



UK **Media
Freedom
Forum**

Tuesday 04 March -
Wednesday 05 March

2025

**City St George's University,
University of London**

"2025 signifies unprecedented polarisation within not only societies and cultures, but also traditional allies, who until very recently were united in their support of humanitarian values, democratic division of powers, and freedom of the media.

Across the globe, we are witnessing increasingly authoritarian rhetoric and behaviour, disregard for pluralism, fear of factual reporting, withdrawal from civilised debate, and defensive reaction to critical voices.

With support of the Council of Europe, UNESCO and OSCE, the UK Media Freedom Forum provides a safe and constructive platform for comprehensive discussions and policy solutions to help strengthen independent media and protect professional and citizen journalism internationally."

**Maria Ordzhonikidze, Director
Justice for Journalists Foundation**

"The UK Media Freedom Forum could not be more necessary or timely. Around the world, political leaders are harassing and silencing journalists, disinformation and conspiracy campaigns are polluting information eco-systems, and the journalism business model is failing.

This is happening as the international order itself is shifting - and international aid budgets are shrinking.

The UK MFF is a chance for media and policy experts to discuss the urgent challenges of this moment.

Most importantly, it is a chance to identify concrete actions that can be taken to protect and support independent journalism."

**Professor Mel Bunce
City St George's, University of London**

TABLE OF CONTENTS



AGENDA - UK MEDIA FREEDOM FORUM

Introduction	-	4
Day One	-	5
Day Two	-	6
Evening Event	-	7
Speakers	-	8



ORGANISATIONS AND INITIATIVES

Media Freedom and Democracy	-	10
Media Freedom Coalition	-	11
• High Level Panel of Legal Experts	-	12
UNESCO	-	13
• Global Media Defence Fund	-	13
Spotlight on UN Plan of Action for the Safety of Journalists	-	16
The OSCE	-	17
Spotlight on Media Freedom, Democracy and Security	-	18
Council of Europe	-	21
• Platform for the Safety of Journalists	-	21
• CoE & Media Freedom - Journalism Matters Campaign	-	24



MEDIA FREEDOM AND THE UK

Spotlight on the UK National Action Plan for the Safety of Journalists	-	25
Media Freedom and the UK	-	26
The Future of News Report	-	27
Spotlight on SLAPPs	-	28



ORGANISERS AND SUPPORTERS

About the Organisers	-	31
Supporting Organisations	-	33
Additional Resources	-	35

“The importance of a free press cannot be overstated. It is an integral part of a functioning democracy, and yet, media freedom across the world is under threat.

Advances in artificial intelligence have made it increasingly difficult to spot misinformation, and spyware is being used to monitor journalists' activities. Members of the press are stifled by strategic lawsuits, censorship, unlawful imprisonment and in some cases death.

This Forum will provide a platform for journalists, policy makers, academics and civil society organisations to discuss existing and emerging problems and develop policy recommendations for states to take forward. Defending the freedom of the press requires concrete action. We must find ways to end the suppression and ensure freedom for the truth-tellers.”

Baroness Helena Kennedy KC
Director, International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute

“We are at a critical inflection point. Media freedom and democracy are intertwined - one is not possible without the other.

The democratic backsliding and global disorder we are witnessing today, has been exacerbated by sustained erosion of media freedom, and more broadly the right to free expression and access to information over many years.

. Defending democracy requires States, and all of us, to make a significant investment to ensure our societies remain open, free and informed. The discussions at the Forum are aimed at charting a course forward towards positive change.”

Susan Coughtrie
*Director, The Foreign Policy Centre
Co-chair UK Anti-SLAPP Coalition*

Introduction

The **Foreign Policy Centre** (FPC), the **Justice for Journalists Foundation** (JFJ) and the **International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute** (IBAHRI), in partnership with **City St George's, University of London**, are pleased to welcome you to the inaugural **UK Media Freedom Forum**.

Today media freedom faces an ever complex range of challenges, with an interconnectivity between the domestic and global environment. States and other stakeholders play a vital role in addressing these issues, but there is often a gap between their stated commitments and delivery.

This two-day conference provides a timely opportunity to assess the effectiveness of the UK and other States' involvement with global initiatives, including the 50+ members of the **Media Freedom Coalition** (MFC), and stakeholder engagement with the **United Nations** (UN), **the Organisation for Economic Co-operation** (OSCE), **the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development** (OECD), and the **Council of Europe** (CoE), when it comes to taking concrete action to defending media freedom.

The Forum will provide space to evaluate the extent of existing and emerging problems, and also act as a vehicle through which journalists, policy makers, academics and civil society organisations can develop concrete policy recommendations for the UK government and other national stakeholders, with the aim of creating greater transparency and accountability on media freedom related issues.

The sessions will explore a number of themes impacting media freedom around the world, including **misinformation and disinformation, transnational repression, journalism in exile, strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPPs) and other legal threats, economic pressure, spyware and surveillance and the impact of artificial intelligence.**

We are delighted that the Forum is being realised in cooperation with the **CoE**, which is using the Forum as the UK launch of the **Platform for the Safety of Journalists' 2025 Annual Report**, with additional support from **UNESCO's Global Media Defence Fund**, the **OSCE**, and the law firm **RPC**.

Agenda

10:00

Welcome to the conference

Maria Ordzhonikidze

10:05

Opening Keynote

Caoilfhionn Gallagher KC
Olga Rudenko

10:25

Session 1

**Turning States' media
freedom commitments
into action**

This session will begin by setting the scene of global trends and initiatives relating to press freedom, before turning to an expert Panel to review how sufficient current responses are to addressing these issues.

Baroness Helena Kennedy KC
Professor Mel Bunce
Amy Brouillette
Professor Kingsley Abbott
Professor Can Yeğinsu
Kanbar Hossein Bor

11:30

Short Break

12:00

Session 2

**How can we limit the
impact of corporate
interests on media
freedom?**

Corporations and other private entities are not party to international standards like sovereign states, yet they have an ever increasing, often negative, influence on media freedom issues. This session will explore what states, and institutions, can do to curb the power of corporations for the protection and promotion of media freedom.

Jane Martinson
Courtney C. Radsch
Sayra Tekin
Charlie Beckett

13:00

Lunch

14:00

Spotlight On Session

**The Authoritarian
Playbook**

What are key tools in the authoritarian playbook used to suppress media freedom and how can they be countered?

Ayala Panievsky

Fiona O'Brien
Kris Cheng
Aliasghar Ramezanpoor

A short presentation followed by an 'in conversation with' session with two journalists working in exile.

14:40

Session 3

**Foreign Agent Laws - a
double edged sword?**

Foreign Agents laws are proliferating across the globe. This session will explore Foreign Agent laws, to gain a deeper understanding of how these laws have been framed and utilised in different national contexts.

