

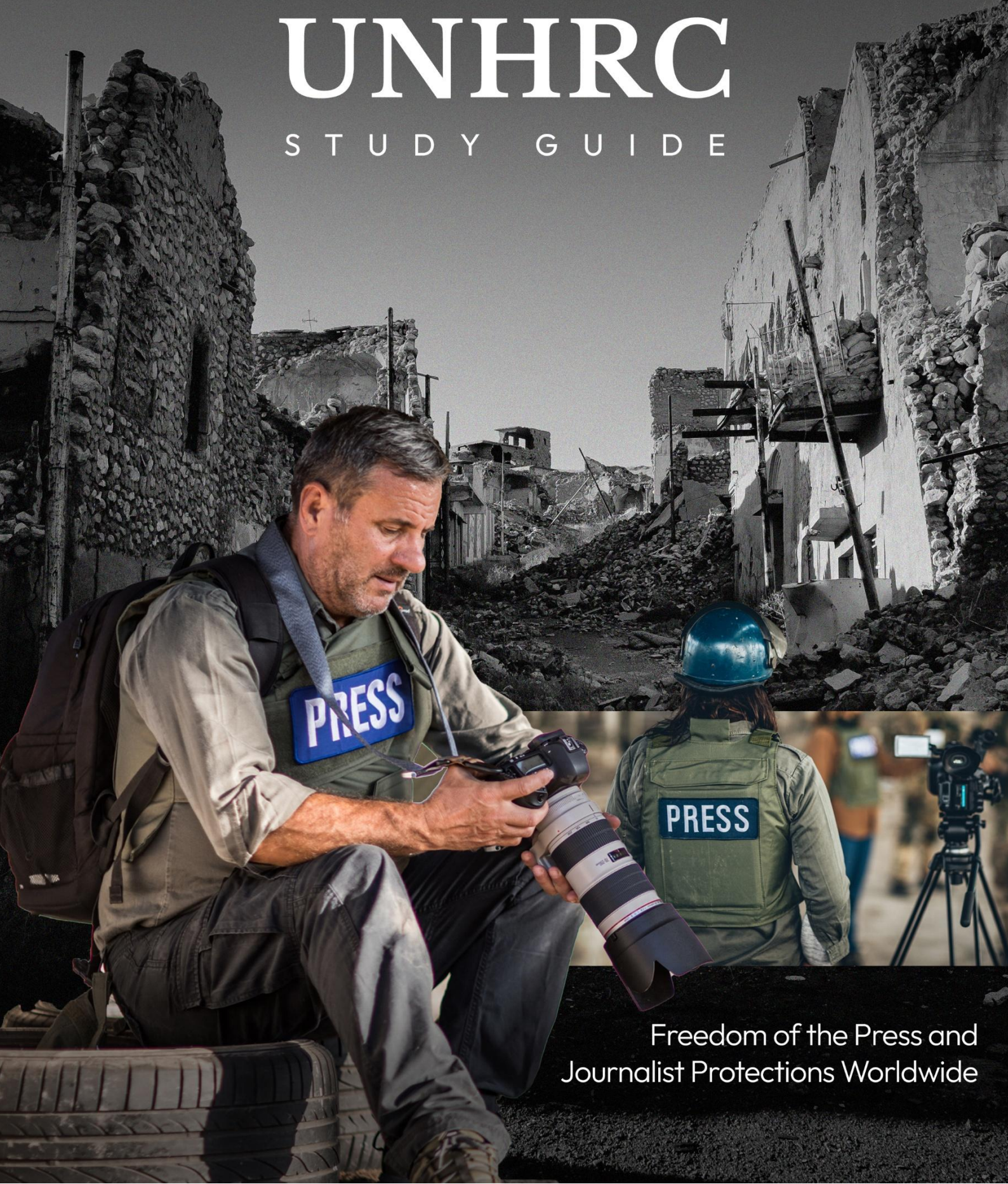


MHI
Model UN

“Slow Motion is Better than
No Motion”

