



ALTITUDE

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Altitude UNA-NCA Model United Nations

Background Guide

United Nations Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



Table of Contents

Letter from the Under-Secretary-General.....	1
The Committee.....	2
Committee Overview: UNESCO	2
At a Glance: The Conference.....	4
The Flow of Debate	4
Key Terms and Concepts	4
Rules of Debate	6
Resolution Formation Process	8
Flow and Structure of a Draft Resolution	9
The Topic: Fostering Freedom of Speech and Journalistic Liberty in the Face of Disinformation.....	10
Topic Overview	10
Topic in Depth	12
First Law Supporting Freedom of Press and Freedom of Information -1766	12
Mechanized Printing: 15th century	12
The History of Disinformation	13
The Global Disinformation Order - 2019	13
Restrictions on Freedom of Speech in China	13
Press Laws in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea;	14
Legislation Against Freedom of Speech in Eritrea	14
Russia’s Laws on Freedom of Speech and Their Limits	15
Pertinent Features	15
Disinformation Amidst the Covid-19 Pandemic	15
Impunity for Attacks on Journalists	16
Prior and Post Censorship	17
Global Efforts	17

UNESCO General Conference: 1992.....	17
The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights: 1976.....	18
Multi-Donor Programme: 2015-2021.....	18
Learning Outcomes	19
Recommendations	19
Key Questions	19
Annexes	21
Relevant Institutions	20
Relevant Legal Treaties, Frameworks, and Conventions	20
Relevant Conferences	20
Further References	21
References	21

Letter from the Under-Secretary-General

Hello Delegates, and Welcome to Altitude MUN 2022!

I am so excited to welcome you to this year's conference (in person!) after what have been two very tumultuous years. My name is Kavya Shah, and I am a sophomore at Georgetown University serving as your Under-Secretary for High School Committees. I began my Model United Nations journey in 8th grade, and over the years, MUN has taught me many valuable lessons about cooperation, diplomacy, and persistence.

As you embark on your MUN experience at Altitude, I hope you keep these traits in mind. While each of you will have moments in which you are challenged – whether it be by new experiences, new knowledge, or your fellow delegates – remember that MUN is about learning how to come together despite our differences. In doing so, two things are key: 1) *perspective* – making a good faith effort to understand why and how an individual or nation is pursuing a particular stance, and 2) *debating ideas, not individuals*. With this understanding, you will be able to work towards innovative *and* realistic solutions to some of our world's most pressing issues.

I'd also like to emphasize that Altitude, rather than a competition between delegates, is designed to be first and foremost a learning experience where delegates of all levels can participate and seek support. We expect delegates to keep an open mind and be willing to learn from each other throughout the conference.

Our conference centers around the UN Secretary General's [Our Common Agenda](#) report which outlines 12 commitments designed to accelerate global collaboration and progress towards the SDGs. Furthermore, we draw inspiration from the [UN Secretary-General's Top 10 Priorities for 2021](#). As you look towards resolutions in your respective committees, we advise that you reference these reports and draw from their conclusions. Consequently, your preparation for the conference should go beyond the given background guide and delve into the specifics of your nation's stance and past collaborative efforts.

We look forward to seeing each of you at Altitude MUN 2022 in New York City! Please do not hesitate to reach out in the meantime with any questions or concerns.

All the best,

Kavya Shah
Under-Secretary-General of High School Committees

The Committee

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Committee Overview

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is a body of the United Nations (UN) that fosters international peace through its promotion within education, science, and culture to secure the Sustainable Development Goals of the Agenda 2030. UNESCO is a Specialized Agency which, through its international conferences, provides detailed research to the main organs of the United Nations via the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).



During World War II, the Conference of Allied Ministers of Education (CAME) held a meeting to rebuild the European educational system in the post-war period. The initiative gained international recognition rapidly, and other governments including the United States were eager to join. Consequently, November 1 to November 16, 1945 marked the gathering of 44 countries that were passionate about the creation of an organization that promotes peace through culture and education. Shortly after, UNESCO's constitution came into binding force.

The ongoing goal of UNESCO, whose headquarters are in Paris, France, is to avert the rise of another world war by continuously fighting for peace and diplomacy while abiding by educational, scientific, and cultural measures. UNESCO membership includes all United Nations Member States, and non-Member States who have received the consent of two thirds of the General Conference.

UNESCO is composed of three main governing bodies: The General Conference, the Executive Board, and the Secretariat. The General Conference includes all UNESCO member states and holds meetings twice a year. A new Director General is nominated to head the General Conference every four years. The meetings of the General Conference are primarily held to elect new members of the Executive Board, discuss resolutions set forward by the Executive Board, hold international conferences, and train UN member states on educational, scientific, and cultural topics. The General Conference holds the authority to create specialized committees and sub-organizations such as the Intergovernmental Committee for Intangible Cultural Heritage, the Committee for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, and the Intergovernmental Committee for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. These sub-organs are tasked with delivering further research to the General Conference.

The Executive Board includes 58 members of the UNESCO Member States, serves for four

consecutive years, and meets twice a year for about three weeks. It submits a biennial agenda to the General Conference, nominates the Director General, supervises the budgeting of the organization, and provides the General Conference with policy recommendations.