Vafa Fati-zade
Andrei Soldatov
Nika Gvaramia
Gladis Temirchieva
Nicholas W. Miller

15:40

Short Break

16:10

Session 4

**Media Freedom:
Integral to Democracy
and Security**

This session will explore the importance free and fair media has in protecting democracy and democratic resilience, and the necessity to embed media freedom principles in an effective, holistic, cross cutting way across Government strategy.

Deniz Wagner
Olga Rudenko
Damian Tambini
Mira Milosevic
Ali- Abbas Ali
Staffan Lindberg

17:20

Closing Address

**Followed by a drinks
reception, and evening
event (see overleaf)**

17:30

Agenda

10:00

Opening Address

Sir John Whittingdale MP

10:10

Session 5

How are European states responding to the most pressing media freedom threats today?

This session marks the UK launch of the 2025 annual report by the Council of Europe's Platform to Promote the Protection of Journalism and Safety of Journalists, and will bring together representatives of the Platform's members, and other experts, to discuss how to respond to the most pressing media freedom threats in Europe today.

Jessica Ni Mhainin
William Horsley
Aurélia Dondo
Fiona O'Brien
Carole Cadwalladr
Barry Mccaffrey
Nadia Hashmi

11:30

Short Break

12:00

Session 6

How can public interest journalism be better protected?

There is no doubt that public interest journalism needs to be better protected, but how do we go about this? This session will look into possible solutions to maintain the integrity and reach of public interest journalism.

Jonathan Heawood
Khadija Patel
Jenna Corderoy
Martin Scott
Meera Selva
Baroness Stowell

13:10

Lunch

14:00

Spotlight On Session

Weaponised Legal Threats

This session will explore how legal or quasi-legal tools that are being used to harass journalists, as well as those defending them (such as lawyers) around the world.

Nadia Mandl

Carlos Gaio
Charlene Miwa Nagae
Veysel OK

A short presentation followed by an 'In Conversation with' session.

14:40

Session 7

Developments on Anti-SLAPP Legislation and Regulation

This session will discuss the positive progress of both legal and regulatory developments made by States, whilst also examining the issues that remain in the ongoing battle and further reform needed in tackling SLAPPs.

Susan Coughtrie
Renaud Gaudin De Villaine
Charlie Holt
Samantha Thompson
Dario Milo

15:40

Short Break

16:10

Spotlight Session

Safety of Journalists - National Action Plans + Campaigns

This session will examine national action plans in two contexts, the UK and the Netherlands, to find out how they work and the kind of impact they can have. With a short presentation on the Council of Europe's pan-European 'Journalists Matter' Campaign.

Artemiza-Tatiana Chisca
Peter ter Velde
Janis Makarewich-Hall

16:35

Session 8

Media Freedom and Democracy

To close the inaugural UK Media Freedom Forum, this Panel will reflect on the conference, outlining key takeaways as well as highlighting how we can take the learnings forward.

Ivor Gaber
Alina Tatarenko
Julie Posetti
Jonathan Bock

17:20

Closing Address

Followed by a drinks reception

17:30

Evening Event

Tuesday 4th March

Uncontrolled: Journalism under Surveillance Film Screening and Panel Discussion

17:45 → 19:15

Screening of the film "**Uncontrolled: Journalism under Surveillance**" (*Sin control: periodismo bajo vigilancia*) about the use of Pegasus spyware against journalists in Latin America, followed by a Q&A with the film's director Jonathan Bock, Executive Director of FLIP, Colombia.

Synopsis: In the last decade, States have acquired sophisticated surveillance tools that are installed in cell phones and other devices and can access cameras, microphones, information and private documents of the user. The use of these tools by Latin American States against citizens and journalists has been proven, thus violating their privacy, their rights and the freedom of the press and expression. The trade in intrusive technologies is increasing, secret surveillance operates in all markets of the world and journalists have become the main target.

*The film runs to 55 minutes, and is in Spanish with English subtitles.
Drinks will be provided.*



Speakers

Ali- Abbas Ali, Director of Broadcasting Competition, OFCOM

Aliasghar Ramezanzpour, Executive News Editor of Iran International

Alina Tatarenko, Head of Division for Cooperation on Freedom of Expression, Council of Europe

Amy Brouillette, Director of Advocacy at the International Press Institute

Artemiza-Tatiana Chisca, Head of the Freedom of Expression and CDMSI Division, Council of Europe

Aurélia Dondo, Head of Europe and Central Asia Region, PEN International

Ayala Panievsky, Presidential Fellow, Journalism Department, City St George's, University of London

Baroness Helena Kennedy KC, Director, International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute. Chair of The High Level Panel of Legal Experts on Media Freedom

Baroness Tina Stowell, former chair House of Lords Communications and Digital Committee

Barry McCaffrey, investigative journalist

Can Yeğinsu, Barrister and Deputy Chair of The High Level Panel of Legal Experts on Media Freedom

Caoilfhionn Gallagher KC, barrister at Doughty Street Chambers.

Carlos Gaio, Executive Director, Media Defence

Carole Cadwalladr, investigative journalist

Charlene Miwa Nagae, Founder and Executive Director, Tornavoz

Charlie Beckett, Professor of Practice, Director of Polis and the Polis/LSE JournalismAI project, London School of Economics

Charlie Holt, European Lead for CliDef, CASE Steering Committee and UK Anti-SLAPP Coalition Co-chair

Courtney C. Radsch, Director, Center for Journalism and Liberty

Damian Tambini, Distinguished Policy Fellow in the Department of Media and Communications, LSE

Dario Milo, Partner, Webber Wentzel and Member of The High Level Panel of Legal Experts on Media Freedom

Deniz Wagner, Adviser, Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media

Fiona O'Brien, UK Director, Reporters without Borders

Gladis Temirchieva, Kyrgyz Journalist

Ivor Gaber, UK representative for UNESCO's International Programme for the Development of Communication

Jan Braathu, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media

Jane Martinson, Marjorie Deane Professor of Financial Journalism at City St George's, University of London

Janis Makarewich-Hall, Deputy Director at the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport.