UNHRC

STUDY GUIDE



Freedom of the Press and
Journalist Protections Worldwide



Table of Contents

Secretary General’s Letter.....	2
Under Secretary General’s Letter.....	3
1. Introduction of Committee: UNHRC	4
2. Agenda: Freedom of the Press and Journalist Protection Worldwide	5
2.1. Introduction	5
2.1.1. Definition and Importance of Press Freedom	5
2.1.2. Role of Journalists in Conflict Zones and Humanitarian Crises.....	7
3. Major Challenges to Press Freedom.....	7
3.1. Censorship and Suppression by Governments	7
3.2. Attacks, Arrests, and Assassinations of Journalists	8
3.3. Legal Threats and Criminalization of Journalism	9
3.4. Surveillance and Digital Censorship	10
4. Global Press Freedom Violations	10
4.1. Recent High-Profile Cases of Press Freedom Violations.....	10
4.2. Regional Challenges to Press Freedom	13
5. Previous UN Actions & Resolutions	16
6. Questions to be examined.....	18
7. Country Matrix	19
8. References and Further readings	20



Letter from Secretary-General

Dear Delegates,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to MHIMUN. As the Secretary-General, I am truly honored to witness your enthusiasm and dedication toward diplomacy, global affairs, and meaningful dialogue. Model United Nations is more than just a simulation; it is a platform that empowers youth to become critical thinkers, compassionate leaders, and responsible global citizens.

The Study Guides you are about to explore have been carefully prepared by our passionate and knowledgeable chairs to provide you with a comprehensive understanding of your committee’s agenda. These documents aim to equip you with the background, context, and key points needed to engage in fruitful debate, draft well-informed resolutions, and challenge ideas with diplomacy and respect.

I encourage you to not only read these guides thoroughly but to question, research, and bring your own perspective to the table. MHIMUN is a space for collaboration, growth, and innovation and your participation is what makes it truly meaningful.

Wishing you a productive preparation and an unforgettable conference experience.

With warm regards,

Kyaw Zin Lat

Secretary-General of MHIMUN '25



Letter from Under Secretary-General

Esteemed Delegates of the Future and Delegates of MHIMUN '25,

It is my absolute honor to welcome you to MHIMUN 2025. My name is Heena Khatoon, and I serve as the Under Secretary-General for the UNHRC committee. Being part of this incredible conference fills me with excitement, and I eagerly anticipate the insightful debates that will unfold.

This year, we delve into a topic that is both fundamental and urgent: “Freedom of the Press and Journalist Protection Worldwide.”

In an era where truth is challenged, journalists stand as guardians of information, accountability, and justice. Yet, many face censorship, imprisonment, and even violence for doing their job. The UNHRC holds the responsibility to address these threats, ensuring that press freedom is upheld and journalists are safeguarded from persecution.

I strongly encourage you to study this guide in depth, especially the questions to be answered section, and come prepared with well-researched policies and innovative solutions. Your role as delegates is crucial in shaping meaningful resolutions that reinforce human rights and global press freedom.

I look forward to seeing you all in MHIMUN '25, where together, we will engage in dialogue, diplomacy, and impactful decision-making. Should you have any questions, please feel free to reach out.

Sincerely,

Heena Khatoon

Under-Secretary-General of MHIMUN '25

Email: khatoonheena185@gmail.com



1. Introduction of Committee: UNHRC

The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) is a key intergovernmental body within the United Nations system dedicated to promoting and protecting human rights globally. Established in 2006, the UNHRC consists of 47 member states, each elected by the UN General Assembly for a three-year term. Its primary role is to address and respond to human rights violations worldwide, offering a platform for dialogue, recommendations, and the adoption of resolutions aimed at improving global human rights standards.

The UNHRC plays a crucial role in defending press freedom—an essential pillar of any democratic society. Through resolutions, special rapporteurs, and investigative mechanisms, the Council has been at the forefront of raising awareness about the threats faced by journalists and advocating for stronger protections. One such significant resolution is Resolution 45/18, which emphasizes the importance of safeguarding journalists and combating the impunity often associated with crimes committed against them. This resolution highlights the UNHRC’s ongoing commitment to addressing violations against press freedom, including violence, harassment, and censorship.

Freedom of the press is enshrined in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which guarantees the right to seek, receive, and impart information without interference. It is a fundamental human right that upholds transparency, accountability, and the protection of other civil liberties. However, in today’s global landscape, press freedom is increasingly under threat. Journalists face numerous challenges including government censorship, physical violence, arbitrary arrests, and digital surveillance. These dangers are particularly heightened in conflict zones and under authoritarian regimes, where reporting on sensitive topics can be met with severe repercussions.

