



Global Conference for Media Freedom

Session: 'Reset Required? Evaluating the first two years of the Media Freedom Coalition'

Date: Wednesday 9th February 2022, 16:00-18:00 (Tallinn time)

Venue: Tallinn Creative Hub, Main Stage (<https://kultuurikatel.ee/en/tallinn-creative-hub/how-to-get-here/>)

Summary of session: This event will present and discuss the findings of an independent academic evaluation of the Media Freedom Coalition (MFC), reviewing its progress since its inception in 2019. Today's media freedom issues will be explored through the lens of the MFC's response to them, with the aim to identify key areas for improvement or development of the MFC to strengthen its work moving forward.

Chaired by **Jodie Ginsberg**, Chief Executive Officer at Internews Europe, this facilitated discussion will be framed around thematic sections of the evaluation report, also entitled 'Reset Required? Evaluating the first two years of the Media Freedom Coalition'. These themes include: '*Promoting Accountability in responding to Media Freedom Violations*', '*Internal Democratic Backsliding and Accountability within the MFC*' and '*Media sustainability - what is the MFC doing to support?*'.

A core panel, including representatives from the evaluation team, the MFC's Consultative Network, and the MFC Coalition, will be present throughout the event. They will respond to intervening speeches made by selected media freedom and development experts, who will be introducing the themes, and key concerns related to them, in turn. **Dr Bahia Tahzib**, Human Rights Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the next MFC co-chair, will provide the closing remarks.

The core panel:

- **Can Yeginsu**, Deputy chair of the High Level Panel of Legal Experts on Media Freedom
- **Jeffrey Marder**, Executive Director of the Human Rights and Indigenous Affairs Policy Division, Global Affairs Canada
- **Owais Aslam Ali**, Secretary General – Pakistan Press Foundation & Co-Chair of the Media Freedom Coalition Consultative Network
- **Dr Mary Myers**, lead author of the MFC evaluation 'Reset Required? Evaluating the first two years of the Media Freedom Coalition'

Intervening speakers:

- **Rebecca Vincent**, Director of International Campaigns, Reporters without Borders (RSF)
- **Lina Yassin**, Academic Researcher from Sudan, former journalist and contributor to the MFC evaluation
- **Susan Coughtrie**, Project Director, Foreign Policy Centre
- **Nick Benequista**, Senior Director, Centre for International Media Assistance
- **Ica Fernandez**, Academic Researcher from the Philippines and contributor to the MFC evaluation
- **Dr. Martin Scott**, Senior Lecturer in Media and International Development, University of East Anglia and member of the evaluation team

The event is being organised by Internews Europe and the Foreign Policy Centre (FPC), together with the academic team who have been conducting the evaluation of the MFC. Any queries regarding the event can be directed to Susan Coughtrie by email (susan.coughtrie@fpc.org.uk) or mobile (+447887534165).

Event format and timings:

Format: A facilitated discussion, based around the thematic sections of the MFC evaluation report. The core panellists will be present throughout the event to discuss the themes, which will be introduced by 1-2 intervening speakers highlighting issues of concern.

16:00 - 16:10: Opening remarks and introduction of the core panellists

Explanation of aim/format of the event by Chair (5 minutes)

Brief introductions by each panels as to their role (5 minutes)

16:10- 16:30: Theme One: Promoting Accountability in responding to Media Freedom Violations

How is MFC responding to media freedom violations? Is the naming and shaming by MFC working? What more should the MFC do to respond to incidents of media freedom violations and address impunity?

Intervener (5 minutes):

- **Rebecca Vincent**, Director of International Campaigns, Reporters without Borders (RSF)

Main respondent from core panel: **Dr. Mary Myers**

Additional responses from other core panellists

16:30-17:00: Theme Two: Internal Democratic Backsliding and Accountability within the MFC

What is the MFC doing to deal with threats to media freedom from within its member states? How can members uphold the principles of MFC and hold each other accountable? What opportunities are there for greater collaboration to address media freedom issues?

Interveners (5 minutes each):

- **Lina Yassin**, Academic researcher and former journalist from Sudan
- **Susan Coughtrie**, Project Director, Foreign Policy Centre

Main respondent from core panel: **Can Yeginsu**

Additional responses from other core panellists

17:00-17:30: Theme Three: Media sustainability - what is the MFC doing to support?

What are the economic threats to journalism and what are the solutions? What has the MFC done so far, is it working? Is simply investing more funds enough or what more should be done?

Interveners (5 minutes each):

- **Nick Benequista**, Senior Director, Centre for International Media Assistance
- **Ica Fernandez**, Academic researcher from the Philippines (pre-recorded video)

Main respondent from core panel: **Owais Aslam Ali**

Additional responses from other core panellists

17:30-17:50: Developing and Defending the Media Moving Forward

What next for media freedom and the MFC? How can the MFC better shine a spotlight to defend against attacks on media freedom? What should be done to raise the profile of MFC work, integrate it into wider initiatives and ensure its relevance? What more should be done to support media development?

Intervener (10minutes)

- **Dr. Martin Scott**, Senior Lecturer in Media and International Development, University of East Anglia and part of the academic evaluation team, who will explain the recommendations.

Main respondent from core panel: **Jeffrey Marder**

Additional responses from other core panellists (*please note, these will effectively be final remarks and so we would ask the remaining core panellists to provide their key recommendations about what the MFC could/should do moving forward*).

17:50-18:00 Closing remarks and key takeaways

Short speech (max 10 mins) by **Dr Bahia Tahzib**, Human Rights Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherland, as next MFC co-chair

Event is wrapped up by the Chair