



WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY

May 3, 2024

Every year May 3 is celebrated as World Press Freedom Day. This occasion celebrates the fundamental principles of press freedom and is an opportunity to evaluate press freedom worldwide, to defend the media from attacks on their independence, and to pay tribute to journalists who have lost their lives in the exercise of their profession. The day holds significance for press freedom and its independence. It is a reminder to governments of the need to respect their commitment to press freedom and is also a day of reflection among media professionals about issues of press freedom and professional ethics.¹



Background

World Press Freedom Day was proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in 1993 following a Recommendation adopted at the 26th Session of UNESCO's General Conference in 1991. This in turn was a response to a call by African journalists who in 1991 produced the landmark Windhoek Declaration.²

The Windhoek Declaration is a benchmark for ensuring press freedom around the world. It began at a seminar in Windhoek in 1991, but the ideas exchanged by the African journalists

¹ <https://www.unesco.org/en/days/press-freedom>

² <https://www.unesco.org/en/days/press-freedom>

and media professionals acted as a catalyst to encourage press freedom, independence, and pluralism in Africa and other parts of the world.³

After 30 years, the historic connection made between the freedom to seek, impart, and receive information and the public good remains as relevant as it was at the time of its signing. It is an opportunity to:⁴

- Celebrate the fundamental principles of press freedom;
- Assess the state of press freedom throughout the world;
- Defend the media from attacks on their independence; and
- Pay tribute to journalists who have lost their lives in the line of duty

Theme of World Press Freedom Day 2024 ⁵

A Press for the Planet: Journalism in the Face of the Environmental Crisis

In 2024, World Press Freedom Day is dedicated to the importance of journalism and freedom of expression in the context of the current global environmental crisis. In the context of the world's triple planetary crisis —climate change, biodiversity loss, and air pollution— dis-/misinformation campaigns challenge knowledge and scientific research methods. Attacks on the validity of science pose a serious threat to pluralistic and informed public debate. Indeed, misleading and false information about climate change can, in some cases, undermine international efforts to address them.

To achieve sustainable development, journalists must report accurately, timely, and comprehensively on environmental issues and their consequences, as well as on possible solutions.

This requires a comprehensive strategy that includes:

- Preventing and protecting against crimes committed against journalists.

³ <https://www.unesco.org/archives/multimedia/document-5562>

⁴ <https://www.un.org/en/observances/press-freedom-day>

⁵ <https://www.un.org/en/observances/press-freedom-day>

- Ensuring the rights to freedom of expression, freedom of scientific research, and access to key sources of information, in addition to combating dis-/misinformation through journalism.
- Promoting the plurality, diversity, and viability of media, especially regional, local, indigenous, and/or community-based media.
- Ensuring that the governance of digital platforms fosters the transparency of technology companies, their accountability, due diligence, user empowerment, and content moderation and curation based on international human rights standards, as indicated in UNESCO's Guidelines for the Governance of Digital Platforms.
- Promoting Media and Information Literacy programs to empower users with skills to engage and think critically in the digital environment.

To know about the details of events on World Press Freedom Day, [click here](#)

References

- <https://www.unesco.org/en/days/press-freedom>
- <https://www.unesco.org/archives/multimedia/document-5562>
- <https://www.un.org/en/observances/press-freedom-day>
- <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000387826>
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Santosh Kumar/Himanshu Pathak/Ritu Kataria/Apoorva Mahiwal/Indu Sharma