



EthicalMUN III

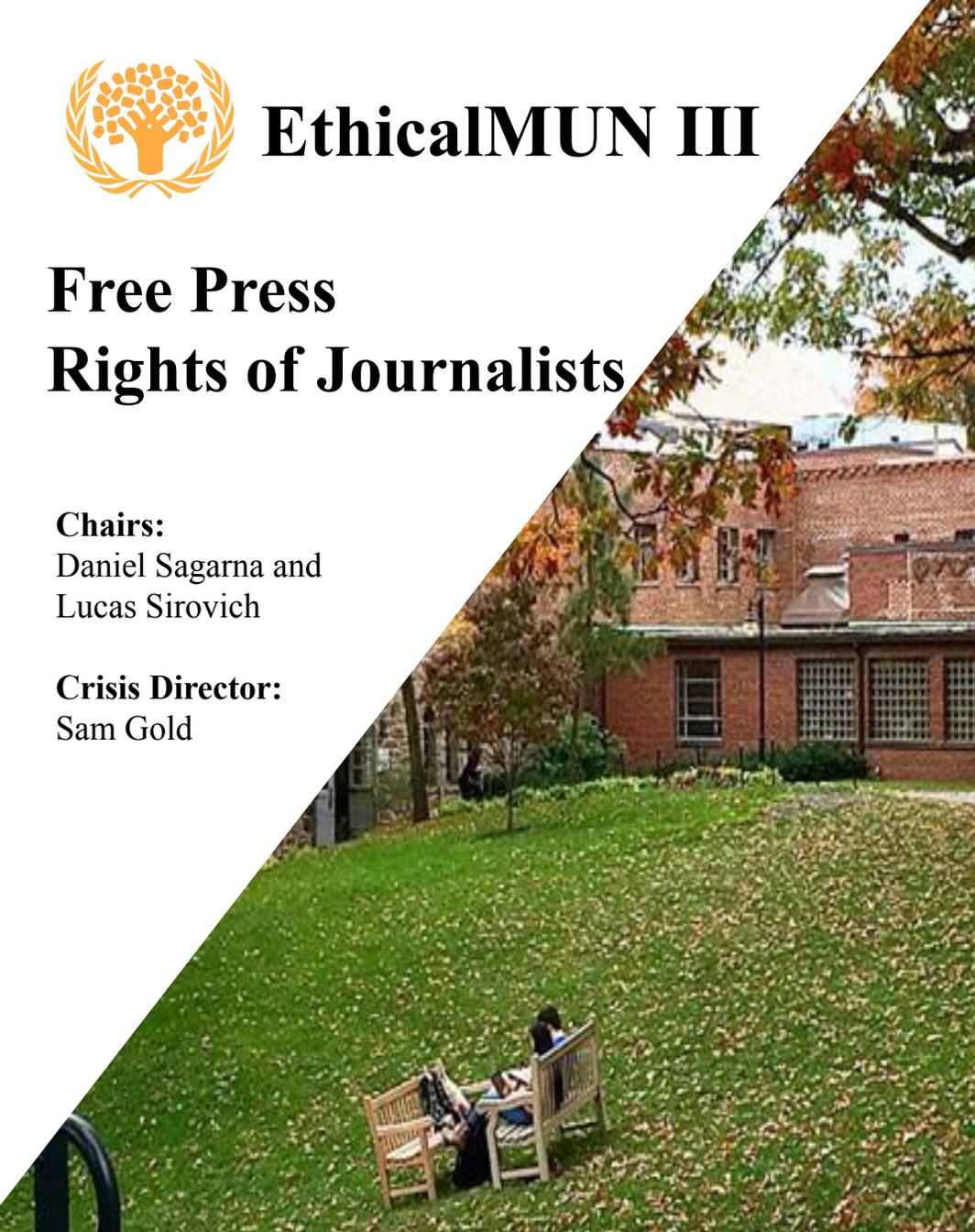
Free Press Rights of Journalists

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EthicalMUN III

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Hello and welcome to UNESCO at EthicalMUN III! We will be your chairs and crisis for what promises to be a fantastic weekend. First let's start off with some introductions:

My name is Daniel Sagarna and I will be one of your chairs for this conference. I was born and raised in New York City, although my family is of Spanish origin. I started my Model UN career participating in high school conferences from 9th grade and on. At Fieldston, I have attended many high school level conferences as a delegate and a chair member. In fact, our two other members and I participated in the same Model UN conference last year where we focused on the Indo-Pakistani conflict of post-British colonization.

