



ArcMUN

Aristotelio College Model United Nations

**3rd Committee of the General Assembly: Social,
Cultural and Humanitarian Committee
(SOCHUM)**

**Media Censorship and the Treatment of Journalists as a
violation of the right to freedom of expression**

Study Guide

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1. Welcoming Letter

We are delighted to welcome you to the 17th Aristotelio College Model of United Nations. Your Board this year feels motivated to make you have good time and to consider the conference as a useful productive and unforgettable experience. We are fully aware that for some of you it's your first time participating in a simulation, but we are here to assist you and to make you feel comfortable. Thus, do not hesitate to ask for any help. We prepared for you this Study Guide, which will help you in your research. This guide will be a stepping stone for expanding your research as we urge you to thoroughly research on the topic, study your country's policy, start brainstorming on possible solutions and proposals, as well as passionately raise your voice.

This year, our topic focuses on combating media censorship and protecting journalists. This is a very important issue because the right to freedom of the press and expression are two of the most basic elements of democracy. Nowadays, we observe more and more violations of these fundamental rights. So it's time to bring an end to these phenomena, and to make sure that all journalists will have the possibility to publish their views freely, without endangering their wellbeing.

We wish you all good luck with your preparation!

The Board of the Social, Cultural and Humanitarian Committee

Vasiliki Theodosiou
Sotirios Eleftheriou

2. Introduction to the committee

The 3rd Committee of the United Nations General Assembly, known as the Social, Cultural & Humanitarian Committee¹, is one of the six main committees of the United Nations General Assembly². It is the primary forum for the allocation and consideration of questions on social, humanitarian and cultural issues, especially when related to fundamental freedoms and human rights³.

Along with the other five main Committees of the United Nations General Assembly, it was established in 1947. It follows the rules of the United Nations General Assembly. Its Resolutions are, in general, a set of recommendations for the Member States to ratify, and in accordance of which they will adjust. Participating in the works of the 3rd Committee of the

¹ Un.org. (2019). *UN General Assembly - Third Committee - Social, Humanitarian & Cultural*. [online] Available at: <http://www.un.org/en/ga/third/index.shtml> [Accessed 9 Jan. 2019].

² Un.org. (2019). *General Assembly of the United Nations*. [online] Available at: <http://www.un.org/en/ga/> [Accessed 9 Jan. 2019].

³Eda.admin.ch. (2017). *The GA Handbook; A practical guide to the United Nations General Assembly*. [online] Available at: https://www.eda.admin.ch/dam/mission-new-york/en/documents/UN_GA_Final.pdf [Accessed 9 Jan. 2019].

United Nations General Assembly are all 193 sovereign states that hold the United Nations membership⁴.

3. Introduction to the topic

Nowadays, media is playing an outstanding role in creating and shaping of public opinion and strengthening of society.⁵ The right to freedom of expression, particularly in all available forms of communication media, is considered a fundamental human right of great significance. It is an crucial element of a democratic society and human dignity.

Taking into consideration that we live in the age of increased connectivity and rapid flow of information through the internet, the freedom to express your opinion and to access information has become more apparent than ever. While this right is universally recognized and guaranteed by almost all the United Nations' member states, national governments have the right to exercise some form of limitations- in many case severe- on freedom of expression in the media. Often these limitations have relentless consequences on the professionals that are involved in the media, such as journalists, activists and bloggers, who are subjected to unjustified persecution and suppression based on the vaguest interpretation of the law and the lack of an independent judiciary system.

The media censorship and the violation of rights of journalists are provoked not only by the ongoing rise of populism in the West due to growing socio-economic inequality and technological evolution but also by the increasing lack of trust of unbiased information which undermine the independence and integrity of the media. In the same time, as a result, increased restrictions on human rights are enabled in countries where freedom of expression in media have been traditionally fragile. Furthermore, increased authoritarianism poses a threat to the preservation of freedom of expression as individual leaders are looking to secure their authority through restraining opposition voices.

Considering the aforementioned issues, it is an undeniable fact that media censorship and the unjust treatment of journalists remain a topic of vast importance, sparking continuous debate.