The Secretariat currently encompasses more than 1,000 individuals working to monitor the implementation of UNESCO decisions and actions. The Secretariat has nearly 50 Field Offices and several UNESCO institutes that assist member states in the implementation of policies. The current Director General of UNESCO is Audrey Azoulay of France, who holds the responsibility of supervising the Secretariat. Azoulay was elected on November 10, 2017 by the 39th General Conference in UNESCO's headquarters in Paris. Azoulay previously headed the French Ministry of Culture and Communication from February 2016 to May 2017.



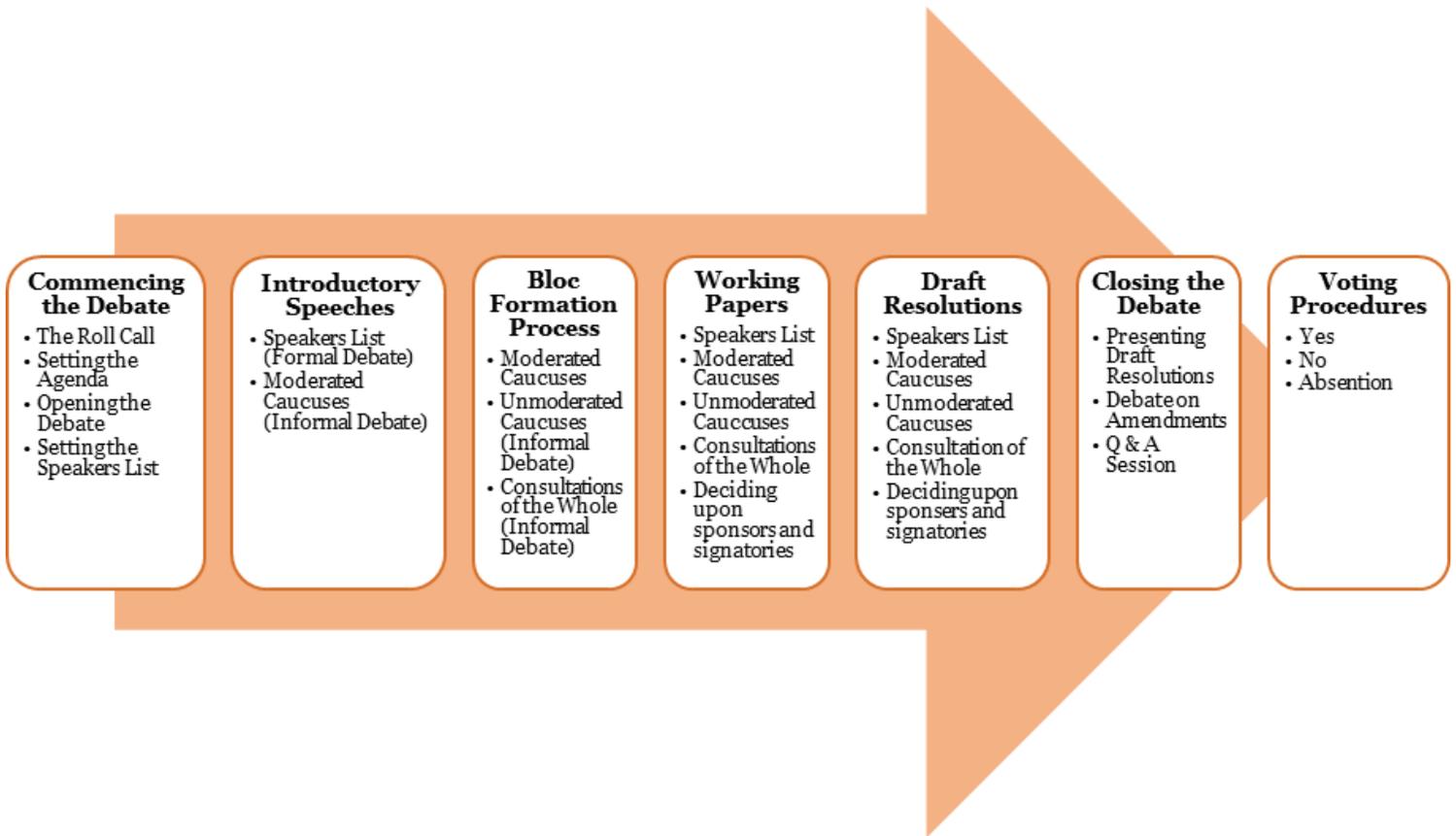
UNESCO's 2020/2021 approved budget was set at 1.3 Billion US Dollars. The budget was 33 percent fundraised, 39 percent member states' contributions, 23 percent from voluntary funds, and 5 percent from other sources. These funds are divided as follows: 11 percent towards administration; 4 percent to General Policy and

Direction; 13 percent to the UNESCO's programme services; 4 percent on enhancing communication, freedom of expression, and journalistic support; 16 percent on the preservation of heritage and history; 18 percent on the environment and the ocean; and 33 percent towards education and its advancement to realize the SDG goals.

UNESCO's mandate, defined in Article 1, paragraph 3 of the UN Charter and Article 1 of UNESCO's Constitution, attempts to establish cooperation between member states on the basis of education, science, and culture while enhancing economic solidity, political stability and safety, and the overall standard of living of all individuals. UNESCO works with multiple bodies of the United Nations, intergovernmental organizations, and non-governmental organizations to pursue peace through the sharing of information, culture, and knowledge.

