

Set My People Intervention Working Session 6 Fundamental Freedoms 1, Including address by the OSCE Representative on Freedom of The Media

The story The Emperor and his New Clothes. Hans Christian Andersen

In spite of the cheering of the crowd, the child pointed out, in innocence, “The Emperor is naked.”

Is it true? Yes.
Is it provocative? Yes
Is it a fact? Yes
Is it offensive? Yes
Is it critical? Yes.

Journalists are like this child who in innocence communicate a fact and truth to make the world a better place. When protecting freedom and justice, will it offend? Yes. Will it be provocative? Yes.
Will it be painful? Yes, just as when the surgeon diagnoses a patient with cancer and then advises a painful treatment.

Freedom of expression gives a platform for debate and critical thinking. Without it there is no accountability. The result is that you will have one dominant narrative which is not allowed to be questioned and which is not based on truth, facts or common sense.

When you control the tongue you control the whole body

Two examples

1) Blasphemy law in Islam is choking freedom worldwide.
If I say, ‘I do not believe in Muhammed as a prophet of God,’ then I am accused of blasphemy. It is ridiculous because if I believe that Muhammed is a prophet of God then I would have been a Muslim, but I am not. Likewise if I do not accept *Sharia* law I am also accused of blasphemy. The murder of Theo Van Gogh and Charlie Hebdo, as well as honour killing, are examples of the application of blasphemy law in Islam.

2) The midwife story
The midwife telling the parents “wow, you have girl,” or “wow, you have a boy.” I hope this will not be criminalised in the OSCE countries in the future

22 Sep. 2016

Challenges

Journalists face numerous challenges by state and non-state actors:

Blackmail, harassment, imprisonment and death threats, all with the aim to silence them. The purchase of big newspapers by the state or state supporters, and the laying off of good journalists are further challenges.

This is why it is very important to protect Freedom of Expression on the internet as it is currently the only public platform free from the influence of the State.

Without Freedom of Speech, People are controlled:

When the Media is controlled, people are controlled. Because when you only feed the public the information you want, and stop them from questioning or accessing alternative narratives; you control them. It becomes propaganda.

Truth is never afraid of being challenged or questioned.

Therefore, critical thinking and freedom of expression are crucial for development, growth and knowledge. It is key for accountability and the well-being of the community.

We would like to remember some heroes of Freedom Of Expression

Here is a list of journalists who were murdered by non-state actors:

Veronica Guerin murdered 1996 in Ireland

Theo Van Gogh murdered 2004 in the Netherlands

Hrant Dink murdered 2007 in Turkey

Marie Colvin murdered 2012 in Syria

Camilla Lepage murdered 2014 in the Central African Republic

Charlie Hebdo murdered 2015 in France

Avjit Roy and a number of other Bangladeshi bloggers was murdered 2015 in Bangladesh.

“Never, for the sake of peace and quiet, deny your own experience or convictions.”

-Dag Hammarskjöld.