

World Press Freedom Day

ISSUE-IN-FOCUS, MAY 3, 2009

The U.S. Embassy's Information Resource Center is pleased to offer you an "Issue-in-Focus" on **Media, Communications and Information Technology**. The full text of the document can be retrieved at the link(s) listed below. If you have problems retrieving the article, or would like to comment on our services, please call 02-205-4640 or write to irc@state.gov.

Current and back issues of "**Issue-in-Focus**" on **Media, Communications and Information Technology** are also available in our homepage at <http://bangkok.usembassy.gov/services/irc/cis/media-communications-and-information-technology.html>

"We must strengthen our efforts to build a media that is critical of inherited assumptions yet tolerant of alternative perspectives; a media that brings competing narratives into a shared story of interdependence; a media that responds to diversity through dialogue."

-- [Director-General of UNESCO Koïchiro Matsuura](#),
[World Press Freedom Day 2009](#)

May 3, World Press Freedom Day, serves as a time to inform the public about the right to freedom of expression and as a reminder that many journalists brave death or jail to bring news to the world. On the occasion of this World Press Freedom Day, the United States joins the international community in celebrating the contributions of free media to the advancement of human dignity, liberty and prosperity worldwide. Freedom of the media -- a right protected by Article 19 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights -- is the hallmark of a free society. Wherever media freedom is under siege, all other human rights are under threat.

FREE MEDIA



[Journalism Under Siege](#) - Brave men and women the world over risk their lives to inform citizens and hold governments accountable. Find out more about these champions of press freedom and why accurate, ethical journalism is so important to effective democratic government.



[Free or Not Free?](#) - Freedom House, a nonprofit organization and voice for democracy around the world, analyzes the status of press freedom in nations throughout the world.

U.S. COMMITMENT TO PRESS FREEDOM

Supporting World Press Freedom - The United States in particular salutes those in the press who courageously do their work at great risk. The press is often a target of retaliation by those who feel threatened by freedom of expression and transparency in democratic processes. Journalists are often the first to uncover corruption, to report from the front lines of conflict zones, and to highlight missteps by governments. This work places many journalists in danger, and it is the duty of governments and citizens worldwide to speak out for their protection and for their vital role in open societies.

MCC's Commitment to Press Freedom - The U.S. Government's Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) recognizes the importance of a free press to the economic and democratic development of a country. A free press increases political transparency; educates citizens, enabling them to make informed decisions; provides information to consumers that leads to competitive pricing; and gives citizens an outlet through which they can voice opinions and ideas. A commitment to a free press is an investment in the long-term progress of any society.

ROLE OF THE MEDIA

Evolving Media and a Free Press - "Congress shall make no law ... abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press." The First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution enshrines a basic U.S. belief: A free press nurtures democracy. Freedom of the press is essential to democracy because it empowers the citizenry and holds governments accountable.



Great Moments in American Media Satire

Do you sometimes wonder if the news you are getting is fictitious or intentionally skewed? There have been many instances where it was exactly that, intended to accomplish specific goals: to influence, scare, or simply entertain the audience or the creator.

The Role of Media in Intercultural Dialogue - Cultural references determine our identity and the ways in which we construct reality. They affect the perception of ourselves, the way we encounter others, and the way we interact with the world. The media greatly influences not only what we think, but also how we act.

MEDIA ETHICS

Web Alert (April 2009) - In honor of World Press Freedom Day on May 3, the Information Resource Center (IRC) of U.S. Embassy in Bangkok is pleased to offer a select list of current online reports, documents and websites on Media Ethics from top think-tanks and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

JOIN THE WORLD PRESS FREEDOM WEBCHAT SERIES

U.S. Support for an Independent Media (May 4, 2009 at 10:30pm Thailand time)

Without an independent media, citizens and countries have no way of receiving truthful and vital information. Join Ambassador Karen Stewart as she discusses how countries must work together to ensure a free press, which is essential for democracies to thrive on May 4 at 10:30pm Thailand time (May 4 at 11:30am EDT).

Is Independent Journalism Possible? (May 5, 2009 at 8:00pm Thailand time)

Responsible and independent media are pivotal to democracy all over the world. To commemorate World Press Freedom Day, veteran reporter Deborah Potter will discuss how journalists across the world can practice independent journalism in light of new technology and new global challenges. Please join Journalism trainer Deborah Potter to discuss journalists' responsibilities in an independent press and what makes a good reporter on May 5 at 8:00pm Thailand time (May 5 at 9:00am EDT).

Giving Local Media a Voice (May 6, 2009 at 11:00pm Thailand time)

How can local media across the world ensure that the public is receiving the information it needs? Please join David Hoffman as he discusses the need for independent journalism in order to raise public awareness on pressing global issues on May 6 at 11:00pm Thailand time (May 6 at 12:00 noon EDT).

World Press Freedom: Is the Economic Downturn a Threat to Journalism? (May 7, 2009 at 8:00pm Thailand time)

Media companies worldwide are facing declining advertising revenue, decreasing circulation and job cuts. In order to withstand this economic downturn, the media must take steps to adapt to new obstacles and changing technology. Sherry Ricchiardi and Frank Folwell will discuss the challenges facing media companies and what direction these companies should take on May 7 at 8:00pm Thailand time (May 7 at 9:00am EDT)

WEB RESOURCES

U.S. Department of State

URL: <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/press/>

U.S. Department of State's Bureau of International Information Programs

URL: <http://www.america.gov/global/democracy.html>

Millennium Challenge Corporation

URL: <http://www.mcc.gov/programs/pressfreedom/index.php>

Committee to Protect Journalists

URL: <http://www.cpj.org/>

Freedom House

URL: <http://www.freedomhouse.org/>

Reporters Sans Frontieres (Reporters Without Borders)

URL: <http://www.rsf.org/>

World Press Freedom Day

URL: <http://www.worldpressfreedomday.org/>

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

URL: <http://portal.unesco.org/>

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