At a Glance: The Conference

The Flow of Debate



Key Terms and Concepts

- **Absolute Majority:** Also known as a two-thirds majority, an absolute majority is $\frac{2}{3}$ of the quorum (or 66.7% of the quorum). Assuming a committee quorum is 60, the absolute majority would be two-thirds of 60, which is 40.
- **Decorum:** The constant order and respect expected from all members of the committee throughout the Conference.
- **Draft Resolution:** Once delegates have compiled their ideas through the working paper, delegates must transform them into an official resolution format. This formal document is known as a Draft Resolution. The reason behind it incorporating the word 'draft' is because the resolution is yet to

be adopted by the Committee. Moreover, a Committee may have more than one Draft Resolution but it can only have one official resolution at the end.

- **Friendly Amendment:** Amendments are considered **friendly** if all of the sponsors of the original Draft Resolution agree to it.
- **Interruptive Points:** Interruptive points are those that can be put forth at any time during the debate process. However, at Altitude MUN, the interruptive points cannot be used to interrupt a delegate giving a speech.
- **Motion:** Delegates will use motions to move from one part of the debate to another. As such, motions will be the outlet used to decide upon the next course of action throughout the conference.
- **Non-Interruptive Points:** Unlike interruptive points, non-interruptive points can only be used when a Chairperson explicitly asks if there are any points or motions on the floor.
- **Point:** Contrary to motions, which delegates put forth to decide upon the next course of the debate, points are used for the sole purpose of facilitating the conference's procedure.
- **Present:** Delegates can vote on a resolution with 'yes', 'no', or 'abstention'.
- **Present and Voting:** Delegates have to vote on a resolution with either a 'yes' or 'no'.
- **Roll Call:** The first part of the Conference is known as the roll call. During the roll call, the name of each participating nation will be called aloud in alphabetical order by the Dais. Delegates can either respond with 'present' or 'present and voting'. A roll call will be taken everytime delegates reconvene at the conference setting after postponement of the debate.
- **Sponsors:** The nations that have contributed the most in terms of developing a particular document, particularly the Draft Resolution.
- **Signatories:** Signatories are nations that wish to see a certain document debated. Signatories do not have to be members of the bloc writing the document.
- **Simple Majority:** A simple majority is 50% of the quorum plus '1'. For instance, let us assume that the quorum for a committee is 60. Therefore, the simple majority for this committee would be 31.
- **Quorum:** The total number of nations present at the committee.
- **Unfriendly Amendment:** Amendments are considered **unfriendly** if at least one of the sponsors of the original Draft Resolution disagrees with it.
- **Working Paper:** The first step in the resolution formation process, the working paper is an **informal document** where delegates can begin gathering ideas and forming solutions in point format. It essentially a 'rough draft' of the Draft Resolution that will follow.

- **Yields:** If a delegate finishes their Speakers List speech and still has some speaking time to spare, they must yield their time. Delegates can either yield their time to the Chairperson, to questions, or to another delegate. Delegates should note that they only have the option to yield their time during the formal debate (the Speakers List).
-

Rules of Debate

Written Motions

Instead of voicing them aloud, these motions are written on formal notes and delivered to the Chairperson by way of an Usher.

Format:

From: Delegates should insert the full names of their nations here.

To: Chairperson

Purpose:

- **Appeal to the Chairperson's Decision:** If the delegate wishes to motion for an appeal to the Chairperson's decision, the purpose should look similar to the following:

“The delegate of (insert full name of nation) motions for an appeal to the Chairperson's decision because (insert reasoning behind the appeal).”

- **Right of Reply:** If the delegate wishes to motion for a right of reply, the purpose should look similar to the following:

“The delegate of (insert full name of nation) motions for a right of reply to (insert full name of target nation) because (insert reasoning behind the right of reply).”

Verbal Motions

These motions can be verbalized aloud when the Committee Chairperson opens the floor for any points or motions. One significant aspect to take into account is that verbal motions need to be seconded.

The Debate

“The delegate of (insert full name of nation) motions to open the debate to discuss (input the Committee topic).”

- **The Speakers List**

“The delegate of (insert full name of nation) motions to set the Speakers List for a speaker's time of (insert the suggested length of speaking time per delegate).”

To pass, this motion requires a simple majority.

- **Moderated Caucus**

“The delegate of (insert full name of nation) motions to suspend the debate and move into a moderated caucus with a total time of (insert total duration of the caucus) and a speaker’s time of (insert the suggested length of speaking time per delegate) to discuss (insert desired topic).”

To pass, this motion requires a simple majority.

- **Unmoderated Caucus**

“The delegate of (insert full name of nation) motions to suspend the debate and move into an unmoderated caucus for a total time of (insert total duration of the caucus) to (insert desired purpose of unmoderated caucus).”

To pass, this motion requires a simple majority.

- **Consultation of the Whole**

“The delegate of (insert full name of nation) motions to suspend the debate and move into a consultation of the whole for a total time of (insert total duration of the caucus) to discuss (insert desired topic of discussion).”

To pass, this motion requires a simple majority.

- **Adjournment and Resumption of Debate**

“The delegate of (insert full name of nation) motions to adjourn the meeting for the purpose of (insert the purpose of adjournment).”