Hi, I'm Lucas Sirovich and I am also delighted to joined my co-Chair Daniel Sagarna. We have worked hard to create this background guide on a topic that will lead to an interesting and intense debate. We are both passionate about UNESCO and the work it does and hope by the end of this conference that you will be too. Similar to Daniel, I started Model UN in 9th grade, where I participated in this exact conference! Outside of school, I play soccer in the fall and I just started playing tennis for the JV Fieldston team.

Hello everyone! My name is Sam Gold and I will be both a chair and crisis director for this UNESCO conference. Daniel, Lucas, and I are all juniors here at Fieldston and we are very excited to run this conference. My first MUN conference was in 2017, and I have loved it ever since. I have participated in prior Model UN conferences at Fieldston, but I am especially looking forward co-chairing UNESCO. Outside of MUN, I love to travel, hang with my friends, and play lacrosse. Above all, I hope you enjoy this experience and we all look forward to meeting you guys in May.

As one of the smaller committees, we have an opportunity to get into depth on key issues and we are excited to hear what everyone has to come up with. Please feel free to contact us at 20lyjosephson@ecfs.org, 20dsagarna@ecfs.org, 20lfsirovich@ecfs.org, or 20shgold@ecfs.org with any questions! We look forward to meeting you all in May. Good Luck!

Best Regards,

Daniel Sagarna, Lucas Sirovich, and Sam Gold

Glossary

UNESCO → The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

SDG → The Sustainable Development Goals

RSF → Reporters Sans Frontieres (an international non-profit, non-governmental organization that conducts political advocacy on issues relating to freedom of information and freedom of the press)

WAN-IFRA → World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers (a non-profit, non-governmental organization made up of 76 national newspaper associations, twelve news agencies, ten regional press organizations, and many individual newspaper executives in 100 countries)

SRS → Special Representative of the Secretary-General

Introduction to the Committee

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was formed on November 16, 1945. The core role of UNESCO is to coordinate international cooperation on education, science, culture and communication with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a framework for its projects.

The Conference of Allied Ministers of Education (CAME) proposed the founding of an international body for culture and education in 1942 as a result of the destruction from World War II. CAME concluded that their education systems needed to be rebuilt once the war ended and determined that international cooperation would be most efficient. CAME's proposal resulted in a conference in London, November 1945, in order to create a

UN cultural and education body. In the end, 37 of the 44 countries present at the conference agreed to create the agency UNESCO.

UNESCO's mandate has developed greatly since its establishment in the 1940s with the promotion of peace through cultural, educational and scientific means. The agency ranges from cooperation on scientific solutions to climate change, to promoting freedom of speech and expression. UNESCO has been active recently surrounding efforts for education and gender equality as a global priority. UNESCO is similarly known for its world heritage site programs that operate to promote the universal value of natural and cultural diversity; some of their world heritage sites include the Grand Canyon, Westminster Abbey, and the Old City of Jerusalem.

Although UNESCO cannot enforce their decisions, policies or recommendations, the agency relies on the cooperation and participation

of its member states and the practical support of other UN agencies.

UNESCO's fundamental role is the agency's responsibility to provide guidance to its members in the best practices and to share expertise to achieve the similar aims of the SDGs.

This committee discusses and analyzes the many conflicts surrounding free speech and journalist rights. Worldwide, these rights are being revoked, and it is an ongoing problem in society. Countries such as North Korea, China, and many others are putting forth new policies which suppress journalism and speech as a whole.

Background Information

UNESCO is the UN agency responsible for the promotion of "the free flow of ideas by word and image." The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), in Article 19, states that, "everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression."