⁴ Un.org. (2019). *Member States | United Nations*. [online] Available at: <http://www.un.org/en/member-states/> [Accessed 9 Jan. 2019].

⁵ Globalethicsnetwork.org. (2015). *Role of media in our society*. [online] Available at: <https://www.globalethicsnetwork.org/profiles/blogs/role-of-media-in-our-society> [Accessed 17 Jan. 2019].

4. Definition of Key Terms

4.1 Media

Media is the main means of communication regarded collectively.⁶ Media includes every broadcasting and narrowcasting medium such as newspaper, magazines, television, radio and internet.⁷

4.2 Censorship

Censorship refers to the suppression of speech, public communication or other information, which may be considered objectionable, harmful, sensitive, politically incorrect or inconvenient as determined by governments, media outlets, authorities or other groups or institutions. There are different types or rationale for censorships namely:

- Military,
- Religious,
- Political,
- Moral and
- Corporate.

4.3 Media Censorship

Media Censorship is the suppression or prohibition of any parts of books, films, news, etc. that are considered obscene, politically unacceptable, or a threat to security.⁸ In other words, it is the suppression of free speech, open public discourse, or any other element of information that is considered objectionable and harmful.

4.4 Journalist

Journalist is the person who collects, writes and distributes news or information for newspapers, magazines, or news websites or prepares news to be broadcast to the public.⁹

4.5. Freedom of the press

⁶Oxford Dictionaries | English. (2019). *media* | *Definition of media in English by Oxford Dictionaries*. [online] Available at: <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/media> [Accessed 17 Jan. 2019].

⁷ BusinessDictionary.com. (2019). [online] Available at: <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/media.html> [Accessed 17 Jan. 2019].

⁸ Oxford Dictionaries | English. (2019). *censorship* | *Definition of censorship in English by Oxford Dictionaries*. [online] Available at: <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/censorship> [Accessed 17 Jan. 2019].

⁹ Oxford Dictionaries | English. (2019). *journalist* | *Definition of journalist in English by Oxford Dictionaries*. [online] Available at: <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/journalist> [Accessed 17 Jan. 2019].

Freedom of the press or freedom of the media is the principle that communication and expression through various media, including printed and electronic media, especially published materials, should be considered a right to be exercised freely. Such freedom implies the absence of interference from an overreaching state; its preservation may be sought through constitutional or other legal protections.

5 .History of the Topic

The concept that the press should be free emerged only after the press itself had become commonplace. The invention of mechanized printing led to the proliferation of books, newspapers, and other publications that spread ideas faster and farther than ever before. Despite this fact, the potential for these ideas to challenge official power structures, made some political and religious authorities actively suppress publications that they considered subversive.

The problem of censorship has proven to be abiding within the ages. If we move back in time the rulers of the Soviet Union were responsible for the longest lasting and most extensive censorship era of the 20th Century. The USSR imposed its strict censorship system on all occupied countries and satellite-states, many of whom had been subject to the censorship of imperial Russia¹⁰. In 1917, the Soviet government signed the Decree on Press¹¹, an order usually having the force of law, which prohibited publishing any articles criticizing the Bolsheviks' authority. In 1946, the BBC started broadcasting radio services for Soviet citizens. Voice of America, Radio Liberty, and Deutsche Welle all followed suit a couple of years later¹². The USSR, though, possessing the most powerful "anti-radio" system in the world, started blocking these radio frequencies used by foreign stations.

Another historical example of extreme forms of media censorship, takes place in Nazi Germany. Firstly, the Nazi's, in order to gain the support of the German citizens and proliferate their ideas, acquired the control of all media, so as to erase political opposition.¹³ During their governance, a *Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda*¹⁴ was established and was responsible for all media. As a result, the freedom of press was extensively suppressed. The articles or broadcasts or movies that were not in accordance with

¹⁰ Beaconforfreedom.org. (2019). *The Long History of Censorship*. [online] Available at: http://www.beaconforfreedom.org/liste.html?tid=415&art_id=475 [Accessed 17 Jan. 2019].

¹¹ Presidential Library. (n.d.). *Decree on Press was adopted*. [online] Available at: <https://www.prilib.ru/en/history/619704> [Accessed 17 Jan. 2019].

