



General Assembly: Journalism and the Issue of Impunity

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Dear Delegates,

My name is Audrey Hemenway, I am a junior, and I will be one of your chairs for the General Assembly committee at CAMUN this year. I've been involved in Model UN since my freshman year, and I am so excited to explore the issues of journalism currently facing the international community, and I can't wait to get started in April.

My name is Henry Roh, the rapp for this committee; I am currently a sophomore at Concord Academy. I've been involved in Model UN since 8th grade. In this committee, I am thrilled to be exploring topics of journalism, especially due to its importance in the everyday lives of people around the world. I hope to make this committee as fun, engaging and inclusive as possible. I can't wait to get to meet you all in April!

Please let us know if you have questions—feel free to email us. See you in April!

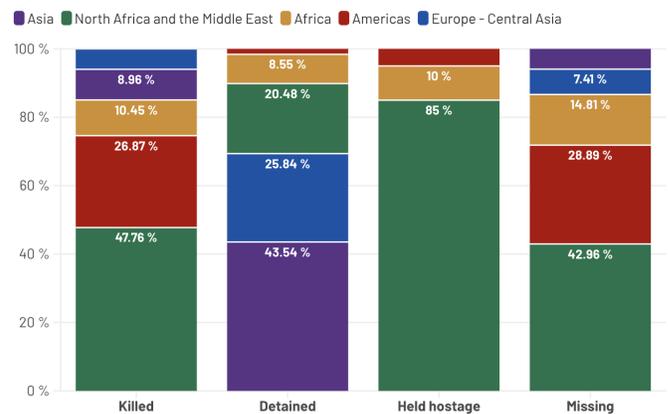
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Background

Journalism is an essential service and a pillar of sustainable development. As attacks, threats, and prosecution of journalists grow in numbers, it is essential to create international policy that protects journalists and sources of news. The IFJ reports that 128 journalists and media workers were killed in 2025 alone¹, showing the growing need for regulation. In addition to killings, the RSF reports that 503 journalists are imprisoned around the world².

Certain regions, especially those currently in war, have much higher rates of journalist killings. Countries such as Palestine, Yemen, Ukraine, India, and Peru lead the world in these deaths. China, Russia, and Myanmar lead in imprisonments reported this year. As delegates consider legislation, they must consider the effects of war and tension between countries.



Source: [Reporters Without Borders](#) - List of countries by region:
Africa: Burkina Faso, Liberia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali, Rwanda, Côte d'Ivoire, Tanzania, Burundi, Mozambique, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Guinea, Sudan, Sierra Leone, Zimbabwe, Eritrea, Nigeria, Somalia, Niger, Benin.
Americas: Mexico, Peru, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Colombia, Ecuador, Honduras, Venezuela.
Asia: Afghanistan, North Korea, Sri Lanka, China, Nepal, Cambodia, India, Bangladesh, Laos, Philippines, Vietnam, Myanmar, Hong Kong.
Europe - Central Asia: Russia, Kosovo, Turkey, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Uzbekistan, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Georgia.
North Africa and the Middle East: Iran, Iraq, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Libya, Palestine, Yemen, Algeria, Lebanon, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Israel, Tunisia, Jordan, Morocco, Kuwait.
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While some journalists are killed in crossfire, many are killed purposefully. Targeted acts on media offices, beatings, and drone targeting have all been reported this year alone. Governments, gangs, and individuals have all been cited for these killings.

Freedom of expression is stated as a fundamental human right in the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights³. As violence against journalists grows, this right becomes harder to maintain.

¹(“IFJ Releases Final 2025 List of 128 Journalists and Media Workers Killed / IFJ”)

²(“2025, a Deadly Year for Journalists: This Is Where Hate and Impunity Lead”)

³(United Nations)

In addition, there is the issue of impunity. In nine out of ten cases of journalist murders since 1993, the killers have gone unpunished⁴. In this committee, it is crucial to consider ways to increase prosecution of crimes against journalists and media workers.

Murders

Since 1990, 3,173 deaths of journalists have been reported by the IFJ, with an average of 91 deaths per year⁵. This past year was particularly deadly: there were 37 deaths over the average.

While different areas of the world were affected at varying degrees, no country can ignore the role that violence and threats play on free media. Even in areas with no reported killings, journalists reporting different areas of the world and accurate media are both affected by these statistics.



Countries with more stable environments must work to support war-ridden nations and areas with instability. Collaboration is essential to ensure the safety of media workers, and the validity of information.

Imprisonment

On December 1, 2024, 361 journalists were recorded as imprisoned, inching closer to the record⁶. In 2024, Asia had 30% of the imprisoned media workers within its borders, with the Middle East and North Africa following close behind.

⁴(Nations)

⁵(“IFJ Releases Final 2025 List of 128 Journalists and Media Workers Killed / IFJ”)

⁶(“Journalist Jailings near Record High in 2024 as Crackdown on Press Freedom Grows - Committee to Protect Journalists”)

More recently, outrage broke out in January when 13 journalists and media workers were detained during the inauguration of the Delcy Rodríguez⁷. Journalists such as Yang Hengjun have life sentences in Chinese prisons⁸, and since 2018, René Capain Bassène has been held in Senegal for murder charges, and continues to be held despite reports of coerced testimonies⁹. As journalists continue to be imprisoned, this essential service becomes more dangerous and difficult.

Technology

An important question for delegates to consider is the question of technology. As artificial intelligence gains popularity and innovation seems to hasten each day, countries must make decisions on regulations around new technologies and nations must work together to create norms.

The online world is growing increasingly dangerous for journalists, especially women. AI-driven threats are reported to be on the rise, and technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV) has become commonplace online¹⁰. During committee, an important topic will be the use of technology in violence against journalists and the possibility of using artificial intelligence and other new technologies to protect media workers and journalists.

Impunity

Impunity, the exemption from punishment or the freedom from consequences of actions, has been an issue in journalism for many years. UNESCO reported that in 2022, 85% of killers went unpunished. While this was a large decrease from 2012 (95%¹¹), this number must drop dramatically.

This lack of enforcement allows journalists to be killed. Delegates must consider how to improve legal systems within their nations and in the international world. With many offenders of killing,

⁷(Cuddy)

⁸(Getz)

⁹(“René Capain Bassène”)

¹⁰(Nations)

¹¹(UNESCO)

imprisoning, torturing, and threatening journalists, it is pertinent to develop strong legal frameworks protecting media workers. Countries already have structures to prosecute individuals, but the question arises how to punish groups such as terrorist groups and nations themselves. When nations attack journalists and the press as a whole, other countries and the UN must respond accordingly.

Questions to Consider

1. Should there be an international response to violence against journalists? How should countries respond?
2. How can the death toll on journalists be lowered?
3. In what ways can nations protect media workers?
4. Should AI and new technologies continue to be integrated into society?
5. How can technology protect journalism?
6. How can the UN lower impunity for crimes against journalists?
7. How does violence affect global press freedom?

Possible Blocs

Developed countries with strong press freedom may want to work together to ensure the global safety of journalists. Many nations with democratic-frameworks, especially those who are Western-aligned might emphasize the importance of press freedom and safety.

In contrast, many countries in the Global South may wish to collaborate, emphasizing the importance of state sovereignty. Nations such as China, Russia and Myanmar may hold a strong stance against a response to the imprisonment of journalists.

Nations currently in war or nearby may want to collaborate with each other, considering the high death toll in warzones. Each of these countries also have their own interests and may prioritize state sovereignty or align with nations willing to give assistance to help develop their legal systems.

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