

World Press Freedom Day 2017

PRESS ORGANIZATIONS PLEDGE TO STRENGTHEN JOURNALISM COMMUNITY IN WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY STATEMENT

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WASHINGTON, DC – May 3, 2017 **World Press Freedom Day 2017** arrives at a time when press institutions worldwide are under siege from forces that are both political and economic.

Combined, these forces threaten democratic society as we know it. The same sweeping structural economic changes that have hollowed out so many newsrooms have produced widespread political anxiety. That anxiety in turn has given rise to scapegoating and kill-the-messenger-ism.

Bearers of what are often bad tidings can't expect to be popular, but journalists cannot take a neutral stand on attacks against themselves. The survival of democracy depends upon a free flow of reliable information.

So as organizations that represent the working press we pledge to:

- Join together in the spirit of craft guilds to provide each other with moral support (including defending our colleagues when attacked) and professional training to make us better guardians of free speech;
- Remind our members that the mission of journalism is not to entertain but to inform the public. Generating audience should not be the primary goal of our work; serving our audience should be.
- Look for creative and innovative ways to support solid, important reporting;
- Get into our communities to hear new stories, build new sources and educate our audience about our role.
- Remind the people that, when we do our jobs well, we are not their enemies but their best friends.

History teaches us that revolutions can create bold new advances for civilization, or produce meaningless destruction. We invite all of those who are in the midst of this information revolution to join us in ensuring that it produces more transparency, more democracy and a better world.

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National Press Club

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Joshua Hatch
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Courtney Radsch
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Mike Cavender
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Bruce Brown
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