

UNESCO REPORT TO HELSINGIN SANOMAT FOUNDATION

on UNESCO/Guillermo Cano
World Press Freedom Prize
and World Press Freedom Day
International Conference

1-4 MAY 2017, JAKARTA (INDONESIA)





OVERVIEW

Photo credit: © UNESCO

The 24th edition of the World Press Freedom Day (WPFDF) was celebrated across the globe on 3 May 2017 under the theme *Critical Minds for Critical Times: Media's role in advancing peaceful, just and inclusive societies*. At a time described by some as critical for journalism, World Press Freedom Day 2017 focused on why it is vital to strengthen free and quality journalism to enable the media to effectively contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16. Specifically, the interrelationships between freedom of expression, justice for all and the rule of law, peace, and inclusiveness were explored.

Organized by UNESCO, the Government of Indonesia and the Indonesian Press Council (Dewan Pers), the main WPFDF celebration took place from 1 to 4 May 2017 in Jakarta, Indonesia. It brought together an unprecedented 1500 representatives and stakeholders from over 90 countries to evaluate press freedom around the world and examine the current challenges media are facing. The international conference addressed a wide range of issues such as fake news, safety of journalists, gender equality and countering violent extremism. It also hosted the Award Ceremony of the prestigious 2017 UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize,

which was awarded to Dawit Isaak, a courageous journalist from Eritrea, who has been imprisoned since 2001.

“We meet today in Jakarta to celebrate a freedom at the heart of all freedoms”, said UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova at the opening ceremony, which was also attended by the Vice President of Indonesia, Jusuf Kalla, and José Ramos-Horta, former President of Timor-Leste and 1996 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate. In his video message, the United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres called for “an end to all crackdowns against journalists”, highlighting the dangers and risks media professionals face in carrying out their job.

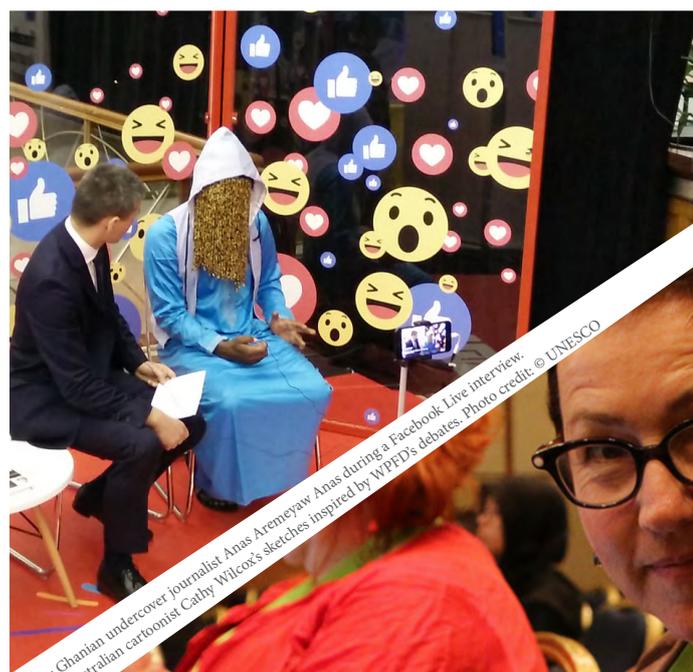
In concurrence with the main event, an Academic Conference on the Safety of Journalists was organized as a follow-up to the initial conference held one year prior, at WPFDF 2016 in Helsinki, Finland. Researchers from across the globe shared insights on various aspects of media safety and impunity, considered as one of the greatest obstacles for press freedom. All this follows UNESCO’s academic research agenda on safety of journalists, developed with the support of HSF.

At the closing ceremony of the main event on 4 May, participants adopted the Jakarta Declaration, a milestone document addressing major challenges to press

freedom, including the: safety of journalists, “fake news” and freedom of speech on the Internet. The document calls on different stakeholders to promote an enabling environment for media and recognized high-quality public journalism as “a public good for all members of society”. Sixteen points in the Declaration deal with the safety of journalists, and the Declaration calls on stakeholders to collaborate in the implementation of the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity.

In addition to the main celebration, WPF 2017 also saw more than 100 national celebrations worldwide. These events ranged from round tables to demonstrations and cultural performances to underline the importance of press freedom and freedom of expression. As the UN agency with a specific mandate to foster freedom of expression, UNESCO coordinates these initiatives and often acts as an organizing partner via its field offices.

For this year’s edition of WPF 2017, three major visibility campaigns were conceived and implemented. These were complemented by partnerships with four different media outlets (Al Jazeera, Rappler, El País and Inter Press Service) who dedicated special blogs and produced feature stories on WPF 2017 and related topics.