The UNHRC continues to address these challenges, seeking ways to protect journalists and ensure they can operate without fear of retribution. This guide aims to provide a deeper understanding of the key issues surrounding press freedom, examine the role of the UNHRC in addressing violations, and explore the global landscape of press protections. By examining international frameworks and significant case studies, we aim to shed light on the ongoing fight for press freedom and the protection of journalists around the world.



2. Agenda: Freedom of the Press and Journalist Protection Worldwide

2.1. Introduction

2.1.1. Definition and Importance of Press Freedom

Press freedom is the right of individuals and media organizations to report news, express opinions, and share information without interference, censorship, or restriction from governments, corporations, or other influential entities. This fundamental right is a key aspect of freedom of expression, enshrined in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). It guarantees that journalists can freely communicate important information to the public, thereby fostering transparency and promoting diverse viewpoints on critical societal issues such as politics, social justice, economics, and governance. Press freedom is not only about the right to disseminate information but also about the public's right to know, which allows them to make informed decisions based on accurate, balanced, and comprehensive reporting.

The importance of press freedom is multi-faceted and goes beyond just providing a platform for news and opinions. First, it plays a crucial role in ensuring transparency and accountability in governance and other sectors. A free press acts as a watchdog, closely monitoring the actions of governments, businesses, and institutions. By investigating corruption, exposing human rights abuses, and uncovering social injustices, journalists shine a light on hidden issues, prompting public debate and, in many cases, policy changes. Without press freedom, those in power may act unchecked, manipulating information and suppressing dissenting voices, thus eroding trust in public institutions and governance.

In democratic societies, press freedom is a cornerstone of political participation and ensures a functioning democracy. A healthy democracy depends on an informed electorate, one that has access to accurate and timely information. Press freedom enables citizens to learn about government policies, political candidates, economic trends, and social issues, ensuring that they can make educated decisions during elections and participate meaningfully in national and global debates. Moreover, the free exchange of ideas in the media promotes public discourse, cultivates a culture of open debate, and fosters civic engagement, which strengthens democratic processes.



Additionally, press freedom is essential for human rights protection. Journalists are often on the front lines of exposing violations such as unlawful detentions, torture, suppression of minorities, and government corruption. Their ability to report freely serves as a deterrent to potential human rights violations by holding perpetrators accountable. In countries where press freedom is restricted, human rights abuses are more likely to go unnoticed and unchallenged. When journalists are silenced or censored, there is less oversight of government actions, and the public remains unaware of critical issues affecting their rights and freedoms.

Beyond politics and human rights, press freedom is integral to societal development. A free press plays a significant role in shaping public opinion and raising awareness about essential issues such as healthcare, education, environmental sustainability, and social equity. It serves as an important tool for education, informing the public about new technologies, scientific advances, and public health initiatives. Media outlets also advocate for social justice, helping marginalized communities find a voice and influencing policy decisions that impact vulnerable groups. A society that enjoys press freedom fosters greater civic responsibility, encourages more active participation in community affairs, and contributes to the social and economic development of nations.

Moreover, in the era of digital media, press freedom faces new challenges and opportunities. The rise of social media has democratized information distribution, enabling individuals and communities to bypass traditional media structures. However, this also leads to issues related to misinformation, online censorship, and surveillance. As digital platforms evolve, ensuring press freedom while protecting individuals' rights in the digital age has become increasingly complex. Press freedom in the digital realm means balancing freedom of speech with the responsibility of preventing harm caused by fake news, hate speech, and other forms of harmful content.

Ultimately, press freedom is more than just a right—it is a fundamental pillar of any free society, playing a central role in promoting democracy, human rights, social development, and the rule of law. Ensuring that journalists can perform their duties without fear of retribution or censorship is essential for maintaining a free, open, and just society.



2.1.2. Role of Journalists in Conflict Zones and Humanitarian Crises

Journalists play a vital role in documenting and reporting from conflict zones and during humanitarian crises, providing the international community with essential information about ongoing violence, suffering, and human rights violations, often at great personal risk. In conflict zones, they are essential in chronicling the reality of war, holding governments and military groups accountable, and shedding light on civilian suffering. For example, Marie Colvin, an American journalist, was killed while reporting on the Syrian Civil War, highlighting the risks journalists face. Through their coverage, journalists like Colvin expose the human cost of war, ensuring the world doesn't remain ignorant of atrocities. During the Ebola outbreak in West Africa, journalists were crucial in informing the world about the crisis, risking their own safety to report on the spread of the disease and the conditions of healthcare workers and affected communities, which helped mobilize global aid and resources.