¹² Yegorov, O. (2019). *Soviet censorship: How did the USSR control the public?*. [online] Rbth.com. Available at: https://www.rbth.com/arts/history/2017/06/27/soviet-censorship-how-did-the-ussr-control-the-public_790892 [Accessed 17 Jan. 2019].

¹³ Encyclopedia.ushmm.org. (n.d.). *Holocaust Encyclopedia | United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*. [online] Available at: <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/en> [Accessed 17 Jan. 2019].

¹⁴ Encyclopedia.ushmm.org. (n.d.). *Ministry of Propaganda and Public Enlightenment*. [online] Available at: <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/ministry-of-propaganda-and-public-enlightenment> [Accessed 17 Jan. 2019].

the Nazi ideology were not published or broadcasted, while the journalists who did not share the same ideas with the regime were imprisoned.¹⁵

The existence of the phenomenon led the United Nations to take action to put an end to it. After the founding of the United Nations, the establishment of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on 10 December 1948¹⁶ contributed in doing so. The declaration formally recognized the importance of protecting the freedom of expression and made clear the fact that media censorship cannot be applied without limits and without respecting this right. Unfortunately, the declaration would not be enough to extinguish the phenomenon. There were still considerable attacks on freedom of expression spotted mostly in non-democratic governments. An example would be the military government of Greece (junta) between 1967 and 1974¹⁷.

The rise of social media brought the question of media censorship once more into discussion with people supporting the view that they contribute in making information accessible to everyone. Despite this new prospect, recently some major social media platforms like Facebook and YouTube took down material posted by conspiracy theorist Alex Jones. The contrast between the freedom of expression that social media seem to promote and the obligation of media companies with to curate information on their platforms raises the issue of whether controlling the flow of information online is feasible and acceptable¹⁸.

5.1 Actions taken so far to address the issue

There are several steps that have been taken by the international community in order to tackle the issue, while a number of considerable organizations have played a considerably important role in ameliorating the situation.

*Reporters Without Borders*¹⁹ (in French "Reporters sans Frontières), is an international organization founded in France in 1985 in order to promote press freedom worldwide and since then it has received many awards for its accomplishments. RSF defends imprisoned or persecuted journalists and media personnel, exposes mistreatment and torture of journalists, provides financial aid for struggling media personnel or companies and promotes journalists' safety, particularly in war zones. In the same time, the organization compiles research regarding violations of press freedom²⁰. Via publicity campaigns and protest letters, RSF

¹⁵ Google Books. (n.d.). *Encyclopedia of Censorship*. [online] Available at: https://books.google.gr/books?id=bunHURgi7FcC&pg=PA194&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false [Accessed 17 Jan. 2019].

¹⁶ Un.org. (2019). [online] Available at: http://www.un.org/en/udhrbook/pdf/udhr_booklet_en_web.pdf [Accessed 17 Jan. 2019].

¹⁷ Greeknewsagenda.gr. (2017). *Military Dictatorship (1967-1974) in retrospect: New historical approaches*. [online] Available at: <http://www.greeknewsagenda.gr/index.php/topics/culture-society/6386-two-conferences-on-the-colonels%E2%80%99dictatorship-in-greece> [Accessed 17 Jan. 2019].

¹⁸ The American Interest. (2018). *Social Media and Censorship - The American Interest*. [online] Available at: <https://www.the-american-interest.com/2018/08/08/social-media-and-censorship/> [Accessed 17 Jan. 2019].

¹⁹ Bienvenue sur le site de Reporter sans frontières | RSF. (2019). *RSF*. [online] Available at: <https://rsf.org/en> [Accessed 17 Jan. 2019].

²⁰ RSF. (2019). *Reports and statistics | Reporters without borders*. [online] Available at: <https://rsf.org/en/actions/reports-and-statistics> [Accessed 17 Jan. 2019].

publishes several yearly reports that include rankings of countries around the world by their degree of press freedom.

In 1981, an international nonprofit organization, named Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ)²¹. Its aims include the protection of the freedom of press and the safeguarding of journalists' human rights and the conduction of researches, which provide "a global snapshot of obstructions to a free press worldwide"²².