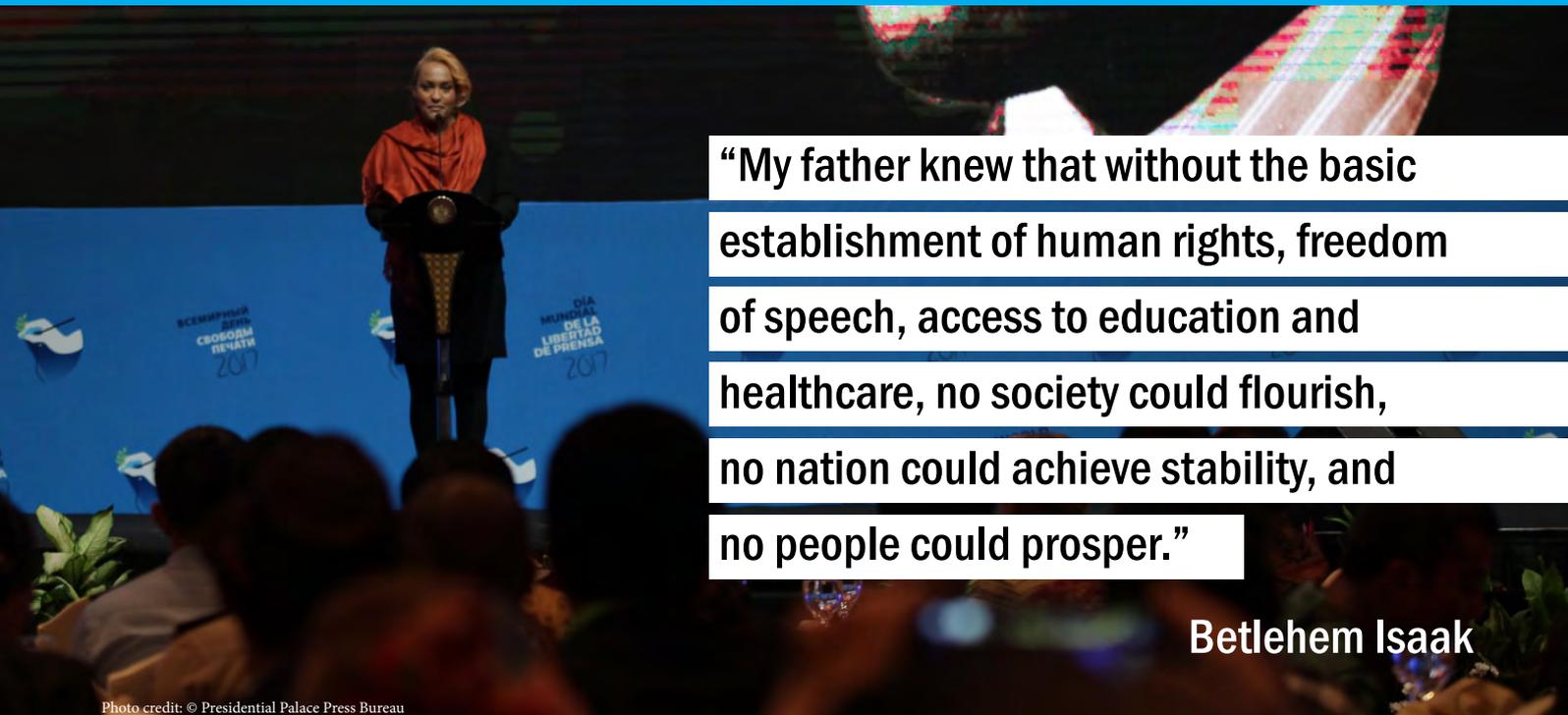


Above: Chadian undercover journalist Anas Aremeyew Anas during a Facebook Live interview.
Below: Australian cartoonist Cathy Wilcox's sketches inspired by WPF 2017's debates. Photo credit: @ UNESCO

WPF 2017 IN NUMBERS

- **19** pre-events, two plenary sessions, an opening and closing ceremony, 12 parallel sessions, a Speaker's Corner, three exhibitions, a Cinema, and an Academic Conference on the Safety of Journalists.
- **164** speakers participated, of which 90 were men and 74 were women.
- **3** cartoonists, Cathy Wilcox from Australia and two cartoonists from Indonesia, Agustina Kadiani and Iwan Mangopang, were engaged to depict the gist of the discussions in caricatures.
- Close to **1500** participants from over 90 different nationalities took part in the programme in Jakarta, almost double the amount of participants that attended the previous WPF main conference in Helsinki, Finland. For the second year in a row, the attendance record was pushed higher.
- More than **500** different organizations were represented, including civil society, intergovernmental bodies, media, academia, and national governments.
- **3** main visibility campaigns promoted WPF 2017 and its theme. The main campaign was entitled *Stay Critical* and featured a video (translated into six UN languages) along with key messages and facts on how media contributes to the achievement of SDG 16. In addition, UNESCO partnered with the international organization Cartooning for Peace to publish a **series of selected cartoons on freedom of expression and press freedom** by international cartoonists. 2017 marked also the twentieth anniversary of the UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize. The anniversary was highlighted by a **commemorative video**, which featured the Helsingin Sanomat Foundation's logo, and the publication of **20 quotes for press freedom**, a series of quotes by laureates of the prestigious Prize.