In humanitarian crises, journalists provide key insights into the impacts of natural disasters, famines, and refugee movements. For instance, journalists covering the Rohingya refugee crisis in Myanmar helped expose the military's brutal crackdown, bringing international attention to the persecution and leading to investigations into genocide. Despite facing extreme threats such as kidnapping, violence, and assassination, journalists continue to report in dangerous areas. James Foley, an American journalist, was kidnapped and murdered by ISIS while covering the Syrian conflict, underscoring the extreme risks journalists take to report from these regions. Investigative journalism can also uncover potential war crimes and abuses, as seen in coverage of the Iraq War and the Syrian Civil War, where journalists uncovered evidence of torture, executions, and other violations of international law.

Ultimately, journalists serve as the eyes and ears of the world in conflict and crisis situations, providing critical information that influences policy decisions, human rights interventions, and international aid. Protecting press freedom is essential to ensure that their work can continue without fear of retaliation or violence.

3. Major Challenges to Press Freedom

3.1. Censorship and Suppression by Governments

Censorship and suppression of the press by governments are among the most severe challenges to press freedom. In many countries, governments impose restrictions on media



outlets, censoring or controlling information that is critical of the government, its policies, or its leaders. This often takes the form of media blackouts, forced self-censorship, or even direct threats and violence against journalists. Governments may also enact laws that restrict what can be reported, forcing media outlets to follow strict guidelines that stifle dissent and prevent coverage of sensitive topics, such as corruption, human rights violations, and political repression. For example, China has been known for its extensive censorship of the internet and media, controlling news outlets, censoring social media platforms, and punishing journalists who report on politically sensitive topics like the Tiananmen Square massacre or Hong Kong protests. Similarly, in Turkey, the government has used laws to arrest journalists and close independent media outlets, particularly those critical of President Erdogan's administration, effectively silencing opposition voices.

In authoritarian regimes, censorship is not only a tool for controlling information but also a means of maintaining political power. Governments often use national security laws or anti-terrorism laws as justification for censoring news, limiting journalists' ability to report freely and hold those in power accountable. In extreme cases, journalists who challenge the government's narrative may face imprisonment, harassment, or even death. The suppression of the press limits the ability of the public to make informed decisions and undermines democracy. A press free from government interference is essential for holding those in power accountable, exposing corruption, and promoting transparency. The ongoing repression of the press by governments is a key challenge the international community must address to ensure the protection of press freedom worldwide.

3.2. Attacks, Arrests, and Assassinations of Journalists

Journalists around the world face increasing threats of violence, arrest, and assassination for simply doing their job—reporting the truth. Governments, armed groups, and even non-state actors often resort to intimidation and violence to silence journalists who expose corruption, human rights violations, and political wrongdoing. Attacks on journalists can range from physical assaults to harassment, with the aim of preventing them from reporting freely. Journalists worldwide face increasing dangers, with over half of countries deemed unsafe in the 2023 World Press Freedom Index. In 2023, 95 journalists were killed in the Israel-Gaza conflict alone. In Mexico, for example, the country remains one of the deadliest places for journalists, where many have been murdered or attacked for exposing drug cartel activities and government



corruption. Arrests are another common tactic used to suppress journalists. Many governments arrest journalists under false charges, such as “spreading misinformation” or “threatening national security,” in an effort to silence dissent and curb independent reporting. Countries like Russia and Egypt have been notorious for arresting journalists who criticize the government or report on controversial issues, often subjecting them to harsh conditions and prolonged detention. More extreme, and tragically frequent, are the assassinations of journalists. High-profile cases like that of Jamal Khashoggi, a Saudi journalist murdered in a Saudi consulate, highlight the extreme measures taken to eliminate journalists who challenge powerful regimes. The brutal murder of Daphne Caruana Galizia, a Maltese investigative journalist, is another example of how journalists are silenced for uncovering corruption and illegal activities. These attacks, arrests, and assassinations not only jeopardize the safety of journalists but also pose a direct threat to press freedom, as they create a climate of fear that discourages critical reporting. The impunity with which these crimes are committed further exacerbates the problem, as perpetrators are rarely held accountable.