Moreover, the issue has been often discussed within the UN and by other international organizations as well. Amnesty International²³ has played a key role in this case. Not only has it often tried to stop journalist imprisonments in countries like Saudi Arabia, Iran, China, and Qatar but it has also forwarded such cases to the UN. In 2013, the UN General Assembly adopted the resolution on Safety of Journalists²⁴ and the Issue of Impunity on its 68th session. The resolution also proclaimed the 2nd of November as the International Day to end Impunity. Although various resolutions have been passed addressing censorship in some way, the implementation still remains a massive problem.



²¹ Cpj.org. (2019). *Committee to Protect Journalists – Defending Journalists Worldwide..* [online] Available at: <https://cpj.org/> [Accessed 17 Jan. 2019].

²² Cpj.org. (2019). *Our Research - About CPJ.* [online] Available at: <https://cpj.org/about/research.php> [Accessed 17 Jan. 2019].

²³ Amnesty.org.uk. (2019). *Tag: Journalists | Amnesty International UK.* [online] Available at: <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/tags/journalists> [Accessed 17 Jan. 2019].

²⁴ Ohchr.org. (2019). [online] Available at: https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Journalists/A_HRC_39_23_EN.docx [Accessed 17 Jan. 2019].

6. Legal Framework

6.1 The United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)

The United Nations' 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights²⁵ is a milestone document in the history of human rights. In article 19 the Declaration clearly states that : "*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 regardless of frontiers*".

6.2 European Convention on Human Rights (1950)

The Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights provides the right to freedom of expression and information, subject to certain restrictions that are "in accordance with law" and "necessary in a democratic society".²⁶ This right includes the freedom to hold opinions, and to receive and impart information and ideas.

Almost all European States have overriding constitutional protection for freedom of expression. The wording of these constitutional guarantees varies and is often different from that of Article 10 of the European Convention. At the same time, State authorities, including courts, are under an obligation to interpret and apply constitutional protections. This is an important way in which concordance between national and international legal systems is promoted.

6.3 American Convention on Human Rights (1969)

The American Convention on Human Rights²⁷, signed and ratified by members of the Organization of American States (OAS)²⁸ on its 13th Article puts dynamic basis on the freedom of the Press and restricts the possibility of journalist's threatening. It states that the freedom of thought and expression is a fundamental human right and its exercise shall not be subject to censorship, but to afterward imposition of liability in order for the respect of rights of others or the protection of national security to be ensured.

²⁵ Un.org. (n.d.). *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. [online] Available at: <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/> [Accessed 18 Jan. 2019].

²⁶ Ohchr.org. (2019). [online] Available at: https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Journalists/A_HRC_39_23_EN.docx [Accessed 17 Jan. 2019].

²⁷ Cidh.oas.org. (n.d.). *Basic Documents - American Convention*. [online] Available at: <https://www.cidh.oas.org/basicos/english/basic3.american%20convention.htm> [Accessed 18 Jan. 2019].

²⁸ Oas.org. (2019). *OAS - Organization of American States: Democracy for peace, security, and development*. [online] Available at: <http://www.oas.org/en/> [Accessed 18 Jan. 2019].

6.4 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) (1966)

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)²⁹, one of the most important multilateral treaties adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on human rights, acknowledges the right to the freedom of the Press and the need to protect the journalists. The treaty, which has 117 parties have taken the international responsibility to safeguard the journalists and their task.

7. Discussion of the Topic

7.1 Cases of limitation of freedom of the press

One main argument that is expected to surface in the debate of the protection of freedom of the press is the argument on a nation's sovereignty. Most of the countries where heavy censorship exists rely on the argument of the protection of sovereignty of the state and the protection of their political agendas. Media have been blamed regularly for having a political bias³⁰, but the link between politics and censorship is harder to spot. Any information that may threaten to adversely affect sovereignty is censored. For example, the government of China, although the country's constitution guarantees to its citizens the right to freedom of expression, exercises extreme control in all forms of media, while there are a lot of cases of journalists who are imprisoned in harsh conditions³¹. The news that are broadcasted reflect the ideology of the Communist Party, while the media censorship is even stricter in regions where separatist elements exist, like Tibet.

