

TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP BRIEFING PAPER Role of Non-Governmental Organizations and Fact Checkers

Journalists and activists work tirelessly and often times in dangerous situations to distribute quality reporting and information to citizens throughout the world. However, due to media restrictions in some countries and/or the increasing problems around misinformation and propaganda, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) and fact-checking organizations are becoming even more vital to ensuring journalistic freedom. Organizations like Reporters without Borders, the Freedom of the Press Foundation and the Pulitzer Center for Investigative Journalism actively support and encourage reporting on countries with restricted media environments. By funding crucial reporting, often from locally-based journalists and activists, these organizations are helping provide important stories to the global community.

In addition to NGO's, fact-checking organizations are becoming increasingly important in the modern world. Intentional misinformation campaigns across the world have sought to confuse citizens and sow distrust in media organizations. Fact checkers act to bolster media consumer's trust by providing quality information on reporting and distinguishing between hard facts and political opinions. Fact checkers are also vital to accountability, especially during political campaigns when elected officials are incentivized to promote best-case scenarios, unattainable goals or figures that best support their argument.

Task

You are attending a meeting of international advocates for global free and independent press. The meeting will take place under the backdrop of significant changes to the landscape of global media, including the proliferation of disinformation, the polarization of media and the rise of alternative media and social media. Additional concerns regarding increasing instances of violence, persecution and interference from state actors is also of interest to this meeting. Your task is twofold: **(1)** Identify a minimum of five ongoing issues connected to the topic of the role of NGO's and fact checking organizations, including specific incidents and broader trends; and **(2)** develop two to three strategies to meet the needs previously identified.

The challenge for this committee group is to assess the needs of different media environments around the world, and to develop strategies and solutions to meet these needs given the various media contexts and cultures found throughout the world.

Key questions to consider from the perspective of your assigned country and region

1. What are some NGO's related to journalism and freedom of expression that are active in your country?
2. How can a NGO promote a free and independent press? What actions may they take in trying to do so?
3. Find the webpage for one of the NGO's listed in the first paragraph. Define the organization's goals and mission.
4. What are fact-checking organizations?
5. How can a fact-checking organization improve the media environment?
6. What are some potential complications for fact-checking organizations, specifically around the intersection of fact-checking and political opinions?

Helpful Resources

- Role of NGO's and Fact checking Organizations
 - [NGO's are Vital to Democracy](#) – Civil Liberties Union for Europe
 - [Misinformation and the Roots of Fact-Checking](#) – Poynter
 - [What is an NGO? What Role does it Play in Civil Society](#) – GrantSpace (Additional Links Within)