

**FORUM: GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION OF:** The Ongoing Fight for Truth: Protection of the Freedom of the Press.

**MAIN SUBMITTER:** United States, Slovenia, Japan, Suriname, United Kingdom, Taiwan, Germany, Serbia, Kiribati, Argentina, MSF, Poland, Namibia, South Africa, Nicaragua

*Affirming* its belief in Freedom of Expression and its correlation in Freedom of the Press,

*Aware* of the understanding of the press freedom index and its compilation based on the assessments of pluralism, media independence, self censorship, the media's environment, legislative framework, transparency and the quality of media infrastructure,

*Believing* fully that the protection of the freedom of the press should be guaranteed to the people, while retaining a composed manner that can ensure the both the assurance of the government from the widespread impact of fake news and the protection of a fundamental human right,

*Emphasising* the importance of battling dishonest reporting and defamation as an international effort, as it will not only aid to stop the polarization of modern society, stop the unnecessary hate and dishonesty spreading across the globe, but also aid the people under a corrupt government,

*Welcoming* the efforts made by Reporters Without Borders (RSF), Committee to Protect Journalism (CPJ), International Freedom of Expression (IFEX), Article 19, as well as all UN bodies working relentlessly on the issue,

*Deeply concerned* over Turkey's and China's unprecedented imprisonments of journalists, in the past years, totalling to almost 80 imprisonments in 2018 alone,

*Bearing in mind* the efforts and progress made in the General Assembly's 'Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity' and the UN's Plan of Action on the matter, the 2016 UN Human Rights Committee's Safety of Journalists, the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance of 2016, and Speak Up! Freedom of Expression and Media in the Western Balkans and Turkey,

*Deeply concerned* by the recent castigation of journalists, including professional, civic and freelance, and media sources by the government in certain countries,

*Deeply regretting* the lives lost by journalists, including professional, civic and freelance, in the front lines in areas of armed conflicts, such as Syria or Iraq,

*Bearing in mind* James Foley and Steven Joel Sotloff, two American journalists whose lives were lost to the actions of terrorist in 2014, and *reaffirming* the United States' deep commitment to their fight against radical terrorism in the Middle East,

*Recognising* that due to local conflicts, many countries are unable to prioritize the lives of journalists, and therefore *affirming* the United States' readiness to take action and step in for these countries and complete this necessary task,

*Recognizing* the potential damaging effects of the possible spread of fake news that may be a possible consequence that can come from the freedom of the press,

*Stressing* the importance of combating advocacy of hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination or violence on the Internet, including by promoting tolerance and dialogue,

*Having studied* the prejudicial impact hate speech and defamation can cause to a government and its people,

*Affirming* that the situation, protection of the freedom of the press, be resolved under the precondition that it be done in a peaceful and expeditious manner,

1. Proposes the following definition to be internationally adopted for freedom of the press, based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), in 1948, Paris GA: Any and all written work that comply to a standard of truth, to be determined by a UN body, and are fully meant for the public to read, including any citations, excerpts or documents from other sources, can be written and published, whether online or on paper, and freely accessible to the population, impartial of their religious, political or social stance;
2. Calls for the creation of a Non Governmental Organization, named Independent Commission of Truthful Reporting (ICTR), whose duties will entail:
  - a. Working in collaboration with Member States to eradicate false reporting,
  - b. Receiving and reviewing journalists' work sent in by governments, originating from their Member State, when they believe that the work is unethical, false or not reliable,
  - c. Deciding which of the following consequences (if any) will be applied, keeping in mind that the consequences vary on the frequency of the news agency's falsity as well as the degree of falsity:
    - i. Contacting, via email, call or in person if deemed necessary, of the ICTR to the news agencies, explaining problems and sources of unethicalness, falseness or unreliability, and asking them to correct them,
    - ii. Contacting the news agencies and requiring immediate correction of the published information,
    - iii. Demanding an effective shut down of the news agency, if deemed necessary,
  - d. The active support of the freedom of media outlets and journalists in a country from government censorship and political oppression;
3. Calls for the creation of a checking mechanism in all nations to impede the creation and spread of misinformation and fake news in professional journalism, and determine whether a work complies to 'a certain standard of truth' made up of the following, but not limited to, components:
  - a. A revision by the federal government, to ensure that, while no infringement is made on the freedom of the press nor freedom of expression, the official news is kept realistic and portrays the truth correctly, in which the government may give suggestions or highlight what is and isn't acceptable,
  - b. A private aid by the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) and ICTR to the government to ensure that the government's decisions are fair and based on equity, however, the UNCAC should not have any power or share the informations and decisions discussed with third parties,
  - c. An annual publication, available to all civilians, addressing the following categories, per se the government's decisions and opinion:

- i. Showcasing news organizations that do an exceptionally good job at truthful reporting,
      - ii. Showcasing news organizations that do an exceptionally bad job at truthful reporting,
      - iii. Ranking prominent news or press organizations in their truthfulness,
    - d. Gives the government the right to, in extreme cases to be called on by a UN body, increase taxes on corporations that continuously:
      - i. Endanger and falsely discredit the government, in actions such as reporting (or creating fake) leaks from inside the government, as they often related to sensitive information intentionally not made public for national security,
      - ii. Reports on the government in an exclusively negative and biased manner, or even repeatedly personally mock the heads of government, as it destabilizes the nation and dirties the government's name;
4. Further recommends social media corporations or organizations to work collaboratively with the government as well as in further cooperation with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) such as but not limited to, the Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma, as well as Reporters Without Borders, in the matters of:
- a. Using social platforms to spread awareness on matters such as the dangers of reporting in areas of armed conflict, as well as the casualties suffered by the journalists in their fight for the truth,
  - b. Directly educating, or giving the opportunity of learning to, freelance or civic journalist, especially those reporting in areas of armed conflict, to report in a way that prioritizes their safety, using the The Freelance Journalist Safety Principles (provided by Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma) as primary guidelines,
  - c. Allowing for the employment of military action by volunteer member states to protect professional or civic journalists as they see fit, in ways such as but not limited to:
    - i. Employing divisions in the area to directly protect teams of journalists,
    - ii. Forming a coalition with other volunteer member states to rid of terrorist groups, such as Daesh, who often prioritize the riddance of freedom of expression, such as in "A message to America", of 2014,
    - iii. Implementing military sanction on parties in areas of armed conflict that participate in the murder, mistreatment or holding captive of journalists,
  - d. Ensuring that social medias do not promote the actions of parties in their violence against journalism, as they did, as previously mentioned, in 2014, by monitoring and not giving these parties a platform;
5. Recommends to also introduce tougher press regulations in situations where the press releases are “informative” speeches which are purposely intended to induce hatred, racist ideas or encourages terrorism, or direct encouragement to go against human rights, and only to be accepted for release for strict educational or federal evidence purposes;
6. Endorses an international motion to rid of any and all censorship of the Internet, to guarantee an unlimited access to the World Wide Web, with the exceptions of, but not limited to:
- a. Obscenities such as child pornography, bestiality, necromancy, or exceptionally violent or disrespectful content,
  - b. Regulations of the black market,
  - c. Governmental confidentialities, for the overall safety of the nation,

- d. Regulations on the content available to minors, focusing mainly on sexual or extremely violent content;
7. Demands for the immediate release of all imprisoned or captured journalists, listed by the CPJ, due to reasons such as but not limited to:
    - a. They have not committed any criminal act other than the practice of their right to Freedom of Expression,
    - b. If those who have broke international law, they are to be judged by the International Court Of Justice;
  8. Calls upon nations to establish effective ways to protect journalists rights and their exploration of knowledge as all states should promote and facilitate international cooperation aimed at the development of media and information and communications facilities and technology in all countries;
  9. Requests the Security Council to impose economic sanctions to the nations that oppress the basic human right that is the freedom of the press, such as but not limited to: Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia and Turkey, with:
    - a. Trade Embargoes,
    - b. Trade Barriers,
    - c. Economic Reprimands,
    - d. Tariffs;
  10. Requests all delegates to remain actively seized on the matter.