Journalism is an essential part of free speech and expression as it helps to ensure that the public is informed of local, national, and international events which will help them to form their own opinions. It is also a way of expressing discontent, debating policies, and holding political leaders to account. As a result, journalism is an important part of a healthy democracy, informing a country's citizens of issues that affect them and helping them to participate in politics. Every year the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers (WAN-IFRA) produces its World Press Trends Report which is the single biggest study of news media. According to its 2016 Trends Report, 2.7 billion adults are reading newspapers in print with digital sources such as social media and news sites overtaking print in some countries. The report estimates that newspapers globally generate \$168 billion in circulation and advertising revenue. When this is combined with

magazines they are the third largest cultural industry in the world, together employing over 2.9 million people.

The protection of such a massive industry is obviously a huge challenge for UNESCO. There are many threats to journalism but in recent years two issues have become vitally important:

- Fake news
- The safety of journalists

Fake news is defined by the Collins English Dictionary as “false, often sensational, information disseminated under the guise of news reporting.” Fake news is not an entirely new concept but became widespread and famous during the 2016 US presidential election with both candidates referring to it during the campaign. Famously, fake news in the US election was linked to Russia and perhaps more surprisingly to Macedonia where many fake news sites and articles were traced to. The

governments of many countries have become concerned that fake news could interfere with their politics and elections. Fake news, or other misleading information, also threatens journalism as a form of cultural heritage, as people start to lose trust in the media when they cannot tell the difference between real and fake news. This can play into the hands of authoritarian and populist leaders who use mistrust of the media to their advantage and attempt to make themselves look like the only sources of truth. They can also use the term ‘fake news’ as a smear against legitimate journalism to undermine reporting that is not in their favor.

The safety of journalists has been a long-term concern for UNESCO and for the UN in general. Journalists often work in difficult conditions and put themselves in danger to cover stories, especially when they report from conflict zones. Stories from the front line have on many occasions helped to uncover

atrocities that may otherwise have been ignored. Therefore, the protection of journalists while they carry out this work is essential for transparency on issues and events that those involved may prefer unreported. In many cases, governments do not have positive relationships with journalists and journalism, which can be a further threat. Journalists are frequently imprisoned, and in some cases executed, across the world and their freedom to write restricted, undermining their important role in society. A more recent development for the safety of journalists has been an increase in threats made against them online. Twitter, for example, has exposed journalists to personal attacks and death threats on an unprecedented scale.

UNESCO’s responsibility is to act on these difficult and complex problems but, as mentioned before, it cannot force its members to make changes. The countries and governments you will be representing

may have no concerns about journalism being under threat. In fact, some may be actively involved in reducing journalistic freedom or shutting down press activity altogether. You will, therefore, need to find solutions while trying to maintain the highest level of support possible. A very useful source is the World Press Freedom Index created by Reporters Without Borders which rates press freedom in every independent country and gives an idea of the health of journalism on a global scale.

Fake News

Though the term has become popular and a regularly used word a lot the last two or three years, fake news as a notion is not new in any way. It is a type of what was previously known as “yellow journalism” defined by the US State Department as “a style of newspaper reporting that emphasized sensationalism over facts.” Yellow

journalism was most prevalent in the United States during the 1800s. This was due to the fact that newspapers made no effort to be objective and instead wrote inaccurate and often entirely un-researched stories in support of the party or candidate they favored. This kind of reporting allegedly changed the outcome of the US presidential election between John Adams and Thomas Jefferson in 1800 and pushed the United States into war with Spain in 1898.

The Spanish-American war is an excellent example of how fake news helped to change political feeling and force action. In an attempt to outsell each other two newspapers (The New York Journal and The New York World) tried to find stories that would make for attention-grabbing headlines. They both settled on the revolution against Spanish rule in Cuba but found reporting the facts did not make for very interesting reading and would not make them stand out

from the competition. In trying to sell papers the rebels in Cuba were made to sound like the leaders of the American independence movement while the atrocities they committed were ignored. Meanwhile, atrocities committed by Spain were exaggerated and in some cases, details were completely made up - the suggestion from the newspapers was that America should join the fight against Spain.

