

A CELEBRATION OF PRESS FREEDOM

World Press Freedom Day

UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize

People outside Balai Sidang Jakarta Convention Centre, venue for the World Press Freedom Day 2017 International Conference.
Photo credit: © UNESCO

A large banner for World Press Freedom Day is being held by a group of people. The banner features the text 'WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY' in large, bold, green letters. Below this, in smaller black text, it says 'Information is your RIGHT!'. At the bottom of the banner, there are several logos, including 'Gender', 'LACRAS', and 'SWEPF'. The background shows a line of trees and a clear sky.

WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY

An overview

Every year, 3 May is a date which celebrates the fundamental principles of press freedom. It serves as an occasion to evaluate press freedom around the world, defend the media from attacks on their independence and pay tribute to journalists who have lost their lives in the exercise of their profession.

World Press Freedom Day (WPFDD) is a flagship awareness-raising event on freedom of expression, and in particular press freedom and the safety of journalists. Since 1993, UNESCO leads the global celebration with a main event in a different country every year, organized together with the host government and various partners working in the field of freedom of expression.

This main event offers a rare opportunity for hundreds of representatives of the media, civil society, law and policy makers, human rights defenders, UN agencies and academics to network and explore new ideas and issues. It serves as a platform to discuss latest developments and challenges regarding freedom of expression and press freedom. Globally, some 100 national events complement the main celebration each year.

In 2018, Ghana will host the main global celebration of WPFDD, which will be organized in Accra on 3-4 May. The global theme for the 2018 celebration is *Keeping Power in Check: Media, Justice and the Rule*

of Law. The Day in Accra will feature vibrant debate and discussion about the interplay between media, the political process and the judicial system as well as issues such as transparency of the political system, independence and media literacy of the judiciary, and the accountability of state institutions towards the public.

In 2017, the main conference of WPFDD was held in Jakarta, Indonesia under the global theme of *Critical Minds for Critical Times: Media's role in advancing peaceful, just and inclusive societies*. Organized by UNESCO, the Government of Indonesia and the Indonesian Press Council, the event gathered 1,500 participants from over 90 countries who scrutinized and debated the challenges facing media around the world such as "fake news", the increase in attacks against journalists, gender equality and violent extremism.

The Day also serves as an occasion for the Organization to award each year the UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize to a person, organization or institution that has made an outstanding contribution to the defence and promotion of press freedom. This Prize is one of the most prestigious international awards in this area.

A photograph of three individuals—two women and one man—holding a large white sign. The woman on the left has dark curly hair and is wearing a yellow top. The man in the center is wearing a red patterned turban and a dark shirt. The woman on the right has dark hair and is wearing a black top. The sign they are holding has the text 'SAFE TO SPEAK' in large, bold, brown letters, with the hashtags '#WPFD' and '#PRESSFREEDOM' below it. The background is white.

ABOUT THE DAY

UNESCO's mandate to promote the free flow of ideas

**SAFE
TO
SPEAK**
#WPFD #PRESSFREEDOM

Media campaign for World Press Freedom Day 2013. Photo credit: © UNESCO

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is the United Nations specialized agency with the mandate to promote and defend freedom of expression as well as its corollary, freedom of the press. UNESCO's Constitution adopted in 1945 calls on the organization to foster "the free exchange of ideas and knowledge" and the "free flow of ideas by word and image."

Today, this imperative remains as relevant as ever. UNESCO is committed to raising awareness among Member States, civil society and other partners on issues of freedom of expression both online and offline; to promoting the safety of journalists; and to supporting governments to act on attacks against journalists to prevent a culture of impunity from taking root. The Organization also promotes quality journalism through the strengthening of professional and ethical standards, as well as providing advisory services on media legislation including freedom of information laws.

For UNESCO, press freedom concerns not only the media. Today, it is also the right of each individual to impart information to the public. It also impacts on each individual's right to freedom of information and their ability to both access information and express themselves, whether through journalism, art or other genres without fear for their safety in doing so.