“The delegate of (insert full name of nation) motions to resume the debate.”

To pass, this motion requires a simple majority.

- **Closure of Debate**

“The delegate of (insert full name of nation) motions to close the debate and move into the introduction of draft resolutions.”

To pass, this motion requires an absolute majority.

- **Debate on Amendments**

“The delegate of (insert full name of nation) motions to close the introduction of draft resolutions and commence the debate on amendments.”

To pass, this motion requires an absolute majority.

To pass, each amendment requires a simple majority.

- **Voting on Resolutions**

“The delegate of (insert full name of nation) motions to close the debate on amendments and commence the Resolution voting procedure.”

To pass, this motion requires an absolute majority.

In order to pass and become the Committee’s official Resolution, the Draft should garner at least a simple majority.

Points

Interruptive Points

- **Point of Personal Privilege:**

This point can be utilized by a delegate whenever they experience a certain personal discomfort that hinders their ability to fully participate in the conference at hand.

- **Point of Order:**

A point of order is brought up when a delegate feels as though the rules of procedure have been broken.

Non-Interruptive Points

- **Point of Parliamentary Inquiry:**

This point can be used whenever a delegate would like to ask the Dais members a question regarding the overall rules of procedure.

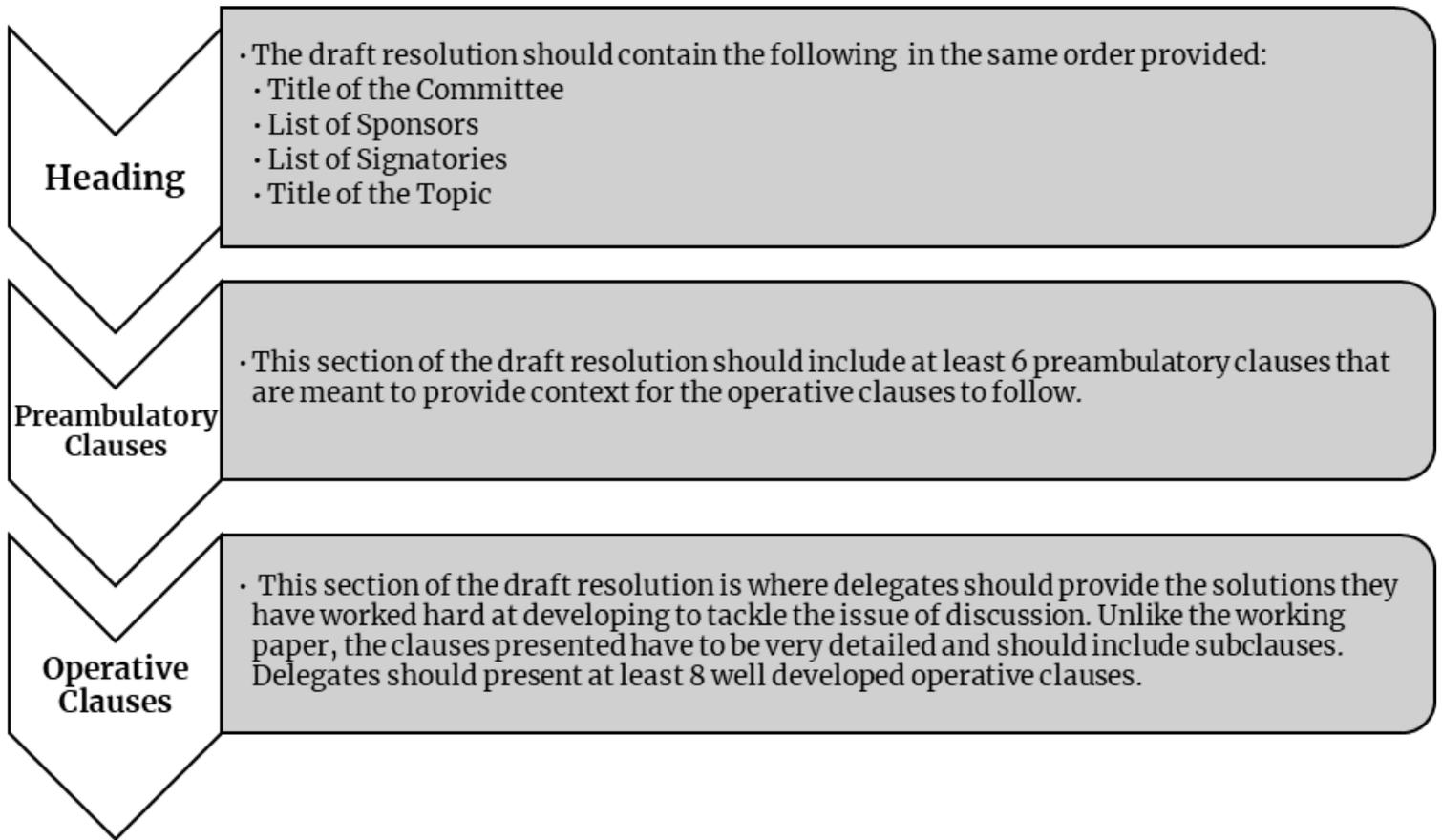
- **Point of Information:**

A point of information, also known as a point of inquiry, can be exercised by delegates whenever they would like to ask a question regarding something they do not understand about the issue at hand.