The anti-Spanish feeling in America was made worse when a battleship, the USS Maine, exploded while anchored off the coast of Cuba killing 250 Americans. To this day, the cause of the explosion is unknown but at the time both The New York Journal and The New York World immediately blamed Spain and began to spread the slogan "Remember the Maine". This helped drive public opinion firmly in favour of war which when combined with other political factors was enough for the United States to act.

Fake news became more and more unusual over the course of the 20th Century in independent journalism. Where news was controlled by governments or political elites, propaganda was often used to sway public opinion on an issue - especially before and during the World Wars. However, reporting by independent news sources established a reputation of honesty and reliability often through journalists reporting from conflict areas and investigative journalism uncovering crimes or atrocities.

Fake news has become famous again mainly due to its role in the 2016 US Presidential election. During the campaign, stories began to circulate, mainly through social media, that were usually false and designed to damage the campaigns of both Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump. However, fake news stories were far more likely to favor Trump than Clinton and in many cases gained large readership, so

perhaps just as in 1800 fake news helped decide the outcome of an election.

The origins of fake news stories were often hard to establish, but the FBI claimed that on election day in 2016 they traced stories to Russia which helped to spur on allegations of Russian meddling in the election. It also emerged during the election that a profitable fake news industry had been established in the city of Veles, Macedonia where hundreds of pro-Trump stories were being published. The fundamental issue with these stories and with fake news, in general, is that lies and misinformation was presented as being entirely factual. The style of writing and the sites they were posted on were specifically designed to look professional and realistic to gain higher levels of traffic and therefore higher advertising revenue.

In the time since the 2016 US election, fake news has affected dozens of countries worldwide, but

especially democracies. As democracy relies on the thoughts and opinions of voters to choose its leaders, information and its accuracy are of vital importance. There has been a criticism of the hosts of fake news stories, mostly Facebook and Google and their failings in tackling the issue, but similarly, the international community has not yet come together to find solutions.

Journalist Safety

Over the past ten years, more than 800 journalists have lost their lives, most of them being not even warred reporters. An average of 100 journalists lose their lives every year, and only 8% of these killings are being resolved, according to a UNESCO Report, the most vulnerable being local journalists. As news organizations increasingly rely on freelance journalists, who usually work alone and with less security in dangerous areas, there has also been a rise in their deaths (about 19% of the

victims). Most of them worked in conflict zones, highlighting the dangers faced by reporters in such areas. Most journalists, however, are not assassinated, but rather imprisoned without trial. According to Reporters Sans Frontieres (RSF), more than half of these journalists are arrested for “anti-state crimes,” a common practice in countries such as China or Saudi Arabia, where the government still holds tight control over the press and does not allow criticism of their rulers. Governments intimidate journalists by numerous methods such as online and offline harassment, kidnappings, torture or destruction of material. While men remain the most targeted (>90%), as they are usually more likely to report on conflict zones, women face gender-based intimidations, such as sexual harassment or violence, which often are not noticeable in statistics. Foreign journalists are also targeted through difficult visa application or arbitrary detention and questioning.

For instance, a German journalist working for Die Zeit reported to have been arrested with her Chinese colleague after reporting about the Hong Kong Protests.

Current Crisis:

Fake News

UNESCO’s Director of Freedom of Expression and Media Development, Guy Berger, noted in a speech to the World News Media Congress in Durban, South Africa this year that the confusion fake news creates make all news seem equally believable. Fake news stories often attempt to discredit legitimate journalism by accusing it of being fake news itself, helping to create an atmosphere of confusion and trying to push the blame for fake news onto mainstream media. The danger of this situation is that it could cause individuals and society to ignore journalism all-together as they don’t feel they can trust it. Instead they may

fall back on the opinions of their friends, their own pre-existing assumptions, or the claims of a strong leader. Populist leaders such as Donald Trump, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in Turkey, and Rodrigo Duterte in the Philippines have all adopted fake news as part of their politics. While they may not be actively responsible for discrediting traditional media and journalism, the effect of people losing trust in journalism has been to increase their power to define the truth. They have also been able to use fake news as a smear term against stories, journalists, and media companies that oppose or criticize them.