Origins of the Day

World Press Freedom Day, celebrated every 3 May, is UNESCO's flagship programme to draw attention to freedom of expression and press freedom

as fundamental human rights for all. The annual date was proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in 1993 following a Recommendation adopted at the twenty-sixth session of UNESCO's General Conference in 1991.

The origins of the Day lie in the Windhoek Declaration signed by a group of African journalists who gathered at a UNESCO seminar titled "Promoting an Independent and Pluralistic African Media" that was held in Windhoek, Namibia from 29 April to 3 May 1991.

**"We journalists are the
pillars of reform, of
freedom, of democracy
and we are the
champions of people
who have no voice."**

Christiane Amanpour

CNN Chief International Correspondent and
UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for Freedom of
Expression and Journalist Safety

Key Functions of World Press Freedom Day

■ To serve as an occasion to inform citizens of violations of press freedom - a reminder that around the world, media, including online media, are censored, suspended, blocked, and closed down, while journalists, editors and media workers are harassed, fined, attacked, jailed, and even murdered.

■ To encourage and develop initiatives in favour of press freedom, and to assess the state of press freedom worldwide.

■ To serve as a reminder to governments of the need to respect the right to freedom of expression, press freedom and access to information. This is key if societies want to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 16.10 - Public access to information and fundamental freedoms

■ To be a day of reflection among media professionals about issues of press freedom and professional ethics.

■ To be a day of support for journalists who are targets of attacks, harassment or arbitrary detention for exercising press freedom.

■ It is also a day of remembrance for those journalists who lost their lives in the exercise of their profession.

■ The celebration of World Press Freedom Day further affirms the idea of freedom of expression and freedom of information as fundamental human rights, as stated in Article 19 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which reads: "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers." It is a right elaborated in Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) as well as in the three regional human rights treaties that are Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), Article 13 of the American Convention on Human Rights, and Article 9 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.



FLAGSHIP CONFERENCES ON WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY AROUND THE WORLD





OVER THE YEARS:

World Press Freedom Day themes
(1994-2018)

Facebook Live interview with a speaker at World Press Freedom Day 2017 in Jakarta.
Photo credit: © UNESCO

In the past 25 years UNESCO has used WPFD as an opportunity to spotlight the role of the press and freedom of expression in the promotion of dialogue, development, and democracy. The themes were selected usually in response to current world developments, including changes in the media landscape such as the rise of the Internet and of user generated content via social media, or shifting political landscapes such as the so-called “Arab Spring”. The theme sets the focus for the many commemorations of the Day worldwide. The following are examples of the themes that UNESCO has chosen to highlight over the years:

- **Media in Violent Conflict and Countries in Transition** (2000, 2002, 2004)
- **Media and Good Governance** (2005)
- **Media, Development and Poverty Eradication** (2006)
- **Freedom of Information and Empowerment of People** (2008, 2011, 2016)
- **Media, Dialogue and Mutual Understanding** (2009)
- **21st Century Media: New Frontiers, New Barriers, New Voices** (2011, 2012)
- **Safety of Journalists and Impunity** (2003, 2007, 2013, 2015, 2016)
- **Gender and Media** (2015)
- **Media and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** (2014, 2016, 2017, 2018)

The issue of safety of journalists, media workers, and social media producers has been a recurring theme at World Press Freedom Day bearing in mind that more than 800 journalists have lost their lives in the past decade alone. On average, every four days a journalist is killed for bringing information to the public.

While constituting the most serious attack on press freedom, the killing of journalists is just the tip of an iceberg. Media professionals regularly face numerous other threats including intimidation, kidnappings, enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention, torture, harassment and physical assault. Furthermore, in nine out of ten cases of killings of journalists the perpetrators of the crimes go unprosecuted.

With a special focus on *Media, Justice and the Rule of Law*, World Press Freedom Day 2018 in Accra will highlight the importance of an enabling legal environment for press freedom, and give special attention to the role of an independent judiciary, fully capacitated in regard to freedom of expression issues, in ensuring legal guarantees for press freedom and the prosecution of crimes against journalists.

“If opinions are right or wrong is not the issue; the issue is whether or not we are free to express them.”