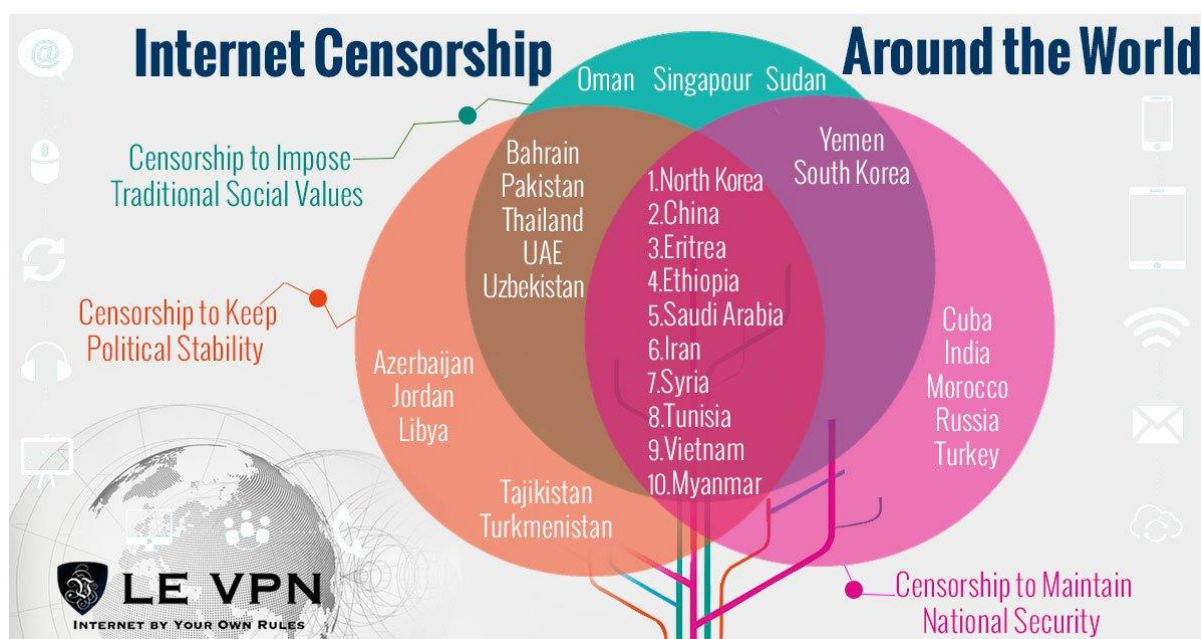
At the same time, restraining the right of freedom of the press when national security is concerned, is a frequent phenomenon. In some states the freedom of the press is constitutionally guaranteed, unless it involves releasing information that might compromise national security. In most countries this is a principle that it is constitutionally established. Greece is one of these countries, as article 14 of the Greek constitution declares the freedom of the media as long as it does not release information about the structure, the armory of the army or the protection of the country or having as a purpose the violent change of the constitution itself.³² Further limitation of the freedom of press is related to the argument of the justification of media censorship in case of violation of religious norms. This practice is common particularly in countries in the Middle East, including Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait and Qatar.

²⁹ Ohchr.org. (n.d.). *OHCHR / International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*. [online] Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/ccpr.aspx> [Accessed 18 Jan. 2019].

³⁰ The Balance Careers. (2018). *Tips for Avoiding Media Bias When Covering Political News Stories*. [online] Available at: <https://www.thebalancecareers.com/how-to-avoid-media-bias-in-political-news-stories-2315159> [Accessed 18 Jan. 2019].

³¹ Council on Foreign Relations. (2018). *Media Censorship in China*. [online] Available at: <https://www.cfr.org/background/under/media-censorship-china> [Accessed 18 Jan. 2019].

³² Hellenicparliament.gr. (n.d.). *Greek Constitution*. [online] Available at: <https://www.hellenicparliament.gr/UserFiles/f3c70a23-7696-49db-9148-f24dce6a27c8/001-156%20aggliko.pdf> [Accessed 18 Jan. 2019].