Resolution Formation Process



Flow and Structure of a Draft Resolution



The Topic

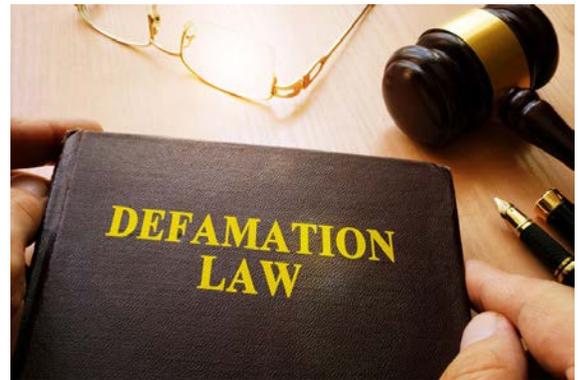
'Fostering Freedom of Speech and Journalistic Liberty in the Face of Disinformation'

"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." - Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948.

Topic Overview

Freedom of speech and freedom of expression are two of the most important pillars of democracy. UNESCO remains a strong advocate of free speech in all of its forms ranging from across traditional and digital means of expression. Every person is born with the right to be opinionated and to express that opinion freely through speech, publication, art, etc. The right to freedom of expression also includes access to information and the ability to broadcast that information.

Freedom of speech is restricted to the expression of thoughts and opinions that do not collide with the safety and reputation of others (referred to as defamation.) **Defamation** is categorized into two headings: **slander** and **libel**. Slander being an oral offense towards a party and libel is a written offense or disgrace communicated through written publications or mass communication outlets. Regardless of whether the statement is slander or libel, it is considered as defamation when it acts as an offense to a person or a group of people. Both forms of defamation are considered to attack the dignity of a person; slander includes a defined act that harms a person's dignity, whereas no defined act is present in libel.



Those at the frontiers of freedom of expression are journalists around the world. Journalists act as mediators between the government and the public; their primary duty is to keep people around the world apprised of advancements nationally and internationally.

Journalists' primary duty is to collect, assemble, analyze, and break down pieces of information to make them accessible to the public. Journalists hold the duty of conveying the information in the most objective manner to ensure that the public receives transparent news and truthful content. Thus, public opinion formation relies heavily on the information gathered by journalists due to the major impact the analysis of news has on the public.

Journalistic liberty is the absence of restrictions on journalistic work and journalistic

publications. Violation of journalistic liberty can be described as restrictions placed on the information journalists can publish.

Freedom of speech, reinforced through journalists, is the messenger between citizens and their governments, allowing public demands to be heard even when they do not align with the governments' views. A major aspect of freedom of speech is the ability to discover and learn from different and unique points of view.



UNESCO strives to protect journalists by fostering press freedom across various forms of media outlets. However, this safety is often threatened given that journalists have a duty to access accurate information to broadcast it to the larger public. For journalists to be able to fulfill their most important duty, they often must venture into unsafe locations where freedom of speech may not be respected. An average study by UNESCO revealed that every five days, one journalist is targeted and murdered for broadcasting information to a large community.

Journalists around the world face daily chances of murder, kidnap, theft, assault, or threat. From 2006 to 2020, 1,200 media professionals risked and lost their lives in the line of duty. In the

majority of cases, the murderers do not face consequences for their actions. According to the United Nations Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, “crimes against journalists have an enormous impact on society as a whole, because they prevent people from making informed decisions.”

These attacks on journalists threaten the access to information and thus jeopardize the future of liberal democracy. Journalists and their ability to access, analyze, and convey information to the public are an essential pillar of a well-educated and informed citizenry.

With the rise of social media, the processing and dissemination of information has become more decentralized, allowing any individual to step into the role of a journalist without the appropriate training or ethical considerations. Thus, the circulation of disinformation has increased, which detracts from the integrity of journalistic work and inhibits journalists from fulfilling their duties independently.



Disinformation is the act of propagating false information with the intention of deceiving public opinion. Beyond the dangers of disinformation itself, one prominent reason to tackle disinformation is that it has become an

excuse to restrict journalistic liberty and freedom of speech. For example, at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, governments chose to silence journalistic expression under the guise of stopping the circulation of false information surrounding the pandemic. This prevented legitimate investigations into governmental transparency and accountability that would otherwise be carried out by journalists.

Topic in Depth

While many nations have some legal claim to freedom of expression, no nation stipulates an absolute right to freedom of speech. Reasonable restrictions in cases of defamation (as mentioned earlier), wartime, and during emergencies are common. However, there are still numerous nations where the right to free speech is not recognized at all.

First Law Supporting Freedom of Press and Freedom of Information- 1766

On the 2nd of December, 1766, the Swedish parliament legislated a law that became the world's first declaration of freedom of press and freedom of information. The Freedom of the Press Act mainly targeted the censorship of the Swedish government and demanded that the government's internal official events and actions become accessible to the public. The law enabled democratic participation and provided citizens with the ultimate right to express opinions and gain information without barriers.

Mechanized Printing: 15th century

After mechanized printing emerged in the 15th century, the publication of books, newspapers, and printed information allowed information to flow freely into the hands of the public. Due to the influence of information over public opinion

and government perception, political elite and religious figures regarded these publications as disruptive and sought their regulation.