Jessica Ní Mhainín, Head of Policy and Campaigns, Index of Censorship

Jenna Corderoy, investigative journalist, Democracy for Sale

Jonathan Bock, Executive Director,
Flip, Colombia

Jonathan Heawood, Executive
Director, Public Interest News
Foundation

Julie Posetti, Global Director of
Research at the International Center for
Journalists and Professor of Journalism
City St George's, University of London

Kanbar Hossein Bor, Deputy Director,
Democratic Governance and Media
Freedom Department, Foreign,
Commonwealth and Development
Office

Khadija Patel, Journalist-in-Residence,
International Fund for Public Interest
Media

Kingsley Abbott, Director, Institute of
Commonwealth Studies

Kris Cheng, Exiled journalist from Hong
Kong

Maria Ordzhonikidze, Director, Justice
for Journalists Foundation

Martin Scott, Professor in Media &
Development, University of East Anglia

Mel Bunce, Professor of International
Journalism and Politics, at City St
Georges, University of London

Meera Selva, Chief Executive,
Internews Europe Mira Milosevic,
Executive Director of the Global Forum
for Media Development (GFMD)

Nadia Hashmi, Deputy UK Permanent
Representative to the Council of
Europe

Nadia Mandl, Associate Project
Officer, Freedom of Expression and
Safety of Journalists, UNESCO

Nicholas W. Miller, Senior Legal
Advisor & Coordinator for Multilateral
Engagement, International Center for
Not-for-Profit Law

Nika Gvaramia, Co-Founder, Ahali &
Coalition for Change

Olga Rudenko, Editor in Chief of The
Kyiv Independent

Peter ter Velde, Project Manager,
Persveilig

Renaud Gaudin De Villaine, UN Office
of the Commissioner for Human Rights

Samantha Thompson, Senior
Associate, RPC

Sayra Tekin, Director of Legal, Policy
and Regulatory Affairs, News Media
Association

Sir John Whittingdale MP, Chair of the
APPG on Media Freedom

Staffan Lindberg, Director of the V-
Dem Institute at University of
Gothenburg

Susan Coughtrie, Director, Foreign
Policy Centre

Vafa Fati-zade, Advisor, Justice for
Journalists Foundation

Veysel Ok, Co Director/ Attorney-at-
law, Media and Law Studies
Association (MLSA)

William Horsley, co-founder and
director, International Director, Centre
for Freedom of the Media (CFOM)

To access the
conference agenda
and speaker list
online scan the
QR Code:



Media Freedom and Democracy

The **UK Media Freedom Forum** will be opened with a keynote jointly delivered by Caoilfhionn Gallagher KC, human rights and media lawyer, and Olga Rudenko, Editor in Chief of The Kyiv Independent, on the theme of **Media Freedom and Democracy**.

As we convene together in March 2025, the need to act to protect our freedoms and the democratic health of our societies could not be more urgent or apparent. It is hoped that the Forum will result in fruitful discussions, with concrete takeaways that can be taken forward by the stakeholders represented and beyond.

***“Coming from Ukraine, I have been able to see first-hand how indispensable a free media is for an emerging democracy.*”**

I am grateful to have the chance at the UK Media Freedom Forum to bring a Ukrainian perspective on the importance of real, independent journalism to a British and an international audience at this crucial time.”

Olga Rudenko

Editor in Chief of The Kyiv Independent

***“Repeatedly I see in my international work that when journalism is denigrated by Western governments and Western politicians it has an impact across the world.*”**

We need to be proud of a long history of supporting journalists and supporting journalism, not only in order to protect journalists and journalism here in the UK, but also to protect journalists and journalism across the world.”

Caoilfhionn Gallagher KC

Human rights and media lawyer and barrister at Doughty Street Chambers

Gallagher's work in media has included leading the legal teams for the family of murdered Maltese journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia, for jailed Hong Kong pro-democracy media mogul Jimmy Lai, and for over 150 BBC Persian journalists persecuted by Iran

Media Freedom Coalition

The **Media Freedom Coalition (MFC)** brings together 51 countries from six continents to promote media freedom through advocacy, diplomatic interventions, legal reforms, events and funding. In carrying out this work, governments of the MFC – as well as their embassies – work closely with civil society, legal experts, multilateral organisations and journalists themselves.

What does the MFC do?



- **Advocacy:** including case interventions, in which MFC states take action in public or in private in support of journalists under threat.
- **Embassy networks:** which leverage the MFC's wide network of embassies to promote media freedom.
- **Supporting legal reforms:** to promote policies and laws supporting media freedom.
- **Events:** which may include the MFC's own events, or taking part in other events such as World Press Freedom Day.
- **Global Media Defence Fund:** administered by UNESCO, which supports projects that enhance journalists' legal protection and/or media freedom.



The MFC's recent report **Why Media Freedom Matters** seeks to make the argument for protecting media freedom even stronger.

The report brings together over 100 pieces of evidence on the links between media freedom and democracy, health, the economy, peace and security, and the environment. It has been distributed to MFC governments and their embassies to help them advocate for media freedom.

Find the report via mediafreedomcoalition.org/reports

Contact the MFC Secretariat via info@mediafreedomcoalition.org or Twitter [@mediafreedomc](https://twitter.com/mediafreedomc). For more information, visit the MFC's website www.mediafreedomcoalition.org or by scanning the QR Code opposite.

Who is involved in the MFC?

The MFC's key stakeholders and groups are:

- **The member countries:** All members have signed the Global Pledge on Media Freedom. The MFC is currently led by its co-chairs, Estonia and Germany.
- **The Consultative Network** is a group of national, regional and international organisations that, in collaboration with a much broader set of civil society groups, voluntarily provides advice to the MFC and facilitates selection of cases that it believes require state intervention. The Consultative Network's current co-chairs are Amy Brouillette (International Press Institute), alongside Jonathan Bock and Luisa F. Isaza Ibarra (FLIP).
- **The High Level Panel of Legal Experts on Media Freedom** is an independent advisory body to MFC member countries (see below).
- **UNESCO** administers the Global Media Defence Fund and participates in MFC discussions as an observer.
- **The Working Group on Media Development** ensures that the MFC's work on media freedom incorporates issues relating to media development, such as the skills and capacities of media outlets and their financial viability.
- **The MFC Secretariat** provides administrative support to the Co-chairs and wider coalition, to ensure the MFC can maximise its impact.

The High Level Panel of Legal Experts

An independent advisory body of the MFC, the High Level Panel's remit is to provide **legal advice and recommendations to the MFC and its partners**, including international organisations, for the purposes of **promoting and protecting a vibrant, free, and independent media**. The High Level Panel also provides individual States with legal advice in the form of legal opinions on draft legislation or legislation already in force, where media freedoms are engaged, as well as amicus curiae opinions at the request of a constitutional court or an international court in a media freedom case of general public importance.

The Secretariat is the **International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute**, providing operational, technical, and legal assistance. The Chair of the High Level Panel is Baroness Helena Kennedy LT KC and its Deputy Chairs are Mr. Can Yeginsu and Ms. Catherine Amirfar.

For more info: www.ibanet.org/IBAHRIsecretariat



Scan to visit the
MFC's website

UNESCO

As the United Nations agency with a specific mandate to foster 'the free flow of ideas by word and image', **UNESCO** leads the implementation of the **United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity**, which is the only systematic UN-wide plan that aims to create a free and safe environment for journalists and media workers in both conflict and non-conflict situations.