3.3. Legal Threats and Criminalization of Journalism

Legal threats and the criminalization of journalism are significant challenges to press freedom, as governments increasingly use laws and regulations to silence independent media. In many countries, laws are enacted that make it illegal for journalists to report on certain topics, effectively criminalizing the act of journalism itself. These laws often include broad charges such as defamation, sedition, or national security offenses, which are frequently applied in a way that stifles free expression and punishes journalists for reporting on controversial issues.

For instance, in Myanmar, journalists have been targeted under the Unlawful Associations Act, used to silence critical voices, especially those reporting on government abuses during the military coup. Similarly, in Hungary, the government has introduced laws restricting media ownership and freedom, leading to the criminalization of independent journalism and stifling press freedoms. These legal measures often have a chilling effect on media outlets, forcing them to self-censor or avoid covering sensitive issues altogether to avoid prosecution or fines.

The criminalization of journalism not only directly harms journalists but also undermines the public's right to be informed, as it restricts the flow of critical information about



governance, human rights, and corporate accountability. In some cases, journalists can face long prison sentences or harsh penalties for their work. In extreme situations, governments use legal threats to intimidate and silence dissenting voices, curbing any efforts to hold power to account.

3.4. Surveillance and Digital Censorship

Surveillance and digital censorship are increasingly used by governments to control and monitor the flow of information, making it more difficult for journalists to report freely. Governments, often with the assistance of technology companies, monitor online activities to track, harass, and sometimes imprison journalists for their reporting. Surveillance tools are used to intercept communications, monitor social media activity, and even track journalists' movements in real-time. This creates a chilling effect, as journalists fear being watched or targeted simply for doing their job. In countries like China, state-sponsored surveillance is pervasive, with the government monitoring online communications and even using artificial intelligence to suppress dissent and control the narrative on social media platforms.

Digital censorship, often in the form of internet shutdowns or the blocking of websites, is another tactic used by governments to limit access to independent news and stifle free speech. Governments in Iran and Russia have implemented widespread internet censorship, blocking websites, restricting access to social media platforms, and limiting the circulation of news that is critical of the government. Journalists and activists in these countries face significant challenges in disseminating independent information and conducting investigative journalism. Digital censorship also includes the use of deep-packet inspection technology to filter content, as well as the regulation of social media platforms to ensure that only government-approved narratives are propagated. The growing reliance on digital surveillance and censorship threatens press freedom, as journalists and citizens alike are unable to access unfiltered news, and their privacy is violated in the process.

4. Global Press Freedom Violations

4.1. Recent High-Profile Cases of Press Freedom Violations

1. Maria Ressa (Philippines)



Maria Ressa, the co-founder of Rappler, a digital news outlet in the Philippines, has been at the forefront of the fight for press freedom in an increasingly hostile media environment. In 2021, Ressa was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, sharing the honor with Dmitry Muratov, the editor-in-chief of Novaya Gazeta in Russia. However, despite this international recognition, Ressa has faced numerous legal challenges from the Philippine government under President Rodrigo Duterte. She has been targeted with multiple charges, including cyber-libel, a charge related to a 2012 article on Rappler that she had no editorial control over at the time of publication. These charges reflect the Philippines’ deteriorating stance on independent journalism, especially as the Duterte administration has repeatedly criticized media outlets that challenge its narrative. Ressa's legal battles have not only posed a threat to her freedom but have also brought global attention to the erosion of press freedom in the Philippines, especially for outlets that criticize the government’s controversial war on drugs.

2. Jamal Khashoggi (Saudi Arabia)

Jamal Khashoggi, a prominent Saudi journalist and columnist for The Washington Post, became one of the most notable figures in the global conversation on press freedom following his brutal assassination in 2018. Khashoggi, a vocal critic of the Saudi royal family and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, was murdered inside the Saudi consulate in Istanbul, Turkey, on October 2, 2018. His death, which was initially denied by the Saudi government, was later confirmed to have been premeditated and carried out by a team of Saudi agents. The case sparked international outrage and brought renewed attention to the dangers faced by journalists in authoritarian regimes. Khashoggi’s assassination exposed the extreme lengths to which governments would go to silence critics, and the global response highlighted the urgent need for stronger protections for journalists worldwide. His death remains a symbol of the threats journalists face for speaking out against oppressive regimes.