7.2 Internet and Social Media censorship

Nowadays internet has become an inextricable element of our lives, while the integration of social media in daily life, rendered the public access to instant news extremely easy along with the danger of the spreading of fake news both in the online and in the actual world. With roughly 36% of the world's population owning a social media account, political regimes and cultures that do not uphold the principle of freedom of speech are becoming increasingly threatened by the power of social media to influence, giving rise to endless arrests, detentions, internet shutdowns and social media taxes³³.

Yet, there are countries where internet access is not granted to its citizens. A notorious example consists North Korea, where internet access is restricted. Global Internet may be available for students and faculty members, but the access is limited and policed, while for visitors internet access is possible through a 3G network. For citizens online access is only available through Kwangmyong, a free public intranet platform with a limited number of sites and services.³⁴ Facebook, Youtube and Twitter are blocked.

In 2011, Egyptian activists began organizing a demonstration against the longstanding Mubarak regime, using Facebook. Within days, thousands of protesters who were informed about the demonstration through the social media, gathered in Cairo. Then, the Egyptian

³³ Amnesty.org.uk. (n.d.). *The rise of social media censorship*. [online] Available at:

<https://www.amnesty.org.uk/blogs/ether/rise-social-media-censorship> [Accessed 19 Jan. 2019].

³⁴ Le VPN. (n.d.). *Internet Censorship in North Korea | Press Freedom | Le VPN*. [online] Available at: <https://www.le-vpn.com/internet-censorship-north-korea/> [Accessed 19 Jan. 2019].

Government decided to cut off the country's internet access. As a result, the number of protests multiplied.³⁵

For individuals to fully enjoy freedom of expression and information online, the Internet needs to be stable and accessible to everyone. Technical failures and intentional disruptions can impact access to information regardless of frontiers. The Council of Europe has developed a framework of international cooperation to prevent and respond to eventual disruptions of the Internet.

Some of the key issues the Council of Europe is addressing, are the protection and promotion of freedom of expression as well as free access to information online. Furthermore, it wants to develop standards based on human rights so as to protect the flawless cross-border exchange of Internet content. Moreover, it aims at balancing freedom of expression and safeguarding the dignity of the people involved. It goes without saying that it, also, aims at rendering the internet accessible to everyone while developing guidelines to assist governments to promote freedom access to pluralistic, quality-based and diverse sources of information.

The long-term aim of this framework is to decrease illiteracy of all social and age groups and establish transparency and accountability in democracy by using the Internet to facilitate access to official documents as part of the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Access to Official Documents.

7.3 Safety of journalists

Journalists are frequently imprisoned, and in some cases executed, across the world and their freedom to write is restricted. This undermines 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. Over the past ten years, more than 800 journalists have lost their lives³⁶.

Most journalists however are not killed, but imprisoned without even a trial. According to Reporters Sans Frontieres (RSF), more than half of these journalists are arrested for “antistate crimes”, a common practice in countries such as China or Saudi Arabia, where the government still holds a tight control over the press and does not allow criticism of their rulers. In Turkey, there have been numerous cases where high-profile journalists have been imprisoned. Mr. Can Dunder, a top Turkish journalist, was sentenced to 6 years in prison for

³⁵ Routley, N. (2017). *Map: Internet Censorship Around the World*. [online] Visual Capitalist. Available at: <https://www.visualcapitalist.com/internet-censorship-map/> [Accessed 19 Jan. 2019].

³⁶ Unesco.org. (2018). *Safety of Journalists | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization*. [online] Available at: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/freedom-of-expression/safety-of-journalists/> [Accessed 20 Jan. 2019].

publishing details of covert Turkish shipments to Syrian insurgents³⁷. Following the recent Coup attempt in Turkey in July 2016, the censorship measures have significantly increased. Numerous journalists have also been arrested³⁸.

In some cases, governments intimidate journalists by numerous methods such as online and offline harassment, kidnappings, torture or destruction of material³⁹. All these threats force journalists to either face violence and arbitrary detention, or even death, or to flee their country, lowering the chances of offering criticism or providing information on conflicts or certain controversial issues.