The role of social media is vital to understanding how fake news has grown. Social media allows for information to be spread at unprecedented speed and may lead people to more fake news than they would encounter offline as they are more likely to trust stories posted by their friends. As two of the most

popular social media sites, a lot of pressure has been placed on Facebook and Twitter to tackle the fake news posted on their sites. However, defining exactly what fake news is has proved to be difficult and controversial, and current evidence shows that fact checking and warning flagging has so far had little impact on the scale of fake news published to social media . An interesting case study that shows many of the issues with fake news is the Philippines and specifically the case of Leila de Lima. According to We Are Social's 'Digital in 2017' report Filipinos spend more time on social media per day than any other nationality . However, the Philippines also suffers from slow and very expensive internet connection, but using Facebook is free. This has made Filipinos more likely to experience fake news as they see the headlines as they scroll through Facebook but do not read the articles due to the cost attached.

Leila de Lima is a Filipino senator and prominent critic and opponent of president Duterte. Before joining the senate, she served as chair of the Philippines Commission on Human Rights from 2008 to 2010, and Justice Secretary from 2010-2015. She became famous for her campaigns against the drug trade, during which she oversaw the trial and imprisonment of prominent drug lords. However, she has been caught up in Duterte's violent war on drugs and is currently in prison charged with drug trafficking and taking money from drug dealers. Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and the European Union all consider her imprisonment to be political and motivated by her criticism of Duterte's policies and leadership. As soon as de Lima was arrested stories began to circulate on social media aimed at discrediting and undermining her. These included claims that she had attempted suicide in prison, that her son had been

arrested for smuggling drugs, and that she was the biggest drug lord in the Philippines all of which were fake. While these stories may seem unbelievable on their own, one story that came out, that de Lima had been having an affair with her driver, turned out to be true which made all other stories about her seem instantly believable. The result has been that a key opponent to Duterte's presidency has been imprisoned and discredited. Fake news has therefore undermined democracy in the Philippines through its undermining of legitimate journalism. This case shows the key parts of fake news that need to be addressed. The power of social media and its role in tackling the issue, the way it can be used for political gain and manipulation, and the need to bring back trust in traditional news media.

Journalist Safety

The alarming number of journalists killed throughout the world

is not only worrisome on a human rights level, as it threatens both the freedom of expression and access to information, but it also prevents the international community from attaining the Sustainable Development Goals. Data collection regarding the safety of journalists (such as number of killings, kidnappings, disappearances, torture and detention, amongst others) has been made part of the global indicator. While NGOs concerned with freedom of press, such as RSF or WAN-IFRA, have raised awareness through reports and articles on the dangers facing journalists and human right infringements, some member states have framed these arrests as threats to state security, a common practice in China (see for instance the arrest of Yang Xiu Qiong in 2016). UNESCO itself has provided a monitoring, reporting and data collecting role to the international community, publishing yearly findings on journalist killings and provided a

platform promote freedom of expression, cooperation between member states and providing training courses for both security forces and judges. A key objective for UNESCO regarding journalist protection has been to tackle the issue of impunity from member states. While there has been an increase in provision of information about cases of journalists condemned, the number is still low (49% only), and only 15% of these cases have been resolved. However, while the UN itself has been facing limited participation between and within member states. As journalist safety is not specifically part of the mandate of many UN bodies, nor a crucial aspect of them, UNESCO also faces challenges in terms of resources limitations. Moreover, as data collection on killings and prosecution is sent by member states to UNESCO on a voluntary basis, while there has been an increase in response, there is room for improving participation and engagement.

Questions to Consider:

1. How do we ensure access to legitimate journalism and how do we define it?
2. Who is responsible for policing fake news?
3. What is the role of social media and how should it act?
4. How do we stop fake news from influencing politics and elections?
5. What can we do to protect journalists from persecution?
6. How do we protect journalists in dangerous environments?
7. What can be done to ensure that crimes committed against journalists are punished?
8. What can member states do at a national level to support journalistic integrity and safety?