UNESCO's Global Media Defence Fund

Enhancing the Legal Protection of Journalists and Combatting Impunity for Crimes against Journalists

The Global Media Defence Fund (GMDF), administered by UNESCO, plays a vital role in strengthening press freedom and ensuring the legal protection of journalists worldwide.

Established during the 2019 Global Campaign for Media Freedom led by the UK and Canada, the GMDF supports nonprofit organizations in the implementation of local, regional, and global projects aimed at enhancing journalists' safety, supporting investigative journalism, and undertaking strategic litigation. The GMDF also supports the Media Freedom Coalition Consultative Network, the High Level Panel of Legal Experts on Media Freedom, and the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of expression and opinion.

Since its inception in 2020, the GMDF has provided over **USD \$4.5 million in financial grants**, supporting more than **150 projects worldwide**. These initiatives have directly benefited over **8,000 journalists, 1,500 lawyers, and 240 NGOs**, leading to significant progress in journalist protection and legal defense, including:

- **1,100+** cases of legal assistance provided to journalists.
- **230+** investigations conducted into crimes against journalists.
- **170+** instances of strategic litigation undertaken, contributing to standard-setting precedents for media freedom and journalist safety.

In Fall 2024, the GMDF launched its first thematic Call for Partnerships, focused on defending environmental journalism. For more info on future Call for Partnerships, scan the QR Code, or go to: www.unesco.org/en/global-media-defence-fund



With the support of the
UNESCO Global Media Defence Fund (GMDF)

The Judges' Initiative

Recognising the critical the role of judicial systems in protecting press freedom, UNESCO collaborates with judges, prosecutors, and law enforcement to ensure three Ps - **Prevention, Protection, and Prosecution** - to guarantee journalists' safety and end impunity for crimes and attacks against them. As judges in many countries enjoy a high degree of independence, their decisions play a key role in guaranteeing the implementation of international standards on freedom of expression and journalist safety.

Strengthening their capacities is essential to ensuring fair trials, protecting access to information, and upholding the rule of law. Since 2013, UNESCO has trained over 36,000 judicial actors and more than 12,000 law enforcement agents through a series of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) and field trainings

Support to Parliamentarians

Developed with the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the Centre for Law and Democracy the most recent **Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on "Freedom of Expression for Parliaments and Their Members"** to support parliamentarians and their staff in gaining specialised knowledge on protecting freedom of expression is still open for registration.

"At a time when journalists face mounting legal threats, UNESCO stands firm to promote the safety of journalists and freedom of expression. Through its initiatives, such as the Global Media Defence Fund or the Judges Initiative, we are working to ensure that legal systems and the key legal actors reinforce journalists' safety and end impunity for crimes against journalists."

Sylvie Coudray
Director for Freedom of Expression, Media development and Media and Information Literacy (CI/FMD) and Secretary of the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC)

UNESCO works for freedom of expression and the rule of law: publications and resources for the judiciary

This complementary [brochure](#) to the Judges' Initiative provides a comprehensive list of UNESCO's key publications and resources for judicial actors. It includes a global toolkit, guidelines, a training manual, and a guide for amicus curiae interventions. The materials cover critical themes such as freedom of expression during COVID-19, the right to protest, data protection and privacy.

Guidelines for the Governance of Digital Platforms

All stakeholders share responsibility for sustaining an enabling environment for freedom of expression and the right to information, while ensuring there is an open, safe and secure environment for users and non-users. The [guidelines](#) outline a set of duties, responsibilities and roles for states, digital platforms, intergovernmental organizations, civil society, media, academia, the technical community and other stakeholders to enable the environment where freedom of expression and information are in the core of digital platforms governance processes.

The “misuse” of the judicial system to attack freedom of expression: Trends, Challenges, Responses

The [brief](#) addresses current trends, challenges and responses worldwide on defamation and related laws, with a special focus on abusive practices such as 'forum shopping' and Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPPs).

The misuse of financial laws to pressure, silence and intimidate journalists and media outlets

The [brief](#) analyses the growing trend of the use of allegations of financial crimes to target and abuse independent and critical media and journalists and provides recommendations for states, intergovernmental organizations, CSOs, lawyers and tax regulators.

All materials can be found on UNESCO's Digital Library: unesdoc.unesco.org/home

SPOTLIGHT ON

UN National Plan of Action for the Safety of Journalists

The **UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity**

emerged from a process initiated in 2010 at the request of UNESCO's Intergovernmental Council for the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC).

Endorsed by the UN Chief Executives Board on April 12, 2012, it has received support through resolutions passed by the General Assembly, the Human Rights Council, and UNESCO.

The primary goal of the UN Plan of Action is to **foster a free and safe environment for journalists and media workers**, whether in conflict or non-conflict areas, thereby **promoting peace, democracy, and global development**.

To access the UN Plan of Action, scan the QR Code:



To access UNESCO's report on the outcomes of the regional and thematic consultations, scan the QR code:



The Plan encompasses various initiatives, including **the creation of an inter-agency mechanism** to enhance the contributions of each UN entity and ensure coherence across the UN; **collaboration with States to develop laws and other measures** that protect freedom of expression and the safety of journalists; and the establishment of partnerships aimed at **raising awareness and encouraging initiatives**.

In 2022, to mark the tenth anniversary of the Plan of Action, UNESCO published a report summarising the **outcomes of regional and thematic consultations**, and provides concrete recommendations for future implementation of the Plan of Action.

The OSCE

The **Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)** comprises 57 States from Europe, Central Asia and North America, and is the world's largest regional security organization. The OSCE monitors media developments in its participating States for violations of free expression.

This includes monitoring and demanding accountability for murders, attacks and harassment of journalists and prosecution of journalists and members of the media for their professional activities; reviewing legislation that can affect free expression and legislation regulating the media. The OSCE also engages in media development through training and support for editors and journalists.

OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media

The Representative on Freedom of the Media (RFoM), an independent OSCE Institution, has a unique mandate to protect and promote media freedom in all 57 OSCE participating States.

The RFoM's activities include observing media developments as part of an early warning function and helping participating States abide by their commitments to freedom of expression and free media.

Jan Braathu (Norway) is the sixth OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, appointed in December 2024.

Find out more about the RFoM's work at: www.osce.org/representative-on-freedom-of-media

The OSCE's **comprehensive approach to security** integrates not only political and military aspects, but also economic and environmental issues, and human rights, including media freedom.

When journalists and other media actors can work independently and safely, citizens have access to accurate, trustworthy information; authorities are held accountable; and constructive public debate can flourish.

A freer flow of information helps prevent or de-escalate conflicts by exposing harmful rhetoric, disinformation campaigns, and human rights abuses before they spiral further.

A [new report](#), featured overleaf, by the OSCE RFoM on "**media freedom, democracy, and security**" provides clear empirical evidence to this end.