The poet John Milton made the argument of press freedom in his 1644 pamphlet *Areopagitica*, published in response to British legislation that mandated the government license all works before publication. The argument for free speech soon gained state recognition, at least in the United States. In 1733, New York newspaper publisher John Zenger was found innocent of libel in a landmark jury trial on the grounds that the articles he printed, which were harshly critical of New York's colonial governor, were nonetheless based on fact. Twenty-five years after Sweden's Freedom of the Press Act became law, the writers of the United States Constitution entrenched the same idea in the document's First Amendment.

During the period between 1830 and 1860, machines and manufacturing boosted the speed and cost-effectiveness of newspapers. Benjamin Day launched the *New York Sun*, which used technology to mass-produce newspapers. The cost of sending printed papers to subscribers was reduced when roads and canals were upgraded. By the end of the Civil War, more journalists and newspapers were attempting to meet professional accuracy and impartiality standards in a growing industry.

With such advancements and the Universal Declaration for Human Rights' Article 19 (detailing freedom of expression), many countries have set free speech and expression as a top priority. Yet, some countries still implement state and government censorship over publications. The international organization Reporters without Borders monitors journalistic treatment around the

world and annually ranks countries by their level of press and media freedom. Subsequently, countries at the bottom of the RSF list are those who violate press and media freedom by imposing sanctions, censorship, and restrictions on media outlets. China, Russia, and North Korea are among some of the lowest ranked countries on the RSF list.

The History of Disinformation

Disinformation is a practice that has been prevalent in nearly every civilization. Its purpose, throughout history, has been for the political elite to control the flow of information. In the 17th century, political campaigns, such as that of the Habsburgs' supporters during the 30 years' war, tried to strengthen power by controlling the flow of information.



Later in this period appeared Edward Bernays, the nephew of the Austrian-American Sigmund Freud, who is regarded as the 'father of propaganda. Bernays controlled the masses by sharing propaganda campaigns to affect public behavior in the 20th century. What differs propaganda from disinformation is that

propaganda is not necessarily designed to harm. Even so, mass propaganda and political disinformation have aligned to construct new methods of influencing political campaigns.

The Global Disinformation Order: 2019

Even though disinformation has been used extensively since the 19th century, the term 'disinformation' has witnessed an increase in usage since 2016 which aligns with the Brexit referendum, the US presidential elections (of which Donald Trump was a candidate) and the fear of Russia's manipulation of votes. Disinformation has always been seen as a main threat emerging primarily from Russia and China.

The Global Disinformation Order is a report issued by the University of Oxford in 2019 that revealed 26 countries resorting to state-sponsored digital propaganda to influence public opinions and exacerbate existing socio-economic and political divides. From 2017 to 2019, the number of countries that participated in coordinated disinformation campaigns went from 28 to 70.

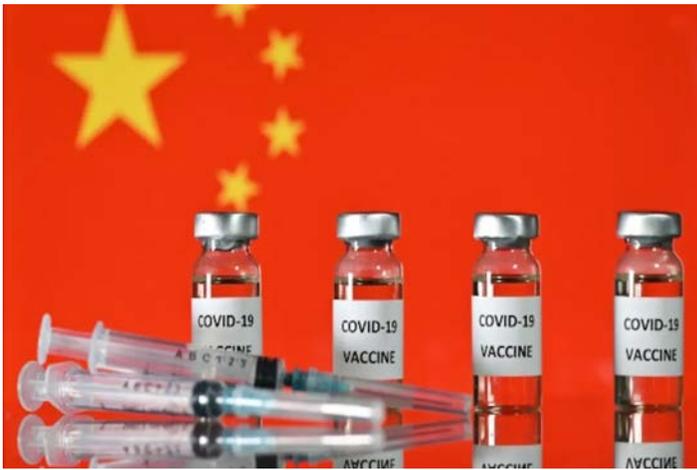
Below are four case studies examining the state of free speech and disinformation around the world.

Restrictions on Freedom of Speech in China

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Chinese government moved to restrict its citizens' freedom of publication online. In part, these restrictions were meant to conceal information about the severity of the pandemic. These restrictions consequently threatened other rights such as the right to freely access information, freedom of

expression, and especially the right to accurate information about healthcare.

China's strict approach to online expression is echoed on the global platform by support of a 'cyber sovereignty' at the UN and other international organizations. Disputes regarding internet freedom of speech and expression are becoming increasingly linked to wider geopolitical discussions about whether technological governance should be open and global, or limited and nation based.



Press Laws in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

The Korean Workers' Party is the chief arbitrator of the nation's mass and press media. Thus, the media presents one single story in the press that aligns with the government's views. North Korea acknowledges press freedom as a constitutional right among its citizens. Unfortunately, there remains a significant gap between the constitutional promise of press freedom and its practical implementation. The essential right to a free and independent press, as interpreted in its libertarian sense, is restricted for North Koreans in the pursuit of what the government deems 'collective good.'



Legislation Against Freedom of Speech in Eritrea

The Eritrean constitution provides freedom of expression and press, although these rights are often violated. The Press Proclamation Law of 1996 requires all publications and journalists to be licensed by the government – allowing the government to restrict what is ultimately published. The law also states that publications must be approved by the government before being released, and it forbids reproducing content from prohibited periodicals.