Portfolio Powers and

Delegate Views:

There is great tension between States around the world regarding issues. While some advocate complete freedom for journalism, others see journalist as a servant of the state requiring some degree of oversight or control. Some countries protect journalism in their domestic laws. While others specifically require journalist to be overseen by government of ruling party officials. The Human Right Council is in the awkward position of having to negotiate a path through these conflicting attitudes. Party-controlled media silences independent journalists and muckrakers trying to expose the truth about government corruption. The key aspect to consider for bloc positions is attitudes towards journalism and free speech. Attitudes vary across the international community on what the role of journalists should be in society and

whether criticism of government should be allowed. You should consider what your country's record is on press freedom, on defending freedom of speech, and if it has executed or imprisoned journalists. The issue of fake news doesn't affect all countries equally but it may have affected your country's society or politics or perhaps your country's leader is benefitting from fake news. You should consider what the role of social media is in your country's society as well.

Here is a website to help understand the situation of free press better in your country:

<https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2017/france>

United States

While the United States constitution emphasizes the right of free speech, and has promoted the notion of free journalism in the past, the United States in recent years has become infamous for its issues

surrounding “fake news” and persecution of journalists. In its recent presidential election the term “fake news” was thrown around, as the candidate and now president Donald Trump blamed it for spreading misinformation about him. This term has been manipulated greatly in bipartisan issues and has helped create an even larger divide in U.S politics. While the United States promotes the notion of free journalism, it was added this year to the list of most dangerous countries for journalists after witnessing 68 journalists die. This number is a 15% increase from recent years, showing an increase in violence both abroad and at home journalism. The issue of fake news has sparked outrage and violence towards journalists creating this percent uptick. While the United States promotes the wellbeing of journalists to the outside world, it has some work to do at home before it can fully support action against journalism and violence.

North Korea

North Korea has some of the most tightly restricted media in the world. While theoretically the North Korean constitution protects freedom of speech, the reality is a different one. Mass media is almost completely controlled by one source, the Korean Worker Party, which allows no other media on air. This creates a funnel of propaganda from the government to its citizens who only view this one perspective. Because press is completely state controlled, there are no fundamental free press issues as there are no journalists in North Korea who go against the country's stance.

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia has very strict laws when it comes to freedom of speech and press. It scores as one of the worst countries in the world on its free press protections. The internet is severely restricted, and social media is frowned upon, as people have been

notoriously 'banned' from tweeting and writing. In recent years, Saudi journalists have started to leave in search for better opportunities abroad, since most if not all of their work is censored and suppressed by the totalitarian monarchy currently in place.

Venezuela

Venezuela once had a stable economy and a free press system. However, with the recent economic struggles and political corruption dozens of independent media outlets have been forced to close in Venezuela. This is taking a toll on the presence of free accurate news in Venezuela as many of the countries ongoing troubles and crises are not even being reported by the news organizations. All in all, due to political repression, or pure economic depression free press and accurate news is hard to come by in Venezuela at the moment.

Russia

Although Russia remains a country including many media outlets, there is limited access to the independent news coverage that opposes the political views of the government. Television, the major leading source of news, is similarly utilized for the distribution of propaganda, where the mainstream media has shown significant bias towards the United Russia party, the ruling political party of the Russian Federation. Pressure of the government, including aggressive tax inspections and criminal investigations, towards independent media groups like broadcasters has led to the ousting of many news sources. The risk of violence and prosecution in Russia is particularly high now.

Cuba

Cuba has one of the most representative media environments in North America and South America.

The state owns and controls traditional news medias, which use their outlets to promote its political goals and deny opposition from others. Journalists that work in both state and independent media risk harassment, threats, and detention if they are connected to any coverage perceived as critical towards the authorities of Cuba's political system. Despite restrictions surrounding media, journalism has expanded recently in producing higher-quality news; journalists have also engaged debate over the role of censorship in media for the country of Cuba.

