

E3 and Netherlands Foreign Ministers Statement on World Press Freedom Day

Press release

Joint Statement by Dutch Foreign Minister Blok, French Foreign Minister Le Drian, German Foreign Minister Maas and British Foreign Secretary Raab ahead of tomorrow's World Press Freedom Day.



Today, we celebrate the crucial role journalists play around the world. This year's theme "Journalism without fear or favour" emphasises the importance of taking action to secure independent journalism as a prerequisite for a functioning democracy.

World Press Freedom Day is the opportunity to voice our support for journalists to continue providing the public with reliable, quality information – a task that has not only become more important but also much more difficult since the COVID-19 outbreak.

We must oppose all attempts by any state to use the pandemic to adopt restrictions on press freedom, silence debate, abuse journalists or spread misinformation. It is deeply concerning to see that across the world, publications are contracting and closing and journalists being made redundant because of falling revenues.

Especially in these times, we depend on independent, fact-based and reliable journalism. A free press is crucial for a comprehensive response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Only by keeping the public informed can we prevent a further spread of COVID-19.

We therefore support the UN Secretary-General's call on governments, as well as media and technology companies to counter misinformation with free, accurate, clear and evidence-based information and to avoid excessive efforts that could result in censorship of protected speech. We reiterate our support for the Information and Democracy Partnership and the Media Freedom Coalition.

We urge governments not to use the COVID-19 pandemic as a pretext to restrict press freedom and to protect journalists from harassment, threats, detention or censorship so that information can be disseminated without suppression.

We commend journalists for their important work and will continue to stand up for them and campaign for world press freedom.

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