According to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), as of December 1, 2015, 17 journalists were jailed in Eritrea, one of the highest rates in the world and the highest in Sub-Saharan Africa. Though six journalists from the government-controlled Radio Bana were liberated in January 2015, the overall number of detained journalists remained high. The journalists had been detained without trial since February 2009, when they were apprehended during a search on their radio station. Approximately 50 journalists and other employees were brought to the Doboito prison camp during the operation.

The most recent arrests and imprisonments occurred in 2011, when 4 journalists from the state broadcast media station, Dimtsi Hafash, were detained and jailed; the government has yet to reveal the allegations against them. Since 2001, 9 journalists have been imprisoned, and practically all of them are being held in solitary confinement. International attempts to force Swedish courts to investigate the well-known case of Swedish-Eritrean journalist Dawit Isaak, who was detained without trial in 2001, were blocked in 2014. While there were claims that Isaak died in captivity in 2011, this could not be proven, and he was still presumed to be alive in 2015. The administration, however, has refused to reveal his location or health condition.

Russia's Laws on Freedom of Speech and Their Limits

President Putin approved legislation criminalizing "calls for separatism" on December 30, 2021. Infringers risk a penalty of up to \$9,500 or up to 5 years in jail if they make public demands for action against the country's territorial sovereignty.

Over 60% of the country's 45,000 registered local newspapers and journals are owned directly by the government or state-controlled organizations. Up to 66 percent of the 2,500 tv TV channels, including all 6 regional channels, were controlled entirely or partially by state or federal governments.

According to the Glasnost Defense Fund (GDF) and other non-governmental organizations (NGOs), Russian officials have leveraged the media's reliance on the state for access to property, printing, and distribution facilities to suppress critical journalism. They stated that around 90% of the traditional media relied on state-controlled enterprises for paper, printing,

and circulation, and that many broadcast networks were obliged to rely on the state for access to the airwaves and office space. The GDF also alleged that authorities continue to influence printing prices at state-controlled publishing businesses in order to put pressure on commercial media competitors.



President Putin also signed a decision on December 11 to close the country's main state owned news service, RIA Novosti, which had been noted for its fair coverage. The order substituted RIA Novosti with an agency named Russia Today, directed by Dmitriy Kiselyov, which has a strong pro-government leaning.

Pertinent Features

Disinformation Amidst the COVID 19 Pandemic

"We're not just fighting an epidemic; we're fighting an infodemic," said Doctor Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization at the Munich Security Conference in February 2020.

With the spread of COVID-19, disinformation has spread similar to the virus itself. The mass media has always been at the forefront of managing health related news and information. As the spread of the coronavirus increased,

people have turned to the mass media for clarification regarding the rates of infection and methods of prevention and treatment. Instead, in the midst of the chaos and fear surrounding the virus, media consumers have found themselves stuck in a loop of fake news and misinterpreted information that has not been fact checked or verified. Taking advantage of the uncertainty surrounding the virus, people leveraged disinformation to push their own agendas through the pandemic.



In an aim to combat disinformation, journalists around the world were exposed to several restrictions while broadcasting news pertaining to COVID-19 information. Governmental constraints, trying to combat the circulation of false information, threatened journalistic liberty. It is undeniable that certain constraints must be imposed to ensure the restriction of false information; however, this must not coincide with the freedom of journalists performing their jobs and duties.

Media rights activists insinuate that the restrictions imposed on journalists during the pandemic have denied citizens access to information and updates regarding the virus. Freedom House issued a report entitled 'Democracy Under Lockdown' revealing that 91 out of 192 countries have resorted to different

restrictions on media in response to the health crisis. Though countries claimed to have imposed these restrictions to regulate the flow of false information, a plethora of countries imposed them to hide the severity of the pandemic and attack the work of journalists. Meanwhile, countries that are already critical of internet access and free speech like China, Egypt, and Turkey have carried on the opportunity to jail free journalistic work under the attempt to fight misinformation during the COVID 19 pandemic.

Impunity for Attacks on Journalists

“Since 2017, the majority of these crimes have taken place outside of countries experiencing armed conflict – more than 60% of killings in 2020. In other words, journalists are not only dying in the crossfire of war – they are also being targeted for exposing wrongdoing and speaking truth to power”, said Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of UNESCO.

November 2 marks the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists. A recent statistic by UNESCO revealed 87% impunity for the killers of journalists. **Impunity** is the act of being exempted from the consequences of a crime. Many governments and entities who target journalists experience impunity for their actions.



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#TruthNeverDies

In most cases, female journalists are those who are mostly attacked not just because of their profession, but also because of their gender. In Vietnam, independent journalist **Pham Doan Trang** has been targeted for reporting a variety of sensitive topics such as police violence and her support for press freedom. She was arrested in October 2020, but she had been harassed and intimidated for several years before that. After violently being beaten by the police, she now suffers from long term injuries. Her case has been highlighted by the UN Human Rights Council Special Rapporteurs and ARTICLE 19, as well as 27 other human rights organizations, who have requested that she be released and the allegations against her be dropped. On October 29, UNHCR repeated its requests for her release, claiming that her continuing incarceration constituted an "arbitrary deprivation of liberty in violation of international human rights law." Like Pham Doan Trang, journalists around the world are silenced while their persecutors receive full impunity.