- Mirroring WPF 2016, a Speaker's Corner was organized during the lunch breaks of the main conference. The first session, organized by the EU representation to Indonesia, Brunei Darussalam and ASEAN, focused on “fake news” and hate speech while the second featured the screening of the award-winning Indian film Azaad. In concurrence with the main programme, the second edition of the Academic Conference on the Safety of Journalists was organized by the Hong Kong Baptist University and UNESCO. It featured five in-depth sessions with 19 scholars presenting and discussing the latest research on safety of journalists.
- The popular Youth Newsroom was once again featured during the main celebration. For the fifth time since 2012, a group of young journalists worked together to cover the event and the Day in-depth. Forty-six aspiring reporters produced a special digital newspaper, *Voice of Millennials*, to cover WPF 2017 and its themes. Travelling from Algeria, Malaysia, Morocco, Palestine, United States and Finland, international journalism students together with local journalistic youth.



“My father knew that without the basic establishment of human rights, freedom of speech, access to education and healthcare, no society could flourish, no nation could achieve stability, and no people could prosper.”

Betlehem Isaak

Photo credit: © Presidential Palace Press Bureau

On 3 May, the 2017 UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize was awarded to Dawit Isaak, a journalist from Eritrea, in a ceremony attended by the President of Indonesia, Joko Widodo. Imprisoned since 2001, Isaak was one of the founders and reporters of Setit, the first independent newspaper in the country. Known for his critical and insightful reporting, he was arrested during a government crackdown on the local media. Isaak’s current whereabouts are unknown, the last time he was heard from was in 2005. An independent international jury of media professionals recommended unanimously Dawit Isaak in recognition of his courage, resistance and commitment to freedom of expression.

Isaak’s daughter, Betlehem Isaak, accepted the award on his behalf. “My father knew that without the basic establishment of human rights, freedom of speech, access to education and healthcare, no society could flourish, no nation could achieve stability, and no people could prosper.”, she said. Cilla Benkö, chair of the independent jury, expressed the hope that the

Prize will facilitate the resolution of his case during her address at the conclusion of the ceremony. Previous laureates have been released from prison after receiving their award, most recently Khadija Ismayilova (2016 laureate), who was released only weeks after receiving the Prize. Other recent examples include Reeyot Alemu (2013 laureate) and Mazen Darwish (2015 laureate). With support from the Helsingin Sanomat Foundation and the Guillermo Cano Foundation, the Prize not only lauds the actions and courage displayed by the individuals to whom it is awarded, it also has an enduring positive effect with tangible outcomes after it has been received.

Notable speakers during the four-day conference included: Joko Widodo, President of Indonesia; Jusuf Kalla, Vice President of Indonesia; José Ramos Horta, Former President of Timor Leste and 1996 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate; Richard Gingras, Vice President of News at Google; Maria Ressa, CEO of Rappler; Farhana Haque Rahman, Director General of Inter Press Service; Joseph Cannataci, UN Special Rapporteur on Privacy; Oscar Cantú, founder and editor of the

Mexican newspaper Norte which was forced to close down after the murder of one of its correspondents; Anas Aremeyaw Anas, award-winning undercover investigation journalist from Ghana; and Rana Sabbagh, Executive Director of Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism. WPF 2017 received substantial media coverage in regions and countries across the world. In total, over 880 articles were published in the six UN languages (English, French, Arabic, Chinese, Russian, and Spanish). The Op-Ed by the UNESCO Director-General was published in 11 media outlets worldwide. WPF 2017 was also strongly present on social media, with six Facebook live interviews of prominent participants during the main conference.

They included José Ramos Horta, Richard Gingras, Anas Aremeyaw Anas, Oscar Cantú, Julie Posetti, a journalist and researcher from Australia, and Bambang Harymurti, journalist and editor in chief of Tempo Magazine. With more than 18k views, the interview with Anas was the most popular and most shared. The commemorative video of the UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize was also pinned on the main Twitter account of the United Nations (close to 9 million followers) for five consecutive days.



Oscar Cantú, founder and editor of the Mexican newspaper Norte, was forced to close down the newspaper after the murder of one of its correspondents. Photo credit: © Beni Setiawan

Funding and Resources

In 2017, the UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize received donations from the following:

Donors	Amount (USD)
Helsingin Sanomat Foundation	25000
Guillermo Cano Isaza Foundation	5000
Total	30000

Additional information:

The [official website](#) of WPF 2017 features the full programme, national celebrations, video-audio and photographic materials, press kit, and articles.

Guy Berger
 Director for Freedom of Expression
 and Media Development

12 June 2017