Cheng Yhizong

2005 UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize

WPFD 2017 IN NUMBERS

Over
1500
participants from
over 90 countries



Photo credit: © UNESCO

155
speakers



Photo credit: © Voice of Millennials

4
media partner
organizations
including Al
Jazeera, El Pais,
Rappler and Inter
Press Service.



Photo credit: © UNESCO



Photo credit: © UNESCO

46
young journalists from
all corners of the world
collaborated in Youth
Newsroom

33

events organized at WPFD main
event, including pre-events,
plenary and parallel sessions,
and an Academic Conference
on the Safety of Journalists



Photo credit: © UNESCO

Over
100
national
celebrations
organized
around the
world



Photo credit: © UNESCO

3
main visibility
campaigns,
including a
partnership
with the
international
organization
Cartooning for
Peace

3
cartoonists engaged to depict
the gist of the discussions
through press cartoons



Photo credit: © Abizia Akh

ROLE OF UNESCO & PARTNERS

UNESCO

Within the UN family, UNESCO has a long-standing tradition of monitoring and raising awareness about the status of freedom of expression, freedom of information, and press freedom worldwide. UNESCO's Communication and Information Sector implements the Organization's 1945 constitutional mandate to promote the "free flow of ideas by word and image." Its rights-based foundations provide context to UNESCO's approach to media development as being inseparable from the universal right to freedom of expression. They further underpin the UNESCO perspective that this bundle of rights applies to all media and across all frontiers.

As part of the "One UN" philosophy, UNESCO also has a strong record of working in tandem with other UN agencies and mechanisms. UNESCO has spearheaded and coordinates the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, which was endorsed by the UN Chief Executives Board in April 2012. The UN Plan of Action is now a global reference point in the areas of the safety of journalists and the fight against impunity for crimes committed against them. It has been referenced in resolutions of the UN General Assembly, UNESCO and the UN Human Rights Council.

UNESCO has a proven track record in fostering dialogue on media, freedom of expression and freedom of information legislative reform between policymakers, civil society organizations, media development groups, media, and other



Handing over of Indonesia's Garuda bird statue to UNESCO. Frank La Rue, Assistant Director-General for Communication and Information, UNESCO (left), Rudiantara, Minister of Communication and Information Technology of Indonesia (right). Photo credit: © Voice of Millennials

key actors worldwide as well as in supporting the development of the institutional and human capacities necessary for legislation's effective implementation. UNESCO coordinates World Press Freedom Day based on close cooperation with its partners.

PARTNERS

Over the last years, UNESCO has cooperated with a wide range of local and international partners in the organization and implementation of WPF. In 2017, the global event in Jakarta was organized in conjunction with 32 partners, representing among others, media development organizations, universities, embassies and governments, internet intermediaries, journalist unions and international media outlets.

These partnerships offer a unique opportunity to connect and meet with the leading experts of the world in the field of journalism, freedom of expression and freedom of information as well as high-level representatives from governments, intergovernmental organizations, media houses, and civil society.

As the largest celebration of press freedom in the world, WPF has a global reach and next to the main event, around 100 national festivities take place every year. The logo of partners is prominently featured in all publicity materials for WPF as well as in social media outreach efforts and on the official event website. Official partners can also use the UNESCO World Press Freedom Day logo for all related activities.

UNESCO/ Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize



Betlehem Isaak receiving from UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova the 2017 UNESCO/ Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize on behalf of her father, Dawit Isaak.
Photo credit: © Voice of Millennials.

The UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize, whose twentieth anniversary was celebrated in 2017, has been awarded to courageous journalists who have stood up for press freedom and freedom of expression, despite the risks they faced.

It is considered as one of the leading recognitions worldwide in the field of press freedom and is the only one in existence within the United Nations system. Given the international visibility of the award, it highlights the commitment and resolution of individuals towards freedom of expression and the challenges they encounter.

The Prize has facilitated the release of several laureates and has allowed their work to continue. From 2013 to 2017, four out of five laureates were imprisoned at the time of their respective award ceremony. Three of them were later released, a testament to the impact of the Prize and its potential in contributing to a free and independent media all over the globe.

