment to Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as stated by the 55th IFLA General Conference in 1989. The IFLA General Conference is deeply concerned about increasing infringements on free expression and the free flow of information in many parts of the world, and the mounting cases of physical abuse and even murders that are being recorded. Attacks are often directed against writers, journalists, publishers and editors, and those responsible may be governments, groups or parties representing extreme political or religious views.

The IFLA General Conference firmly condemns all violent and other restrictions on freedom of expression, access to information and free debate. These are fundamental rights that enable people and societies to protect and enhance democracy and culture.

The IFLA General Conference recognizes that restrictions on freedom of expression and access to information limit the ability of libraries and librarians to serve the needs and interests of their users and therefore, calls upon all governments to ensure the right to freedom of expression and the free flow of information for their citizens and to protect them from violence, intimidation and threat of punishment in pursuit of these rights.