7.4 Fake news

Fake news, formerly known as "yellow journalism" , is defined as "false, often sensational, information disseminated under the guise of news reporting"⁴⁰. By making itself appear like legitimate professional journalism, fake news undermines the trust relationship between journalists and the public. It could cause individuals and society lose faith in journalism and ignore it. 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, as the consequence of people losing trust in journalism leads to the increase of their power to define the truth. Fake news have also been used as a smear against articles, journalists, and media companies of opposing beliefs.

The role of social media, which allows for information to spread extremely quickly, is vital to understanding how the phenomenon of fake news has increased. A lot of pressure has been placed on Facebook and Twitter to tackle the fake news posted on their sites⁴¹. However, defining exactly what fake news is, has proved to be difficult and controversial and current evidence shows that fact checking and warning flagging so far has had little impact on the scale of fake news published on social media.

As democracy relies on the thoughts and opinions of voters to choose its leaders, true information and its accuracy are of vital importance. There has been 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.

³⁷ (www.dw.com), D. (2018). *Turkey issues arrest warrant for exiled journalist Can Dunder over 2013 protests | DW | 05.12.2018*. [online] DW.COM. Available at: <https://www.dw.com/en/turkey-issues-arrest-warrant-for-exiled-journalist-can-dunder-over-2013-protests/a-46606200> [Accessed 20 Jan. 2019].

³⁸ Shaheen, K. (2017). *Turkey sentences journalists to life in jail over coup attempt*. [online] the Guardian. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/feb/16/turkey-sentences-six-journalists-life-imprisonment-failed-coup> [Accessed 20 Jan. 2019].

³⁹ Unesco.org. (n.d.). *THE SAFETY OF JOURNALISTS AND THE DANGER OF IMPUNITY*. [online] Available at: http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/pdf/IPDC/ipdc_council_30_4_en_02.pdf [Accessed 20 Jan. 2019].

⁴⁰ Collinsdictionary.com. (n.d.). *Fake news definition and meaning | Collins English Dictionary*. [online] Available at: <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/fake-news> [Accessed 20 Jan. 2019].

⁴¹ Levin, S. (n.d.). *Facebook promised to tackle fake news. But the evidence shows it's not working*. [online] the Guardian. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2017/may/16/facebook-fake-news-tools-not-working> [Accessed 20 Jan. 2019].

8. Conclusion

Free, independent and diverse media are essential for democracy. Blogs, social networks, content aggregators and search engines enable individuals to access information and communicate with thousands of people in completely new ways. Together with traditional media, these new media actors are today essential sources of information.

Media censorship is an issue that still sparks controversy. It goes without saying that pluralistic sources and the right to the freedom of expression should be protected. Furthermore, It is important, not only to find ways to ensure the existence of pluralism in the media, but also to protect the freedom of the press.

The alarming number of journalists killed throughout the world not only worries on a human right level, as it threatens both freedom of expression and access to information, but it also prevents the international community from attaining the Sustainable Development Goals, especially No. 16 (“Promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels”).

9. Questions to be addressed

- How can we ensure that the public has access to a pluralistic number of sources to get informed?
- Which are the deeper causes of the rise of media censorships in our days and the consequences of such phenomena in the evolution of States?
- How could we prevent deliberate distortion of information in an age of fake news?
- Is the already existing legal framework adequate? If not, should Member States discuss legal reforms concerning the persecution and conviction of participants in the media and the safety of social media personalities?
- Should government ownership of media be discouraged?
- Which is role of international bodies in ensuring national constitutional articles guaranteeing freedom of expression in media be respected in real life situations?
- Should rhetoric and publications inciting racial hatred and xenophobia be protected as a form of free speech by the state?

- Which should be the role of international or transnational media in breaking censorship barriers in restrictive states?
- How much influence should the international community have on domestic laws concerning media censorship?
- What role should NGOs play in facilitating Press Freedom throughout the world?
- Which measures must be taken in order to ensure the elimination of unjust incarnation of journalists and that crimes committed against journalists are punished?
- What can member states do at a national level to support journalistic integrity and safety?

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