SPOTLIGHT ON

Media Freedom, Democracy and Security

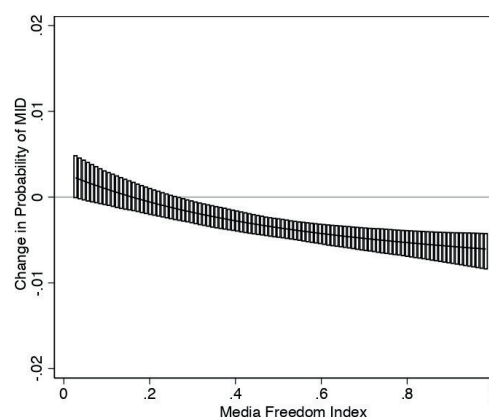


A key finding of the report 'Media freedom, democracy, and security' is that **free media reduces the risk of international armed conflict, internal armed conflict, and state repression**, both by putting security concerns on the public and political agendas, and by providing the public with accurate and timely information about the risks, realities and horrors of armed conflict.

The report is part of a project dedicated to strategic dialogues on the interdependency of media freedom and security and builds on the OSCE RFoM's earlier report "Can there be security without media freedom?" which notes that violations of media freedom often foreshadow wider human rights backsliding and a general deterioration of security.

A **shrinking space for independent media and the spread of "weaponized" disinformation by both state and non-state actors is undermining public trust and polarizing societies**, thereby weakening the foundations of stability and security. The graph, shown right, (from page 13 of the report) shows that it is less likely for states with higher

levels of media freedom to engage in international armed conflict. The graph plots the marginal effect of media freedom on militarized interstate disputes (MID). The metric for the y-axis is the change in the estimated probability of a militarized interstate dispute when comparing a pair of countries. **Put simply, free media promotes international peace.**



The resulting **"upside-down version of trust"** – wherein propaganda outlets gain credibility while legitimate media are labelled 'fake news' – deeply harms social cohesion and public trust in institutions.

To access the report, please scan the QR Code above.



The OSCE RFoM responded to the challenges highlighted by the [Media freedom, democracy, and security](#) report by launching the FoM Dialogues, which includes two primary components:

A Dialogue Platform

A series of structured dialogues bringing together state officials, media community, civil society, and academia in a concerted effort to safeguard and expand the crucial link between media freedom and security.

By sharing insights, experiences, and policy options, participants develop cooperative strategies to ensure states meet their international commitments on media freedom.

These dialogues look at issues such as disinformation and cross-sectoral areas where media freedom can have a significant contribution, such as the climate crisis.



A Public Interest Framework

Guidance for a public interest framework responds to new realities, in which today's information ecosystem requires new governance approaches for upholding media freedom.

The Public Interest Framework is a conceptual and policy-driven concept aimed at ensuring that the information ecosystem gives precedence to public interest journalism and other content that serve the public good, to ensure its continued contribution to democracy, peace, and security.

It encompasses principles such as editorial independence, financial sustainability, and regulatory mechanisms that promote high-quality information.

The framework seeks to create an environment where credible, fact-based journalism thrives despite challenges such as disinformation, political influence, and economic constraints. It also aims to convey journalistic ethical values into the contemporary, more eclectic media landscape with a myriad of media actors.

Next Steps

Ultimately, these efforts reflect the OSCE's long-standing position that **human rights and fundamental freedoms, including media freedom, are indispensable for security.**

As emphasized in the OSCE reports on media freedom and security, the weakening independent journalism frequently precedes broader abuses of power and the destabilization of institutions.

Comprehensive security stems from resilient and inclusive public spheres, powered by independent and pluralistic media.

By bringing together different stakeholders, the OSCE RFoM aims for practical pathways to reinforce independent journalism – an essential cornerstone of societal cohesion.

At its core is a renewed commitment to the principle that **an open, pluralistic media environment is the strongest guarantor of lasting peace** and stability throughout the OSCE region.

“In an information ecosystem full of noise, we end up hearing the sound of silence.

To respond to this phenomena, we need new conceptual and policy-driven frameworks that strengthen public interest journalism and other content that serve the public good. Only then can we continue to ensure media freedom's contribution to democracy, peace, and security”

*Deniz Wagner
Adviser,*

*Office of the OSCE
Representative on Freedom of
the Media*

Council of Europe

The **Council of Europe (CoE)** is an international organisation with the goal of upholding human rights, democracy and the rule of law in Europe. It has 46 member states, 27 of which are members of the European Union. The CoE has developed a consistent body of standards supporting media freedom as well as a unique Safety of Journalists Platform.

Platform to promote the protection of journalism and safety of journalists

The Platform reports on serious threats to the safety of journalists and media freedom in Europe in order to reinforce the Council of Europe's response to the threats and member states' accountability.

2025 ▾ Member states Europe-wide

98

journalists currently in detention

24

cases of impunity for murder

Launched in 2015, the **Safety of Journalists Platform** is a collaborative effort between the Council of Europe and a network of 15 prominent press freedom organisations and journalists associations.

Its primary objective is to be a **real-time mechanism for monitoring and addressing threats against journalists and media professionals**, ranging from harassment and physical attacks to legal and political pressures.

The Platform operates by collecting and verifying alerts on serious threats to media freedom and the safety of journalists.

These alerts, submitted by the Platform's partner organisations, are published **to raise awareness and prompt action from national authorities**.

By making these alerts public, the Platform seeks to ensure **accountability and encourage member states to fulfill their commitments** under the European Convention on Human Rights to protect freedom of expression.

To visit the Platform go to <https://fom.coe.int> or scan the QR Code:





2025 Annual Platform Report: Confronting Political Pressure, Disinformation, and the Erosion of Media Independence

The Media Freedom Forum marks the UK launch of the 2025 annual report, on Wednesday 5th March. Covering 2024, the report assesses press freedom trends across Europe, identifying key threats and proposing policy solutions.

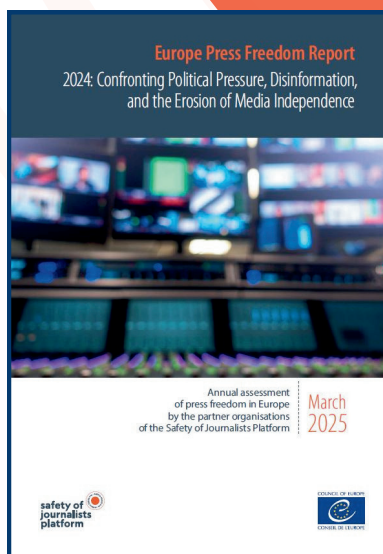
The report is written by the Platform's partner organisations. It takes stock of key areas of law, policy and practices affecting media freedom and safety of journalists in Europe and identifies actions required to improve effective protection of journalists.