Prior and Post Censorship

Free speech is one of the essential pillars of a liberal form of democracy that has been agreed upon by every international human rights declaration. Censorship is a constraint on individuals' right to express their opinions, and **prior censorship** is the application of censorship

before publication – preventing certain information from ever reaching the public.



Prior censorship may be crucial to preventing the spread of disinformation, but it has also been used by governments as a tool to control journalistic liberty.

Global Efforts

UNESCO General Conference : 1993

During the twenty-sixth session of UNESCO's General Conference in 1991, a recommendation was set forward, adopted in 1993, to proclaim the third of May of each year as the World Press Freedom Day.



The third of May serves as a reminder to governments of the imperative to uphold their commitment to press freedom. It is also a day of reflection for media workers on the issues facing

press freedom and journalistic ethics. World Press Freedom Day is also an acknowledgement of the risks journalists undergo to broadcast raw and objective news, and is a memorial to all the journalists who have died on the job.

2021's theme for the World Press Freedom Day is "Information as a Public Good," reiterating the importance of access to information in living a life of dignity. The theme focuses on 3 main points: 1) measures to safeguard the news media's economic capability, 2) methods to promote Internet companies' transparency, and 3) measures to enrich Media and Information Literacy, allowing people to acknowledge, cherish, and protect journalism's contribution to "information as a public good."

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights: 1976

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights was adopted by the UN General Assembly Resolution 2200A (XXI) in 1976. Article 19 of the Covenant provides all individuals with the right to be entitled to opinions without external pressures and to have the ability to express that opinion freely. This expression is free to be communicated through traditional means like print or newspapers, or digital means via mass media. However, this right to expression is still subject to restrictions when it harms others' reputation or the ability to foster internal security and public morals.



**International Covenant on
Civil and Political Rights**

Multi-Donor Programme: 2015-2021

The Multi-Donor Programme on Freedom of Expression and Safety of Journalists (MDP) of UNESCO was established in 2015 to support initiatives in free speech around the world.

MDP's goal is to advocate for the creation and implementation of necessary laws and normative frameworks that improve the environment for free speech and press freedom, as well as to support viable and independent media organizations from barriers and censorship.



With the rise of COVID 19 and the threat against journalistic work through disinformation, MDP was working hand in hand with the media to combat the new challenges presented. MDP worked with 21 countries to implement regional actions to enhance the work of the media and the freedom of journalists. MDP mainly targets freedom of expression, journalists' safety, journalists' fair access to information collection, and Media and Information Literacy (MIL). MDP assisted journalists from 21 different countries including Afghanistan, Iraq, and Mongolia, and to perform their duties safely. MDP funds promote actions seeking to enable media diversity, foster gender equality in the creation of media, as well as help citizens become more competent in media and information literacy.

UNESCO is pursuing a focus on data collection regarding press freedom to support

evidence-based legislation, authentication, and informed activism on the subject. MDP funds also aid in these efforts.

Learning Outcomes

- Delegates will have a clear understanding of what constitutes freedom of speech.
- Delegates will grasp the concept of journalistic liberty and current threats to it.
- Delegates will understand how today's media environment contributes to disinformation, and policy options to combat it. This includes identifying instances where freedom of press has contributed to disinformation.
- Delegates will be able to identify and analyze modern instances of free speech and journalistic repression.

Recommendations

- Delegates must be able to identify case studies of disinformation and point out new methods through which it is spreading.
- Delegates must have the ability to differentiate between journalistic free expression, hate speech, and disinformation.
- Delegates must have a multidimensional understanding of freedom of speech and

journalistic freedom in relation to their fight against false information.

- Delegates must have an understanding of how governments can (and, in the past, have tried to) combat disinformation.

Key Questions

- How has your country addressed disinformation?
- What measures did your country implement amidst the COVID-19 pandemic in relation to journalism and disinformation?
- How does social media complicate discussions of free speech and disinformation? What regulations has your country imposed in this regard?
- What are some of the consequences of disinformation generally, and in your society in particular?
- Has your country collaborated with UNESCO or other UN bodies to safeguard the rights of journalists?
- What penalties has your state adopted to criminalize intentional false information distributed online?
- How can your nation, internationally and within its own borders, work to ensure the investigation and extermination of disinformation in the media?

Annexes

Relevant Institutions

- Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ)
- International Freedom of Expression Exchange (IFEX)
- Reporters Without Borders (RWB)
- Multi Donor Programme (MDP)
- Samir Kassir Foundation
- Freedom House
- Freedom of Information Advocates Network
- United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA)

Relevant Legal Treaties, Frameworks, and Conventions

- United Nations Declaration for Human Rights (UDHR)
- International Convention on the Use of Broadcasting in the Cause of Peace
- International Convention on the Safety and Independence of Journalists and Other Media Professionals
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)
- The International Declaration on the Protection of Journalists
- African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights - Article 9
- European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms - Article 10
- American Convention on Human Rights - Article 13
- ASEAN Human Rights Declaration
- European Convention on Human Rights

Relevant Conferences

- Conference of Ministers responsible for Media and Information Society - Council of Europe (COE)
- Summit for Democracy
- African Investigative Journalism Conference
- APAC Trusted Media Summit
- National Conference on Disinformation and Media and Information Literacy (MIL)
- Stratcom Summit
- Global Disinfo Summit

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