In 2013, the independent international jury recommended Ethiopian journalist Reeyot Alemu as the winner. At the time, she was serving a five-year prison sentence for her reporting. Alemu was released in 2015, serving only three years of her sentence. Investigative reporter Ahmet Şik from Turkey received the Prize in 2014 and was one of the few laureates not imprisoned at the time the award was conferred. The 2015 Prize was awarded to Syrian press freedom advocate Mazen Darwish, who had endured torture, travel bans, numerous detentions

and harassment for his work. He had been arrested in 2012 and was released from jail in August 2015, three months after receiving the Prize. The following year, Azerbaijani investigative journalist Khadija Ismayilova was chosen by the jury. On 25 May 2016, only three weeks after receiving the prestigious Prize, she was released from prison. The latest laureate is Dawit Isaak, an Eritrean-Swedish journalist who has been imprisoned for more than 15 years since 2001. His current whereabouts are unknown.

In the last five years, the Prize has been able to change lives for the better and has become more prominent as the leading recognition for press freedom advocacy.

**“My father knew that
without the basic
establishment of human
rights, freedom of speech,
access to education and
healthcare, no society
could flourish, no nation
could achieve stability, and
no people could prosper.”**

Betlehem Isaak

Daughter of Dawit Isaak, Laureate of the 2017
UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize



*No prison is big enough
to contain free speech.*

MAZEN DARWISH

2015 UNESCO/GUILLERMO CANO WORLD PRESS FREEDOM PRIZE

UNESCO's campaign "20 quotes for Press Freedom"

BACKGROUND of the prize

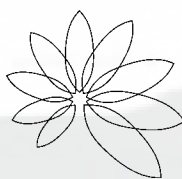
Created in 1997, the UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize honours a person, organisation or institution that has made an outstanding contribution to the defence and/or promotion of press freedom anywhere in the world, and especially when this has been achieved in the face of danger. It was established on the initiative of UNESCO's Executive Board and is formally conferred by the UNESCO Director-General, on the occasion of World Press Freedom Day, on 3 May.

Awarded annually, the \$25,000 Prize is named in honour of Guillermo Cano Isaza, a Colombian journalist who was assassinated in front of the offices of his newspaper El Espectador in Bogotá, Colombia on 17 December 1986.

The Prize is currently funded by the Guillermo Cano Isaza Foundation (Colombia), the Helsingin Sanomat Foundation (Finland) and the Namibia Media Trust (Namibia).



FUNDACION
GUILLERMO
CANO ISAZA



HELSINGIN
SANOMAT
FOUNDATION





LAUREATES

Laureates of the Prize have made significant contributions to media freedom worldwide, often in the face of danger and in times of crisis. The Prize is awarded on the recommendation of an international and independent jury, consisting of six members who represent all types of media, including digital media, and all regions. Jury members are well-known for their work in the area of news gathering, journalism, press freedom, and freedom of expression. The Prize winner is selected by the Director-General of UNESCO on the basis of the assessments and recommendations made to him/her by the jury.

The Prize has been awarded to journalists and activists, in some cases posthumously.

1997 – Gao Yu, China
 1998 – Christina Anyanwu, Nigeria
 1999 – Jesus Blancornelas, Mexico
 2000 – Nizar Nayyuf, Syria
 2001 – U Win Tin, Myanmar
 2002 – Geoffrey Nyarota, Zimbabwe
 2003 – Amira Hass, Israel
 2004 – Raúl Rivero, Cuba
 2005 – Cheng Yizhong, China
 2006 – May Chidiac, Lebanon
 2007 – Anna Politkovskaya, Russia

2008 – Lydia Cacho Ribeiro, Mexico
 2009 – Lasantha Wickrematunge, Sri Lanka
 2010 – Mónica González Mujica, Chile
 2011 – Ahmad Zeidabadi, Iran
 2012 – Eynulla Fatullayev, Azerbaijan
 2013 – Reeyot Alemu, Ethiopia
 2014 – Ahmet Sik, Turkey
 2015 – Mazen Darwish, Syria
 2016 – Khadija Ismayilova, Azerbaijan
 2017 – Dawit Isaak, Eritrea/Sweden

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#PRESSFREEDOM