While press freedom remains under serious threat, collective action, legal reforms, and international cooperation offer a pathway to sustaining independent journalism.

As the Safety of Journalists Platform marks its 10th anniversary in 2025, it plays a vital role in monitoring and defending media freedom across Europe.

Amid heightened geopolitical tensions, growing mistrust in our institutions, and weakening democracies, an independent media that is empowered to provide us with the facts could hardly be more important. On the launch of our annual report, we take the opportunity to remind governments and international bodies of the need to protect and defend media freedom.

Jessica Ní Mhainín
Head of Policy and Campaigns,
Index of Censorship, a founding
partner organisation of
the Platform of the
Safety of Journalists





Good Practices for Sustainable Media Financing

This [report](#) collects good practices of media sustainability at national levels. Analysing some trends in Council of Europe member states can help in forecasting future scenarios and envisaging media policies fit to ensure media sustainability and plurality in a changing media landscape. To do so, the report describes the relevant trends in the news media sector, highlighting the conditions that limit or boost the viability of the news media industry and best practices in news media funding.

Guidance Note on countering the spread of online mis- and disinformation through fact-checking and platform design solutions in a human rights compliant manner

This [Guidance Note](#) is structured around three pillars: fact-checking, platform-design solutions and user empowerment, and provides practical guidance and recommendations to policymakers and stakeholders on countering the dissemination of online mis- and disinformation.

Guidelines on the Responsible Implementation of Artificial Intelligence in Journalism

These [guidelines](#) are an important contribution to the promotion of a rule of law-based and human rights-compliant public communication sphere. They provide practical guidance to the relevant addressees, in particular news media organisations, but also States, technology providers and digital platforms that disseminate news, detailing how AI systems should be used to support the production of journalism.

Recommendation on countering the use of strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPPs)

The [Recommendation](#) provides a definition of SLAPPs, as well as guidelines intended to apply to civil lawsuits, as well as to administrative and criminal law contexts, including legal intimidation tactics. The Recommendation also identifies a non-exhaustive list of 10 indicators to outstanding features of SLAPPs.

CoE & Media Freedom

Division for Cooperation on Freedom of Expression

Helps member states and beyond implement standards by providing legal and policy advice on relevant reforms and legislation.

It also provides assistance through capacity-building and training tailored to the national institutions, media regulators, public broadcasters, law enforcement, journalists, civil society and other relevant actors.

Steering Committee on Media and Information Society

Steers the CoE's work in the fields of freedom of expression, media, internet governance and other information society-related issues and oversees the work on personal data protection.

The CDMSI advises the Committee of Ministers and facilitates and promotes co-operation among CoE member States by developing common policies, and reviewing their implementation.



For more about the campaign see: www.coe.int/en/web/freedom-expression/safety-of-journalists-campaign

The '**Journalists matter**' campaign for the safety of journalists, is a pan-European project launched by the CoE in October 2023 and expected to last at least until the end of 2027.



Objectives of the campaign:

- promoting the development of corresponding **campaigns at the national level**;
- encouraging states to take measures towards the adoption of **national Action Plans** for the safety of journalists;
- providing help towards the development of appropriate **legal and institutional frameworks** at a national level;
- **changing the situation** effectively and significantly in practice.

The basis of the campaign is the [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2016\)4 on the protection of journalism and safety of journalists and other media actors](#), which is articulated around several pillars: **protection** – the topic of the last year of the campaign; **prosecution** – this year's theme; **prevention**; as well as **promotion and awareness-raising**.

SPOTLIGHT ON

The UK National Action Plan for the Safety of Journalists



Established in 2020, the **UK National Committee on the Safety of Journalists** brings together representatives from government, journalism, policing, prosecution services and civil society to work collaboratively to:

- Coordinate work across key partners involved in the protection of journalists' safety;
- Assess how the UK is protecting the safety of journalists, ensuring they are not subject to violence, or threats of violence;
- Identify and agree priorities for journalist safety and develop and publish a National Action Plan for the Safety of Journalists operating within the UK;
- Maintain oversight of the delivery and effectiveness of the National Action Plan.

The **UK's National Action Plan** was published in March 2021 and initially focused on online harassment and physical threats. It was updated in 2023, to include Strategic Lawsuits against Public Participation (SLAPPs), and an expert SLAPPs Taskforce was also convened.

The UK NAP encompasses five steps:

1. Increase understanding of the problem;
2. Enhance the criminal justice system response in tackling crimes against journalists;
3. Support journalists and their employers to build the resources they need to protect personal safety;
4. Help online platforms to tackle the wider issue of abuse online; and
5. Improve public recognition of the value of journalists.

As part of the NAP, the National Union of Journalists (NUJ) and the Society of Media Editors published a **Journalists Safety Toolkit** - www.journalists-safety.tools.

To support building an evidence base of threats, the NUJ also created **Journalists Safety Tracker** - journalistsafetytracker.org.uk, which allows journalists to report incidences of harassment.

To access the UK's NAP, scan the QR Code:



Media Freedom and the UK

The UK has often been heralded as a global leader on media freedom. In 2019, under the last government, the UK co-founded, together with Canada, the Media Freedom Coalition (see page 9) and made this issue a key foreign policy priority.

In October 2024, UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer stated in an op-ed that: **“Journalism is the lifeblood of democracy. Journalists are guardians of democratic values,”** and committed the current government to **“always champion press freedoms.”**

Protecting media at home and abroad, particularly in today's climate, however requires sustained action and investment.

With a greater interpenetration between the domestic and international environment, it is also important for **the UK to recognise the proactive role it can play** in addressing new and existing challenges. This includes taking steps to **protect journalists working in exile, counter transnational repression** and **prevent the misuse of the UK legal system** to shut down public interest journalism.

“At a dangerous moment for journalism worldwide, we need the UK to step up and be a champion of media freedom.”

Without a free, independent press there can be no democracy; journalism must be defended and those who attack journalists must be held to account, both at home and around the globe.”

*Fiona O'Brien
UK Director
Reporters without Borders*

'The Future of News' Report

In November 2024, the **UK House of Lords Communication and Digital Select Committee**, published a the findings of its comprehensive inquiry into **'The Future of News.'**

Shared here are a snapshot of some of the report's key recommendations for the UK Government:

- **Support local media:** This could include tax breaks for hiring local reporters, journalist training schemes and expanded Local Democracy Reporting Service.
- **Champion responsible AI:** The Committee criticises "tepid" previous efforts to resolve copyright disputes and calls for updated legislation to help news providers strike mutually beneficial deals with AI firms. This should include transparency measures to let rightsholders check if their material has been used to train AI, alongside new sanctions for rule-breaking.
- **Take competition seriously:** The Competition and Markets Authority should investigate allegations of anti-competitive practices by big tech firms. Ofcom's rules on media plurality should be updated to take account of AI firms' growing influence in creating news through generative AI summaries.
- **Remain proportionate on mis/disinformation:** Measures to tackle disinformation should not undermine confidence in free speech or fuel public distrust.
- **Tackle SLAPPs:** investigative journalists continue to face legal intimidation and security risks. New legislation is needed, alongside stronger regulatory fining powers and better protections against transnational security threats.

