



World Press Freedom Day 2023

Side Event

Can there be Security without Media Freedom?

organised by the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media
in partnership with North Macedonia as the 2023 OSCE Chairpersonship in Office,
Albania and Switzerland as elected Members of the UN Security Council

*3 May, 13.00-14.00
UN Headquarters, room tbc*

When the mandate of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media (RFOM) was established over 25 years ago, the OSCE participating States recognized that media freedom is a basic component of democracy and essential to a free and open society. The Mandate is unique, as it is ingrained within the organization's comprehensive security concept, making media freedom a key pillar of security.

Against this backdrop, this side event aims to shed light on the interconnected nature of the growing challenges to media freedom and their impact on peace and security. New technologies have radically transformed the way information is shared and consumed, including in ways that erode the traditional role of media in our societies. Illegal, false or malign content is flooding our information spaces, causing growing distrust in the media and polarization in our societies. Disinformation and propaganda, while not new phenomena, have gotten a new impetus by the range, speed and ease by which they permeate our public and political life.

Freedom of the media is important in all times, but it becomes vital in times of crises and conflict. However, information can also become a weapon of war, where false narratives are being produced to justify violence and aggression. This has become clear in the context of the war waged by the Russian Federation against Ukraine as well as in many other armed conflicts around the world.

In other words, aside from being a crucial pillar for safe societies, free speech becomes weaponized to create an information chaos that undermines peace and security. This duality was the starting point for discussions with an Advisory Group of Eminent Experts on Freedom of the Media (AGEEFOM), and led to the RFoM publication – [Can there be Security without Media Freedom?](#)

This side event will provide an opportunity to discuss key findings of this report with members of the expert group. The discussion is closely linked to the main topic of this year's World Press Freedom Day "Shaping a Future of Rights – Freedom of expression as a driver for all other human rights" and aims to highlight how media freedom contributes to security and to the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Speakers

- **H.E. Bujar Osmani**, Minister of Foreign Affairs of North Macedonia and 2023 OSCE Chairperson in Office (*tbc*)
- **Teresa Ribeiro**, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media
- **Joel Simon**, Founding Director of the Journalism Protection Initiative at the Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism in New York City, Member of the AGEEFOM
- **Erica Marat**, Professor at the College of International Security Affairs, National Defense University, Washington D.C., Member of the AGEEFOM
- **Representative of Albania**, elected Member of the UN Security Council (2022-23)

Moderator

- **Jürgen Heissel**, Director of the Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media