3. Evan Gershkovich (Russia)

Evan Gershkovich, an American journalist and reporter for The Wall Street Journal, was arrested in March 2023 by Russian authorities on charges of espionage. Gershkovich had been reporting on the war in Ukraine and had recently written articles about the economic impact of the war on Russia. His arrest is part of a broader crackdown on press freedom in Russia under



President Vladimir Putin’s administration, which has been intensifying in recent years, especially with the escalation of the war in Ukraine. Gershkovich’s detention has drawn widespread international condemnation, with governments, human rights organizations, and journalistic bodies urging Russia to release him. His arrest highlights the increasing risks that foreign and domestic journalists face in authoritarian states, especially when covering politically sensitive topics such as war, corruption, and government policies. It also underscores the use of state power to silence critical voices through legal and extrajudicial means.

4. Julian Assange (United Kingdom/United States)

Julian Assange, the founder of WikiLeaks, has been a central figure in the debate over press freedom, national security, and whistleblowing. Assange’s WikiLeaks platform published classified U.S. government documents, including diplomatic cables and military reports, revealing sensitive information on a range of topics, including the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, government surveillance programs, and human rights abuses. In 2012, Assange sought asylum in the Ecuadorian embassy in London to avoid extradition to Sweden over allegations of sexual misconduct, which he denied. However, the United States has sought his extradition on charges related to the publication of classified documents, citing espionage and conspiracy. Assange was arrested in 2019 after his asylum was revoked, and he has been fighting extradition to the U.S. in a UK court. His case has raised significant questions about the tension between press freedom and national security, with supporters arguing that Assange is being persecuted for exposing corruption and government overreach. Critics, however, claim that his actions endangered lives and compromised national security. Assange's continued detention and legal battles illustrate the complex intersection of press freedom, freedom of information, and state security.

5. Mahsa Amini Protests Coverage (Iran)

The death of Mahsa Amini, a 22-year-old Kurdish woman who died in police custody after being arrested for allegedly violating Iran’s strict dress code for women, sparked widespread protests in Iran in 2022. Amini's death became a rallying cry for Iranian citizens, especially women, who took to the streets to demand justice and greater freedom. Journalists who covered the protests faced extreme measures of censorship, harassment, and detention.



Iranian authorities cracked down heavily on the media, arresting journalists, limiting internet access, and restricting coverage of the protests. Many independent journalists and foreign correspondents were either detained or forced to stop reporting, and their social media platforms were heavily monitored and censored. The Iranian government also imposed an internet shutdown to suppress the flow of information both within the country and globally. The case of Mahsa Amini and the subsequent crackdown on the press has drawn international attention to the dire situation of press freedom in Iran, where journalists often face imprisonment and torture for reporting on sensitive issues such as human rights abuses, political dissent, and government corruption.

4.2. Regional Challenges to Press Freedom

1. Middle East

The Middle East is one of the most dangerous regions for journalists due to authoritarian regimes, ongoing conflicts, and restrictions on freedom of expression. Countries such as Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Egypt have stringent laws that suppress independent journalism. In Saudi Arabia, the government controls most of the media and frequently targets journalists who challenge the royal family’s narrative. Saudi authorities have used harsh tactics, including imprisonment, torture, and even assassination, to silence dissenting voices. The case of Jamal Khashoggi, a prominent journalist murdered in 2018, is one of the most high-profile examples of press freedom violations in the region. Similarly, in Iran, press freedom is severely restricted, and journalists face harassment, imprisonment, and even execution for reporting on politically sensitive topics or criticizing government policies. In Egypt, President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi’s regime has also imposed heavy restrictions on media freedom, including shutting down independent news outlets and detaining journalists critical of the government.

In addition to state repression, ongoing conflicts in countries like Syria and Yemen further endanger journalists. In Syria, the civil war has made it nearly impossible for journalists to report safely, with reporters being targeted by both government forces and opposition groups. Yemen has become a battleground for press freedom, with journalists caught in the crossfire of a brutal war and facing violence, abduction, and imprisonment by both the Houthis rebels and Saudi-led coalition forces. These conflicts create a hazardous environment for



journalists, hindering their ability to report the truth and further undermining press freedom in the region.