China

Countries such as North Korea or the People's Republic of China are well-known examples of censored countries. The Chinese government has long kept tight reins on both traditional and new media to avoid potential subversion of its authority. Its tactics often entail strict media controls using monitoring systems

and firewalls, shuttering publications or websites, and jailing dissident journalists, bloggers, and activists.

Denmark

Freedom of speech as well as freedom of the press in Denmark are both ensured by article 77 of their constitution. Denmark, on a world scale, is one of the most journalist-friendly nations. Denmark is continuing its position as one of the few success stories in an era in which global media freedom is coming increasingly under threat.

Canada

Conditions for media in Canada are free and stable, and outlets are generally able to operate and exercise editorial independence without undue interference. Canada's 1982 constitution guarantees freedom of expression and freedom of the press. The government may legally restrict free speech with the aim of ending discrimination, ensuring social

harmony, or promoting gender equality, but the definition of hate speech, which is punishable by law, remains vague. Overall, Canada is a very journalist-friendly country and supports free-press legislation in many forms.

Egypt

Reporters Without Borders ranked Egypt 161st out of 180 countries for press freedom in 2017, citing campaigns by security forces to marginalize dissenting media opinions and the passage of a law that created a monitoring body with the power to fine or suspend media outlets. Journalists are met with brutal measures if they don't obey the Egyptian law, and can be subject to imprisonment, media blackouts, and channel closures or blockages.

India

India's media remains the freest in South Asia, however, journalists continue to face obstacles, including

legal intimidation (arrests) in connection to their work. Journalists have recently reported heavy-handed government censorship, most notable in the restive state of Jammu and Kashmir. Threats by both police and anti-Maoist groups, against the communist party of India, have resulted in a number of journalists to relocate. Across the country as a whole, violence against journalists has been supported by a prevailing climate of impunity.

United Kingdom

We Offer Crumpets And Tea For All

The United Kingdom welcomes a largely open media environment where journalists may communicate their news freely, without fear of attack or serious harassment. The UK has a strong tradition of editorially independent public broadcasting, however, a small number of large companies control a disproportionate amount of private outlets. There are now existing concerns surrounding

the government surveillance of citizens, and journalists more specifically; a bill signed by Parliament now allows for the massive power of security agencies, which does not grant sufficient protection to journalists.

France

France has a strong tradition of independent journalism and a generally free media environment. However, in recent years, defamation cases, intrusive new security laws, and editorial pressure on journalists by owners have contributed to concerns about decreasing media freedom. According to a French government website, “Freedom of expression is enshrined in the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen.” As for freedom of the press, it is enshrined in the law of 1881. But this freedom has limits: racism, anti-Semitism, racial hatred, and justification of terrorism are not opinions. They are offenses. Also,

France is a very comfortable location for journalists.

Germany

Germany generally values the right of free speech as one that is a fundamental aspect of its democracy. In recent years its hate speech laws, known locally as NetzDG, which places harsh fines on social media giants for going against it, has come under fire. Some argue that because anything mildly controversial is expunged from the internet, it prevents the ability of free speech to be used on the internet. The German anxiety towards intolerance comes into play here as they attempt to manage their fear of allowing hate speech to manifest itself, while also protecting free speech.

South Korea

South Korea is a nation in which freedom of speech is highly valued and well supported in terms of government legislation. However,

South Korea has seen dramatic rise in the latest World Press Freedom Index. In the 2018 report, South Korea is ranked 43rd, up 20 spots from the previous year. This rise can be largely attributed to the South Korean government's recent attempts of suppressing online fake news which many citizens believe infringes on their right of free press by suppressing real news by mistake.

Iran

Iran is yet another nation with a concerning amount of media censorship. Tens of thousands of websites are censored in Iran, according to a 2017 report from the watchdog Freedom House. That includes the websites of foreign news outlets, human rights organizations, political opposition groups and other not aligned with the theocratic regime. It also includes popular social networks such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube and the blogging platforms WordPress and Blogger.

Journalists are held on a tight leash in Iran, as one bad word against the Iranian regime can lead to execution.

Singapore

Overall, Singapore is not a nation that is known for its acceptance of freedom of speech or press. Media freedom in Singapore is legally and economically constrained to such a degree that in recent years the vast majority of journalists practiced self-censorship rather than risk being charged with defamation or breaking the country's criminal laws on permissible speech.

Turkey

Turkey once prided itself on freedom of speech, press, and expression. Yet, in the past few years, censorship has been on the rise in Turkey. Now, censorship is regulated by domestic legislation, and the government has enacted new laws that expanded both the state's power to

block websites as well as monitoring content online.

A Word on the Positions:

The most censored country in the world is North Korea, where there are no independent journalists, radio, newspapers or television shows. Everything broadcasted or printed requires state approval. Supreme leader Kim Jong Un is the main advocate for the suppression of journalism and speech.

Libya similarly lacks independent broadcast of print media. Saif al-Islam Gaddafi, son of controversial leader Muammar Gaddafi, who was known for suppressing the speech of his own citizens

Countries such as Uzbekistan, Eritrea, Guinea, Belarus, and Cuba take a zero tolerance stance on negative media, and have severely cracked down against journalists that voice opposing opinion of the government. Since many of its

members are fractured over this issue, there is no official stance from the Non-Aligned Movement. Elected by the National Assembly of People's Power, president Miguel Díaz Canel is trying to modernize the Cuban economic system and constitution.

China has substantial freedom of the press, except on political matters, where the State and nationalists in the public expect adherence to core themes. Media laws outlining journalists' rights and responsibilities are ambiguous and not clearly defined. This leaves the interpretation of media laws to the discretion of the government.

Journalists accused of spreading anti government opinions are jailed and forced to accept their sentence or pay a fine to go on probation, the terms of which are that they are not allowed to continue their work. In the United Nations, China assiduously protects its own sovereignty over its internal affairs and works to defend the principle of state sovereignty from

anything that could weaken it.

Consequently it usually opposes human rights initiatives that would challenge the authority of the state. But there are situations where China will speak up in favor human rights and journalists, especially when in its overall strategic interests.

The European Union (EU) is a global leader on freedom of journalists, EU states usually elevate the rights of journalists above the power of states. Some EU Member States act under a dual sovereignty doctrine, acknowledging the sovereignty of the state, but also the sovereignty of the individual, including journalists. The EU accepts the principle that free journalist is essential to good governance. It was the first to ratify a binding treaty protecting access to official documents in June 2009, and made it a requirement for accession for non-member states. Balkan member states such as Serbia and Bulgaria have been improving their protection of

journalists threatened in their line of work. The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) is the UN's largest voting bloc, but it is divided on this issue. Many NAM Member States, especially those in Africa and Latin America strongly believe in the value of freedom of information and the importance of journalists.

UNESCO is led by a Director-General, who is nominated by the Executive Board for election by the General Council of all member states for a term of four years, with a maximum of two terms. The current Director-General is Irina Bokova, from Bulgaria, the first woman to hold the position.

The United States has advocated for press freedom protection in the UN for years. However, since Edward Snowden leaked information to the public about worldwide government surveillance, the greatest concern is how accessible government records are to the public

and protecting sensitive sources of information.

Further Reading

The World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers

<http://www.wan-ifra.org/microsites/press-freedom>

Reporters Sans Frontieres/Reporters Without Borders

<https://rsf.org/en>

Highlights from the UNESCO Director-General 2016's Report on the Safety of Journalists and the Danger of Impunity:

https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/unesco_report_english_rgb.pdf

Politifact on Fake News

<http://www.politifact.com/subjects/fake-news/>

Guy Berger, UNESCO Director for Freedom of Expression and Media

Development, speech World News Media Congress, Durban, 2017:
http://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/wan_conference_berger_remarks.pdf

The following news sites also regularly feature articles concerning fake news:

- Al Jazeera
- The Guardian
- BBC News
- The New York Times
- The Independent
- Breitbart News

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