



## World Summit on the Information Society Forum 2022

### Digital Challenges on Press Freedom, Media Viability and Safety of Journalists

3 June 2022 - 9:00-10:15 AM

Room C2, ITU Tower Building - Remote participation is envisaged

Link for registration:

<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2022/Agenda/Session/429>

#### Background:

The proliferation of digital technologies in the media sector has brought innovation and renewal to the journalistic profession. Data journalism, verification tools, and an unprecedented ease to interact with sources are but a few examples. However, digital technologies have also transformed existing challenges to freedom of expression and media development – and created new ones.

Drawing on original analysis of more than 160 data sources, the UNESCO flagship report [\*Journalism Is a Public Good: World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development\*](#) noted the following:

- Dozens of laws have been adopted or amended since 2016 that contain overly vague language or disproportionate punishments that threaten online freedom of expression. Internet shutdowns cut off access to information in many fragile environments around the world.
- News audiences have shifted from traditional media to social media. Google and Meta now receive approximately half of all global digital advertising spending, while global newspaper advertising revenue dropped by half in the last five years.
- Journalists face evolving threats in the digital space, including sophisticated surveillance methods and waves of online violence, which disproportionately targets women journalists.

The Action Line C9 Media session will build on the findings of UNESCO's World Trends Report, specifically focusing on how digital challenges have impacted press freedom, media viability, and the safety of journalists. Bringing together perspectives of journalists and experts from across media, the UN, and the technical community, the session will discuss some of the key challenges and how to address them in order to safeguard journalism as a public good.

#### Format:

Bringing together perspectives from a variety of sectors, this one hour and 15 minutes session will discuss on how to address digital challenges and leverage potential benefits of digital tools to safeguard journalism as a public good. Participants are invited to prepare 5-minute presentations based on the following thematic questions, which will be followed by a moderated discussion.

Participants will be invited to discuss issues related to:

- Media viability – *What kinds of public support or innovation measures can be most effective for tackling media viability in the face of dominant internet companies?*
- Digital challenges to the media – *How can the media sector support global efforts for universal access to Internet and public access to information at large?*
- Safety of journalists – *What are the most pressing digital safety threats that journalists face today and how can we address them?*
- Press freedom – *What kind of regulatory approaches are needed to support journalism/information as a public good in an era of internet censorship?*

**Participants:**

**Opening:** *Presentation of key findings of the World Trends Report* – Rachel Pollack, Associate Programme Specialist, Freedom of Expression and Safety of Journalists, UNESCO

- Ms. Peggy Hicks, director of the Thematic Engagement, Special Procedures and Right to Development Division of the UN Human Rights Office (OHCHR)
- Mr. Callum Voge, European Government Affairs and Advocacy Manager, Internet Society (ISOC) (virtual)
- Mr. Jamil Chade, correspondent in Geneva
- Ms. Asun Gomez Bueno, Director of International Relations, RTVE (Radio televisión Española)

**Moderator: Ms. Fuensanta Amorós Cascales, Junior Programme Officer, UNESCO Office in Geneva**

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