2. Asia

Asia is home to both some of the world’s most censored countries and those with relatively free press systems. In China, the government exerts immense control over information, with media outlets heavily monitored and censored. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) actively censors news coverage, especially on sensitive topics like the Tiananmen Square massacre, Tibet, Hong Kong, and the treatment of Uighur Muslims in Xinjiang. Journalists who step out of line face arrest, detention, or worse. The crackdown in Hong Kong, where pro-democracy protests erupted in 2019, represents one of the most severe curbs on press freedom in recent years. The imposition of the National Security Law in 2020 has led to the closure of independent media outlets, such as Apple Daily, and the arrest of journalists critical of Beijing’s policies.

In Myanmar, the military coup of 2021 resulted in a brutal crackdown on journalists who had been reporting on human rights violations and the political crisis following the ousting of the democratically elected government. Journalists face harassment, arbitrary detention, and torture, and media outlets are frequently targeted by the military regime. The junta’s efforts to control the flow of information have included shutting down internet access and imposing censorship on news coverage, making it increasingly difficult for journalists to operate freely in the country.

3. Africa

In Africa, press freedom is often threatened by political instability, corruption, and restrictive laws. In countries like Ethiopia and Nigeria, journalists frequently face arrest and intimidation during times of political unrest. In Ethiopia, where ethnic and political tensions have been on the rise, journalists reporting on the ongoing civil conflict in the Tigray region have been targeted by both government forces and rebel groups. Many have been detained, harassed, or forced into hiding. In Nigeria, journalists are often arrested or subjected to violent attacks when reporting on corruption, human rights abuses, or the activities of armed groups



like Boko Haram. The Nigerian government has also used restrictive laws and censorship to stifle critical reporting.

Other countries in Africa, such as Uganda, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe, have passed laws that further curtail press freedom. These laws criminalize reporting on certain issues, such as political corruption or government abuses, and journalists who violate these laws face imprisonment. In addition to legal restrictions, journalists in many African countries must contend with physical violence and threats, including beatings, kidnappings, and even murder. Despite these challenges, many journalists continue to work tirelessly, often at great personal risk, to uncover the truth and hold powerful individuals accountable.

4. Europe

While Europe is generally more protective of press freedom compared to other regions, there are notable concerns in certain countries. Hungary and Russia, in particular, have faced criticism for undermining journalistic independence and using state-controlled media to advance government agendas.

In Hungary, the government of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has implemented policies that stifle independent journalism. Media outlets critical of the government have been forced to close or come under government control, and journalists have faced harassment. Orbán's administration has been accused of using public funds to finance media outlets that align with the government's views, leading to a lack of diversity in the media landscape. Similarly, in Russia, the government has cracked down on independent media, especially since the annexation of Crimea in 2014 and more recently due to the war in Ukraine. Journalists face surveillance, arrests, and forced exile. The Kremlin uses state-run media to propagate its narrative, while independent journalists, including those from major outlets like Novaya Gazeta, are harassed and silenced.

These countries serve as a reminder that even in Europe, where press freedom is generally protected, governments can still take actions that threaten the independence of the media and restrict journalists' ability to report freely.

5. Americas



In Latin America, the media landscape is deeply affected by violence and government corruption, with journalists facing significant risks. Mexico, for example, is one of the most dangerous countries for journalists, with drug cartels and organized crime groups posing a severe threat to those who report on corruption or criminal activities. The killings of journalists in Mexico are frequent, and those responsible are rarely brought to justice. In addition to the violence from criminal groups, journalists in Mexico face threats from politicians and public officials seeking to silence critical reporting.

In the United States, while press freedom is generally protected by the First Amendment, the media has faced increasing hostility in recent years. Journalists have been targeted by political leaders, especially during times of heightened political polarization. The rhetoric used by public officials, particularly former President Donald Trump, labeled the press as the “enemy of the people,” which contributed to a more hostile environment for journalists. Attacks on journalists, both physical and verbal, have increased, and there have been cases of journalists being detained or targeted while covering protests or political events. These challenges are compounded by the growing influence of social media platforms, where misinformation and harassment campaigns against journalists are rampant.

Despite these challenges, both in Latin America and the U.S., press freedom remains a fundamental principle that many journalists continue to fight for, even in the face of violent threats and political pressure.

5. Previous UN Actions & Resolutions

1. UN General Assembly Resolution on the Protection of Journalists (2013)

In 2013, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution emphasizing the need to enhance the protection of journalists in conflict zones and beyond. It called for governments to create an environment where journalists can work freely and without fear of violence, intimidation, or imprisonment.

This resolution also highlighted the duty of states to ensure that journalists' rights to freedom of expression are respected and protected.



2. UN Security Council Resolution 1738 (2006)

This resolution specifically addresses the safety of journalists in conflict zones. It condemns all acts of violence, threats, and intimidation against journalists, media professionals, and associated personnel in situations of armed conflict.

It underscores the need for parties to conflicts to ensure the protection of journalists and media organizations under international law.

3. UNESCO’s Campaign for the Safety of Journalists

UNESCO has been at the forefront of advocating for the safety of journalists, establishing the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity in 2012. This initiative works to raise awareness and engage countries in efforts to prevent and address the killing of journalists.

UNESCO's campaigns have included monitoring incidents of violence against journalists and advocating for stronger protections and responses from governments.

4. Resolution 45/18 (2020) – Human Rights Council

Adopted by the UN Human Rights Council, this resolution specifically focuses on the protection of journalists and the fight against impunity for crimes committed against journalists. It calls for robust measures to ensure that journalists can work safely, with special attention to the prevention of killings, arbitrary detention, and torture.

It also stresses the importance of fostering independent media environments and protecting the rights of journalists in conflict situations.

5. UN Human Rights Council Resolution A/HRC/RES/12/16 (2009)

This resolution called on states to uphold press freedom and the safety of journalists, urging them to avoid measures that would lead to censorship, violence, or repression of journalists’ rights to free expression.



The resolution also emphasized the importance of states facilitating an environment where journalists can operate freely, and media can serve its critical public role.

6. Human Rights Council Resolutions on Digital Media and Press Freedom

In recent years, the UN Human Rights Council has started addressing the challenges to press freedom posed by digital censorship, surveillance, and online harassment of journalists. A notable action includes urging governments to regulate the digital space while respecting freedom of expression and the safety of media professionals.

Resolutions encourage governments to ensure that journalists' rights are protected both offline and online, recognizing the increasingly vital role of digital media in shaping public discourse.

7. UN Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression

The role of the UN Special Rapporteur is to monitor the global situation regarding freedom of opinion and expression. The Special Rapporteur reports regularly to the UN on the violations of journalists' rights and makes recommendations for improving press freedom globally.

Reports from the Special Rapporteur often serve as a critical tool for holding governments accountable and advocating for stronger international protections for journalists.

6. Questions to be examined

1. What are the primary causes of growing threats to press freedom worldwide, and how can these be addressed by the international community?
2. How can the UN Human Rights Council enforce its resolutions to protect journalists in conflict zones and ensure accountability for violations?
3. How can the UN combat state-sponsored censorship, surveillance, and repression of journalists, especially in authoritarian regimes?



4. What measures can be taken to reduce impunity for crimes against journalists, such as attacks, arrests, and assassinations, and ensure justice for victims?
5. What specific steps can be implemented to improve the safety of journalists in conflict zones, and what role should peacekeeping missions play?
6. What actions should governments take to protect journalists investigating sensitive topics, such as corruption and political dissent?
7. How do regional and cultural differences affect press freedom protection, and what can be done to harmonize global efforts while respecting these differences?

7. Country Matrix

1. Brazil
2. Palestine
3. France
4. UK
5. Iran
6. Egypt
7. Bahrain
8. Kenya
9. India
10. Russia
11. Afghanistan
12. Nigeria
13. Turkiye
14. South Africa
15. Eritrea
16. Israel
17. North Korea
18. China
19. Bangladesh
20. USA



8. References and Further readings

- <https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>
- <https://rsf.org/en/ranking>
- <https://cpj.org/>
- <https://www.amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/freedom-of-expression/>
- https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/nov/25/killing-of-journalists-in-israeli-strike-could-be-a-war-legal-experts-say?utm_source
- <https://apnews.com/article/myanmar-jailed-journalist-press-freedom-prison-torture-df5ae1a001105b1387f45f95cf5d6746>
- <https://www.ungeneva.org/en/news-media/meeting-summary/2024/06/la-tendance-la-hausse-des-journalistes-en-exil-et-les-attaques>
- <https://www.article19.org/resources/un-new-strong-resolution-on-the-safety-of-journalists/>
- https://humanrightsfirst.org/library/silencing-the-truth-the-global-crisis-of-press-freedom-and-journalist-safety/?utm_source=chatgpt.com
- https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/sr-freedom-of-opinion-and-expression/annual-thematic-reports?utm_source=chatgpt.com