



Press Corps/Palestine News Network

Press Corps

Reporter: Eli Davis

Topic: HRC / Safety of Journalists

In the current world with social media, accurate journalism is more important than ever. Journalists can provide critical information to the people, but some countries believe that in order to maintain control censorship is necessary. Palestine News Network (PNN) believes the Press is a constructive resource that can help, not harm, your country. The issue is that some countries view this differently and have even gone to such extreme measures as murder. On the first day of the conference PNN, visited the Human Rights Council on the topic of Safety of Journalists.

As a reporter for PNN, I focused on what countries are doing to make journalists safe, and why journalists should be able to report on the government uncensored. When I arrived the committee was currently in an informal consultation discussing possible ideas/solutions to make journalists safe. However, there were differing views on this topic. Some delegations thought that freedom of press was a good thing, however some countries wanted to control what the

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press could say in order to stop propaganda about the government from spreading. One of these delegations was the delegation Vietnam. When asked why they wanted to monitor the press they said, "They (the free media) cause propaganda to spread."

One of the countries that wanted freedom of press was the United Kingdom. They viewed the ability for the press to report uncensored as a good thing, and that it, "Built trust between the government and the people." They did also recognize that this is hard to achieve with a dictatorship, and did mention that they were willing to compromise as long as the journalists had a say in what they could and could not report on. I share this view and believe that journalists should be able to report freely and that this is key to improving government.

The committee also had many solutions to improve the safety of journalists, since over 250 journalists were put in prison in 2018. In their draft resolution they called for countries to take action and report crimes against journalists. They also suggested that the UN set up a journalists hotline for journalists that were in danger. In order to pass the resolution they had to compromise and suggest that governments should let unbiased employees groom through stories, however they made sure to specify that this only applies to the press and not every single person in the country. Lastly they also stressed the importance of identification of press workers.

I think that this is a fine resolution, although there should definitely make sure that the groomers are as unbiased as possible. If they are not this could lead to a serious problem down the line if governments were to unfairly control the media. Because of this PNN would ultimately like to remove this process altogether even though it could stop false information

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from spreading. Their resolution also dresses recognition of crimes against journalists since currently over 90% of crimes against journalists go unreported. I, as well as PNN, would like to see more to make sure journalists are safe as well as feel safe reporting on their own government.