"There's a real risk of a 'two tier' media environment developing in the UK. Much of the work to avoid that happening must be led by the media itself.

But a thriving news industry serving all parts of the public also relies on a legal framework that protects media freedom to scrutinise the rich and powerful and to operate independently in a tech-dominated world."

Baroness Tina Stowell
Former chair of the House of Lords
Communications and Digital Select Committee

To access 'The Future of News' Report in full, scan the QR code:



SPOTLIGHT ON

Strategic Lawsuits against Public Participation (SLAPPs)

COUNTERING THE USE OF STRATEGIC LAWSUITS AGAINST PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SLAPPS) – RECOMMENDATION AND EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM



A SLAPP - or **Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation** - is an abusive legal threat aimed at stifling public participation and protected speech. They are brought by the powerful and wealthy to avoid scrutiny and intimidate public watchdogs into either not publishing or removing information from the public domain.

Recently, there has been considerable momentum globally to understand and address the ways in which SLAPP suits undermine the rule of law, democracy and human rights. In the UK and in Europe, following targeted awareness raising efforts by experts and civil society groups, there have been some positive developments to combat these meritless lawsuits.

In February 2024, a **EU Anti-SLAPP Directive** was adopted establishing minimum standards for protecting public watchdogs against SLAPPs. Elements introduced by the directive include procedural safeguards, support for the defendant in court proceedings, early dismissal, award of costs and protection against third country judgements, including those

made in the UK. EU member states have until April 2026 to transpose the directive into national law.

Meanwhile, in April 2024, the **CoE Committee of Ministers approved Recommendation CM/Rec(2024)2**, which establishes a set of minimum standards for CoE member states to tackle SLAPPs.

According to the Coalition Against SLAPPs in Europe (CASE), the Recommendation provides a robust and detailed set of standards and will help push non-EU member states to introduce meaningful anti-SLAPP protections of their own.

It is also particularly important in assisting courts and national authorities in identifying SLAPPs, thanks to a long list of "SLAPP indicators".

The Recommendation is not legally binding the same way the EU Directive will be on member states, but offers a clear and robust pathway for national anti-SLAPPs laws and protections.

RESOURCES

FPC, JFJ and IBAHRI previously organised three UK Anti-SLAPP Conferences (2021-3). Its possible to watch back the sessions and find other resources on the conference website - anti-slappconference.jfj.fund

Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act (ECCTA): strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPPs)

This [policy paper](#) published by the UK Government provides background information to the anti-SLAPP provisions in the UK's ECCTA, adopted in October 2023. The provisions are due to come into force in 2025.

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights: The impact of SLAPPs on human rights and how to respond

This [briefing](#) examines the impact of SLAPPs on human rights, as well as the right to public participation. It also suggests measures that States should take to tackle SLAPPs, including the decriminalization of defamation, blasphemy and other offences; the adoption of anti-SLAPPs laws; and the possibility for courts to dismiss SLAPPs through abuse of process provisions.

Please note the resources on SLAPPs from UNESCO (p.17) and CoE (p.25).

Anti-SLAPP laws are not a new concept. Since the 1990s, anti-SLAPP laws have been adopted in 30+ states in United States, three regions of Canada; and in the Australian Capital Territory.

Currently there are no universal statutory protections to counter SLAPPs in UK law.

While limited provisions to protect reporting on economic crime were included in the 2023 Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act (ECCTA) these are only due to come into force later this year, and would not protect everyone who speaks out in the public interest.

At the start of 2024, a standalone SLAPPs Bill was introduced into the UK Parliament through a Private Members' Bill. Backed by the previous government, it was making positive progress only to fall away due to the General Election.

Amendments made to the draft SLAPPs Bill, committee stage highlighted similar, pre-existing flaws in the anti-SLAPP provisions in the ECCTA. The introduction of a new standalone anti-SLAPP Law, superseding these flawed provisions, would relieve concerns in this area and create certainty as to the UK's course to address this issue.

To see the UK Anti-SLAPP Coalition's model UK Anti-SLAPP law, scan the QR code or visit antislapp.uk:



The UK Anti-SLAPP Coalition

The UK Anti-SLAPP Coalition is an informal working group established in January 2021, co-chaired by FPC, Index on Censorship and CliDef. It comprises a number of freedom of expression, whistleblowing, anti-corruption and transparency organisations, as well as others researching, monitoring and highlighting cases of legal intimidation and SLAPPs, as well as seeking to develop remedies for mitigation and redress.

Solutions have fallen into three main areas: legislation, regulation and cultural change. Aside from legislative and regulatory reform, there have been other positive anti-SLAPP developments, including:

- a change in policy to prevent sanctioned individuals being given automatic licence to pursue SLAPP cases;
- the inclusion of SLAPPs included in the UK's National Action Plan on the Safety of Journalists; and
- the establishment of a cross-governmental SLAPPs Taskforce, to develop non-legislative solutions.

The Coalition continues to provide support to those subject to SLAPPs, and to campaign for a universal UK Anti-SLAPP Law.

The Coalition against SLAPPs in Europe

CASE is a coalition of non-governmental organisations from across Europe united in recognition of the threat posed to public watchdogs by SLAPPs.

The campaign work by CASE was instrumental in the realisation of both the EU Anti-SLAPP Directive and the CoE Recommendation (*see previous page*). CASE is now monitoring and supporting the implementation, as well as continuing to provide support to those subject to SLAPP threats. Since 2019, CASE members have worked with Amsterdam Law Clinics, part of the Law Faculty at the University of Amsterdam (UvA), to also catalogue and analyse SLAPP cases from across Europe, thus far collecting together 570+ cases over a 10 year period.



antislapp.uk



www.the-case.eu

About the Organisers

FPC, JFJ and IBAHRI are delighted to be realising the inaugural UK Media Freedom Forum in partnership with City St George, University of London.



www.jfj.fund

[@jfjfund](https://twitter.com/jfjfund)

The Justice for Journalists Foundation (JFJ) is a London-based charity whose mission is to fight impunity for attacks against the media. JFJ monitors attacks against media workers and funds investigations worldwide into violence and abuse against professional and citizen journalists.

JFJ also organises media security training and creates educational materials to raise awareness about the dangers to media freedom and methods of protection from them. Since 2020, JFJ has funded a number of media freedom related projects, including FPC's Unsafe for Scrutiny project.



www.fpc.org.uk

[@fpcthinktank](https://twitter.com/fpcthinktank)

The Foreign Policy Centre (FPC) is an independent, non-partisan international affairs think tank based in the UK. FPC's mission is to inform both the British and global debate, seeking sustainable solutions for the world's most pressing challenges.

FPC takes a global perspective, informed by the values of democracy, human rights, good governance and conflict resolution. Media freedom is a core theme for FPC, particularly through the work conducted as part of its Unsafe for Scrutiny project, which examines issues at the nexus of safety of journalists and anti-corruption.

Notably, FPC published the 2022 landmark report 'London Calling': The issue of legal intimidation and SLAPPs against media emanating from the United Kingdom', with ARTICLE 19.



www.ibanet.org/IBAHRI

[@IBHARI](#)

The International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute ([IBAHRI](#)) works with the global legal community to promote and protect human rights and the independence of the legal profession worldwide.

Since 2019, IBAHRI has acted as the Secretariat to The High Level Panel of Legal Experts on Media Freedom, the independent advisory body of the Media Freedom Coalition.

The High Level Panel comprises a diverse group of leading international lawyers tasked with providing legal advice for the purposes of promoting and protecting a vibrant, free, and independent media.



www.city.ac.uk

[@CityUniLondon](#)

Based in the heart of London, City St George's, University of London is a short walk from both historic Fleet Street and the Inns of Court. City's Department of Journalism is a nationally renowned centre for journalism education and research.

Founded in 1976, the Department has over 7000+ alumni at the top of newsrooms around the world, from the BBC and the Washington Post to the Times of India, Al Jazeera and Tik Tok.

City is ranked 1st in the UK for Journalism, 1st in the UK for Media and Communications, and 1st in the UK for graduate jobs and employability in media.

Supporting Organisations

We are grateful for the financial support and assistance of our partners to organise the inaugural UK Media Freedom Forum:



fom.coe.int/en/accueil



www.coe.int/en



With the support of the
UNESCO Global Media Defence Fund (GMDf)

www.unesco.org/en



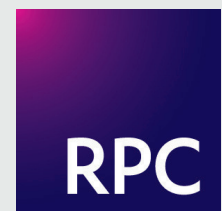
www.osce.org

Sponsored by

RPC is an international law firm specialising in media and technology, retail and consumer, insurance, commercial and financial disputes and regulatory, with offices in London, Bristol, Hong Kong and Singapore.

It has the largest and one of the most highly regarded media defence teams in the UK, recognised in the market as the "go to" firm for publishers and journalists facing media litigation, with long-standing experience of defending public interest reporting.

www.rpclegal.com



Acknowledgements

This conference booklet was prepared by the Foreign Policy Centre (FPC) to tie in with the inaugural UK Media Freedom Forum. Information included within this booklet was kindly provided by our supporting organisations, supplemented with additional material from the organisers' network as well as from research conducted by FPC. Unless otherwise indicated any views expressed are those of FPC's Director Susan Coughtrie. Published March 2025.



Anti-SLAPP team



Anti-SLAPP expertise – RPC has a dedicated anti-SLAPP team, led by head of media Rupert Cowper-Coles who is the only private practice solicitor to have given evidence to the Commons Justice Select Committee on “SLAPPs” and is the UK’s appointed expert on the issue to the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE)



Disputes powerhouse – with over 250 lawyers undertaking contentious work we can handle a number of large, complex disputes simultaneously. Over the last 5 years, we have had more cases in The Lawyer’s top 20 than any other law firm. We defend commercial and media litigation robustly but ethically and are well versed in responding to “SLAPP” tactics



Media expertise – we are passionate about protecting freedom of expression and never act against the media. Our market-leading media defendant team acts for many of the world’s leading publishers and platforms



International coverage – we can service international clients through our foreign offices or our network of referral firms



Managing costs – with clients ranging from private individuals to global companies, we always seek to ensure litigation we are instructed on is resourced to reflect the needs of the litigation and the client’s resources



Value and transparency – we understand the importance of providing transparency on fees through regular cost reporting and working to ensure estimates reflect litigation developments

Contacts



Rupert Cowper-Coles
Partner
T +44 20 3060 6295
M +44 7990 598008
rupert.cowper-coles@rpclegal.com



Samantha Thompson
Senior Associate
T +44 20 3060 6451
M +44 7590 883837
samantha.j.thompson@rpclegal.com

Anti-SLAPP Group
Anti-SLAPP@rpclegal.com

Snapshot of RPC

We are a law firm that works with relentless determination for you. We listen, understand and deliver.

2024
Top ranked
Commercial and
Corporate Litigation
CHAMBERS

2024
Top ranked
Defamation/
Reputation
Management
CHAMBERS AND LEGAL 500

Specialists

140+

Partners

610+

total lawyers

1,120+
people

“RPC are our go-to English law firm for media-related legal threats, disputes and litigation.”

Chambers 2025

“The leading defendant firm, with a superb team which has great strength at every level.”

Legal 500 2024

Additional Resources

Many of the organisations participating in the UK Media Freedom Forum have resources, tools or services that can support journalists and others working on media issues. Some resources have already been linked to throughout this booklet; included below are three practical examples:

Index on Censorship 'Am I facing a SLAPP?' Tool

An online tool specifically aimed at helping journalists to understand whether the legal threat or action they are facing might be classified as a SLAPP.

The questions asked in this assessment are based on research carried out by Index on Censorship into how SLAPPs against journalists most commonly manifest themselves. If your answers coincide with the most common symptoms of a SLAPP, then you are more likely to be told that you are facing a SLAPP. This assessment is intended as a helpful tool and not as legal advice.

www.indexoncensorship.org/am-i-facing-a-slapps-lawsuit

Media Defence Legal Support

Media Defence supports journalists – including citizen journalists, bloggers, broadcasters, photojournalists, cartoonists or fact-checkers – and news outlets when they are confronted with legal action as a

result of their reporting. They can provide funding for your legal defence, help you find a lawyer or provide technical legal support to your lawyer.

Media Defence can also help you bring legal action to compel the state to protect your rights if they have been violated. 73% of the cases Media Defence have supported have had a successful or partially successful outcome.

www.mediadefence.org/get-help

Reporters without Borders Support for Exiled Journalists

In 2024, Reporters Without Borders (RSF) launched a free e-learning course for exiled journalists based in the UK, to help them continue their vital reporting.

Developed in partnership with the National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ), the course covers topics like UK media law, public affairs, writing styles and an introduction to the UK media industry.

For more information, contact fobrien@rsf.org

To access the conference website,
for the agenda and speaker list,
scan the QR Code below:



mediafreedomforum.co.uk



Justice for Journalists
Foundation for International
Investigations of Crime against Media



The
**Foreign Policy
Centre**



Human Rights
Institute



CITY
ST GEORGE'S
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON