

### FAKE NEWS IN THE DIGITAL AGE

The Phenomenon of Fake News and its Ramifications in the Digital Age



Moderator: **Emily Wilkins**, Bloomberg Government; Panelists: **Donald Gilliland**, Contributors Editor, The Hill, **Suzanne Spaulding**, Senior Advisor, Homeland Security, International Security Program, CSIS

Panelists discuss the ramification of the phenomenon of fake news.

**Wilkins:** Certain types of misinformation have been part of news gathering since the news gathering began. I wonder how you see it changed, the evolu-

tion of misinformation. It seems that people nowadays tend to gravitate towards the “fake news”.

**Gilliland:** Significant change occurred in 20th century. Biggest challenge now is how the information is received. With so-

cial media, we are no longer clearly dealing with real news sites or real news organizations. Social media is always active with political information fed to you 24/7. A lot of people think that the

“We must not lose our ability to argue. This is how we defeat the false narrative. So argue. ARGUE!”

-Debra Cagan

See Closing Remarks by TLN Senior Fellow **Joel Starr**, page 6

### Arab Springs—What’s Next?

**Musmar:** The Arabic countries in the Middle East and North Africa went through many stages before they became the countries we know now. Arabs generally were not

in control of power for the last thousand years—being controlled by many other nations. For most, their independence started only some 50-60 years ago. The West needs to

understand how independence (and democratic change) came to each Arab country to understand the trajectory of progress, including the



Moderator: **Kristina Arriaga**, Meta Oversight Board, Trustee and TLN Distinguished Fellow; Panelists: **Wael El Shaar**, Interview Producer, Al Hurra TV, MBN Inc.; **Dr. Frank Musmar**, Researcher, Begin Sadat Research Center for Strategic Studies

### SOCIAL MEDIA’S ROLE IN DELIVERING NEWS



Moderator: **Peter Roff**, Newsweek Contributing Editor and Columnist, TLN Media Fellow; Panelists: **Berislav Jelinić**, CEO Nacional (Croatia), **Daryna Shevchenko**, CEO Kyiv Independent (Ukraine), **Anne-Elisabeth Moutet**, Columnist The Telegraph, TLN Media Fellow and **Carl Szabo**, Vice President of Public Affairs, NetChoice

**Roff:** American experience with news, which keeps a very stiff-arm distance between the government and the provider of information, is in con-

flict with the European tradition, which includes a much stronger role for the state-owned media. National Public Radio (NPR) and public broad-

casting do not have the same kind of impact in the U.S. as state-run media has in some European countries. I don’t know if many places have an analogy of

our First Amendment. Because social media platforms are U.S. companies (with the exception of Tik-Tok), they operate according to U.S. rules and

indeed when ICANN—the organization that controls the internet—when the U.S. released the internet to the world—giving the

### JENNIFER GRIFFIN OF FOX NEWS WINS GOLD MEDAL



### ILLIBERAL DEMOCRACY EDITORIAL INDEPENDENCE AND EUROPE



Moderator: **András Simonyi**, non-resident Senior Fellow—Atlantic Council; Panelists: **Enric Borràs**, Managing Editor, ARA Newspaper, Spain; **Željko Ivanović**, President of the Board and former Editor-in-Chief, Vijesti.me, Montenegro

**Simonyi:** Here (in the U.S.) there is a strategic understanding of the threat that the lack of media freedom causes to our lives and to our democra-

cies and there is a surprise by the naiveté of many concerning what is going on in the world, especially what goes on in the former communist countries. That

said, Željko—I want to say this to you: nobody wanted to listen when we sounded the alarm in Hungary. We were saying—you first

### State of the Media in the Middle East and Gulf

**Craig:** “We must look at the history of journalism in the Middle East, especially after WWII. Before, the area was controlled by colonial powers and whole the subject of journalism was completely different. After 1945, the nation states that emerged had no experience in dealing with political and cultural structures, let alone journalism structure. New

governments wanted to have control of the news reaching out to their citizens. Some independent outlets existed in Egypt, Israel, and Lebanon—at the time—but they were not very influential. One of the rules of the journalists at the time was self-censorship and that meant that journalists could work but they knew



Moderator: **Amb. John Craig**, TLN Senior Fellow; Panelists: **Hollie McKay**, Foreign Correspondent / Writer, **Sean Matthews**, The Middle East Eye

### Keynote Speaker September 20



**Lynn M. Sicade**  
Director of the Office of Multilateral and Global Affairs in the Department of State's Bureau of Democracy Human Rights and Labor

### Rule of Law and How Best to Protect Journalists

**Felbab-Brown:** Mexican government has not been able to mount protection for the journalists, and worst yet, the current president Andrés Manuel López Obrador has often complain about journalists, has attacked various media outlets and specific journalists for their reporting, accusing them they are foreign agents and that they are compromised in an atmosphere of impunity that dangerously seems to give even more free reign to those who want to threaten them or harm them. Apart from the journalists who have died, journalists face a different threat—kidnapping and tortur-

ing. There are also threats through the social media—used especially by the criminal groups. There is a great deal of self-censorship as journalists don’t want any longer to work on covering issues because of the threats. And

what should sink in is that—in Mexico—there is 98% impunity for homicide—that is, out of 100 only 2 criminals are sentenced.

**Muñoz:** We see the use of digital and online violence particularly against women journalists. There

was ample research of sadistic nature of internet and of the horrors attacking women journalists as part of massive disinformation campaign, shaming campaign around the world, particularly in countries where simply

showing a photo of women journalist—even if deep fake—would put her life in danger. The people who engage in such activities do so knowing that there is a very explicit text-book approach to making sure



Moderator: **Shaun Waterman**, Cybersecurity Correspondent, Newsweek, TLN Media Fellow; Panelists: **Vanda Felbab-Brown**, Director, Initiative on Nonstate Armed Actors / Co-Director, Africa Security Initiative, The Brookings Institution; **Abderrahim Foukara**, Al Jazeera, Washington, D.C. Bureau Chief; **Jessica Jerreat**, Press Freedom Editor, Voice of America; **Elisa Lees Muñoz**, Executive Director, International Women’s Media Foundation

### In Memoriam to Journalists Killed



**Jen Judson**, President, National Press Club, Washington, D.C.

According to the committee to protect journalists there have been 51 journalists killed around the world since the beginning of 2022. In 2020 there

were 50 journalists and media workers killed and in 2021 there were 45 total. You may have noticed but we still 3 and a half months left in the year which shows me that journalists’ deaths are on the rise. The world is a little less safe for journalists than it was last year and the year before it.

**LINK to full remarks by Jen Judson and stories of journalists killed in 2022.**



Fake News and its Ramifications in the Digital Age

**Fake News**, from p1  
Russian influence campaign in 2016 was about anti-Clinton pro-Trump posts, but it is so much more complicated and in interesting ways.

If you go back to social media (Facebook posts) that were made public by Congress... there was a very concerted campaign by the Russians to target liberal citizens of the U.S. and they did so with incredibly ef-



**Emily Wilkins**  
*Take your time in processing news, investigate the source, see if there are other sources you can verify the story—as a good way to verify the legitimacy of the story. And even if error made, the good news organization will do all to correct when they get the fact wrong, even if it is a minor one, propagandist won’t.*

fective messaging and around the pressure points of existing division in American society—about race, gun use issue, to a lesser extend feminist issue. So you would have these effective posts from fake groups, for example one called “Blacktivists” that was promoting “black lives matters” while at the same time the troll farms were putting out posts about how the “south will rise”—to stoke and to turn up the volume of a debate what was already a point of argument, division and disagreement in the U.S..

**Spaulding:** News on our broadcast channels came about as a result of the agreement between the Federal government and broadcasters. The government told broadcasters—you can have this spectrum to broadcast all your wonderful TV shows that you make a lot of money from, but news is not a money maker, and we think it is important to American people to have that access to news. Therefore, if you want to have access to these airwaves, we—the Government—control, then you need to show at least 30 minutes of news every day. That was a deal.



**Suzanne Spaulding**  
*We are in times of declining trust in institutions generally. The media is certainly not spared from that. From a Gala poll in July of this year, only 16% of surveys showed a great deal of trust in the media and trust in TV stations dropped to 11%. People don’t know where to go to get a trust-worthy information. We are in big trouble.*

**Gilliland:** If people are engaging with news as a form of entertainment—and I don’t think there is any question that they are when you look at the prime-time programming of cable news—it’s not news. Prime-time news programming is pure opinion en-

tainment. The ecosystem of today’s digital media world is to get people’s eyeballs, to get them to click on the story.

**Spaulding:** Technology has made it possible for people to receive news they need; news that confirms their bias, stimulates them emotionally, and it can be very—very specific, broader, and effective. Local news is more trusted than the national news, but the local news is in decline. What appears to be a local news is now owned by the big companies. We have focused (I think rightly) on domestic sources of disinformation but I think we cannot take our eyes off our foreign adversaries and if Putin ever had any reason to show restraint in mocking our elections, he certainly has no reason right now. He has every reason in the world to try to create a sense that the elections were not legitimate—and that not to favor a particular candidate—but simply to throw this country into chaos, to threaten the peaceful transition of power, to prevent us from mobilizing and coming together to solve the challenges we need to solve, and to undermine the credibility of whoever is in the office because then they are less effective. All Putin must do is to tell his cyber folks to be noisy, make claims that you got into a voting machine—none of it has to be true—they don’t need to accomplish anything. This will be enough for anyone who would lose the election to “jump on these stories”. We need to be out—right now—talking about this, publicly.

**Teaching Civics—A National Security Imperative**  
We have stopped teaching civics in this country. We’ve become complacent about the inevitability and invincibility of democracy, and we decided we no longer need to teach what it means really and how our government works. The most

effective way we can counter the impact of Russian disinformation campaign messaging—design to convince us not just that our system is flawed (which it is—so part of the reason why people reach and believe in this disinformation is because the democracy is not meeting the needs of all of its people, because the justice system isn’t always independent and impartial, because there are economic injustices) is to start again teaching civics.

The message coming from



**Donald Gilliland**  
*A real news organization will correct and fix mistakes and errors—propagandist don’t. You must bring your critical faculties every time you turn on the phone.*

those who push the disinformation is that our system is irrevocably broken, and an individual is powerless to change it. In part, they are pushing this message because if you don’t believe in the system’s ability to change then you bring it to the streets—to violence - to demand change. The Russian military doctrine talks about “the protests potential of the population”. They are absolutely trying to draw people to the streets and create violence. Reporters: Provide more background on your stories—that is part of our civics training.

**Gilliland:** The term “fake news” is an intentionally pliable term of political rhetoric—designed to discredit actual news... I think it’s much more

productive to be explicit about what we’re really dealing with: propaganda (both domestic and foreign) that utilizes misinformation, disinformation and mal information. No one is immune from being targeted by misinformation, disinformation, and mal-information; in fact, when it’s done well, you are not likely to notice—because it taps into your existing views, prejudices, and beliefs, but attempts to amply them... to get you angrier, more outraged, more likely to argue with your neighbor.

I also think there’s a tendency among the punditry to look down on people they think are susceptible to misinformation and disinformation. The fact is it’s targeted to all segments of our society; pundits aren’t immune. What’s more, I think regular citizens are engaged in politics differently—I think most people view it as a kind of entertainment, much like they view sports, with all the team allegiance, uncritical cheering and occasional hooliganism that entails.

We’ve had domestic political disinformation, misinformation, and propaganda in the U.S. since at least the election of 1800... The real threat these days is the ease with which malign foreign governments—like Iran and Russia—can insinuate themselves into the conversations of our daily lives, especially through social media. People need to remember that these governments aren’t as interested in one side or the other “winning” here as they are both sides fighting. They actively work BOTH sides of an argument and try to turn up the heat. The practical solution is for people to think critically, resist when it feels like someone’s trying to stoke your emotions—ask “Who is this really? Am I sure?” If it seems too good to be true, it probably is. Don’t be the dupe of some foreign government’s troll farm. ■

About the TLN  
Freedom of the Media Initiative

Around the world journalists in pursuit of the truth are being jailed, beaten and murdered with alarming frequency.

Authoritarian strongmen and their supporters who wish to silence the press accuse journalists of spreading “fake news” while they themselves pursue malicious social media disinformation campaigns to intentionally undermine the public’s trust in fact-based journalism.

This is a phenomenon not unique to the West. It is prevalent in countries from Eastern Europe and Russia to the Middle East and to Asia. TLN believes that this dangerous development must be confronted in a concerted and compelling way.

**Dr. Michael Haltzel**  
TLN Chairman Emeritus  
**Dr. Daniel Hamilton**  
TLN President  
**Dr. Sasha Toperich**  
TLN Executive Vice President

That is why we launched the Freedom of the Media initiative on December 7, 2021, at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C.

We want to give voice to those trying to defend the rule of law and to protect journalists, fight fake news, and better understand the role of social media in disseminating the news.

Our expert panelists discuss how unbiased news can still be published in countries with illiberal democratic political systems.

The world needs an unencumbered, legitimate press to hold the powerful accountable. But with that comes the responsibility to practice fair and accurate journalism.

Freedom of the Media Awards

- Public Service**  
The TLN Gold Medal will be awarded to a U.S. news organization or individual for their extraordinary contribution and excellence in journalism.
- Investigative Reporting**  
The TLN Gold Medal will be awarded to a foreign news organization or individual for a distinguished example of investigative reporting that exposes wrongdoing by government, corporate and public institutions.
- Explanatory Reporting**  
For a distinguished example of creative reporting and writing that explains a complex subject that impacts the public interest.
- International Reporting**  
For distinguished reporting that illuminates how actions of powerful institutions either positively or negatively impact global peace and security.
- Commentary and Criticism**  
For incisive coverage of cultural and political issues with which societies grapple, including racism, religious prejudice, sexual abuse, and loss of public trust in institutions.
- Next Generation Journalism Reporting**  
For a younger journalist’s courageous accounting of international conflicts, government corruption, or violation of human rights.



**Dr. Frank Musmar**  
*Countries of the region are still learning to catch up with the rest of the world. You will notice that the first thing the Arab Spring countries turned to was religion. Accordingly, the very first country to prove that was Egypt - which came with the Muslim Brotherhood in power. The gap that these Revolutions created in Syria and Iraq created ISIS. So, there is still a lack of knowledge on how to evolve and protest peacefully. In these circumstances, people who don’t know what to do turn to religion. In Egypt, they realized—soon after—that was not the solution.*

**Arab Springs**, from page 1  
composition and dynamics between the Arab countries. For example, the U.S. tried to apply American democracy to Iraq, but that was not suitable for the country of the Middle East.

Some Arab countries are poor in resources, while others are overly rich. Those rich—like Saudi Arabia, an absolute monarchy, and Iran—a theocracy —have more power to control the media in the rest of the Arabic countries. Any Revolution in any Arab country would be alarming to these two regional powers (Saudi Arabia and Iran); hence there was an emergence of limitations on speech and limitation of democracy—since the revolutionaries were proclaimed “the enemies.” There is no such thing as an “old or historic Arabic country.” Yes, the history is there, but the existing countries are new with different compositions—some with a decent number of Christians and Jews.

**El Shaar:** Every time I went back to Egypt to ask how things were, everyone I spoke with said, “we are a ticking bomb.”

THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN THE ARAB SPRINGS:WHAT’S NEXT?

But why, I would ask. People were asking for bread, freedom, and social justice from the Revolution. In the U.S., the founding fathers called for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness as fundamental principles of democracy. When you

does not fit Libya. Every country is unique, and every country needs democratic norms that will be acceptable to that country’s social fabric. Given these countries’ lack of experience in self-governance, the people in Egypt wanted to hand over



*We were talking earlier at the conference about the citizen journalist. What role did the citizens’ journalists have during the Arab Spring, and do they have a role in the future—freedom for individuals to express themselves online?*

translate that in the Middle East culture —bread, freedom, and social justice have, in fact, the same meaning. However, there is a huge gap between people in Egypt and people in the U.S. I agree with Dr. Musmar that the word “democracy” and what fits Egypt does not fit Iraq, and what fits Iraq

the power to the technocratic government. This, for example, does not work in Egypt. Instead, the Muslim Brotherhood received the power, the first elected administration after thirty years of the Mubarak regime. But the election results did not reflect Egypt’s social fabric.

Among Arab countries, the 2010 revolution in Tunisia was a unique example that led to a peaceful transition. The icon of all revolutions was Mohamed Bouazizi, a young Tunisian street vendor who was repeatedly harassed and later slapped by a female police officer demanding bribes. Bouazizi couldn’t do anything to her except set himself on fire, ending decades of frustration and anger due to government corruption and oppression, social injustice, inequality, and a wrangling economy. Internet and social media have certainly played a key role in making the voices of Tunisian protests heard way beyond just Tunisian borders, inspiring other people in other countries and leading to waves of protests across the region; almost all of them share the same demands, jobs, better living conditions, and greater freedoms.

Education is the key. That should be the focus for all. Lack of education showed how even the Revolution, when it happened, could not succeed in the way it should have. When the dust settled, the governments continued to play on the “secu-

rity” card—if you do not choose me—you will have no security.

**Musmar:** Tunisia is a relatively small country without major geographical boundaries that can be governed easily. Moreover, the country laves many division factors because Tunisia is ethnically, religiously, and linguistically unified compared to Syria and Yemen. Comparing Tunisia to Egypt, the Military in Tunisia was less integrated than in Military governed Egypt. Most importantly, Bin Ali fled early and did not fight back the way other leaders did; doing that, the scene was less violent, with less drama in the memories.

**Musmar:** It was a great tool at the beginning of the Revolution. As a journalist, when I receive any video from—what we call citizen journalists—I verify those videos, whether new or old, real or fake. Especially in Syria, by the way, there were many fake videos not filmed in that country. I don’t think that citizen-journalist work for the Middle East nowadays. We must set norms for using social media platforms to avoid misinformation and fake news. We should have the Code of



**Wael El Shaar**  
*When we started to use Facebook in Egypt—back in 2006 / 2007—people were bragging about it. Then came Twitter, receiving the same reaction. People in Egypt were thirsty to learn what was happening outside their borders. At that time, the Egyptian regime kept TV news extensively reporting on what was going on within the country but banned any news about the conditions and dynamics outside, including in neighboring states. Social media platforms changed all that.*

Conduct on how to use the social media platform, probably through the U.N. system, so whichever country—including the individuals/institution within—breaks it, it should be held liable through the U.N..■

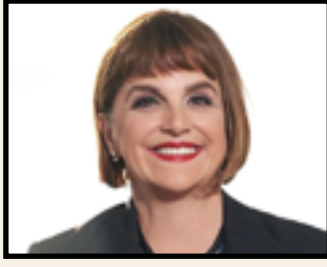


2022 TLN  
Freedom of the Media  
Award Committee Members



**Dr. Ali Abusedra,**  
TLN's Senior Fellow

A co-founder of the London Foundation for International Law. Dr. Abusedra has participated in UAE negotiations with the White House on free trade agreements between the UAE and United States; and negotiations with the International Criminal Court on the case of lawyers detained in Libya who were sent by the ICC.



**Kristina Arriaga,**  
TLN's Distinguished Fellow

A former member of the U.S. delegation to the United Nations Human Rights Commission, the U.S. delegation to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and the Vice-Chair of the U.S. Commission for International Religious Freedom. Arriaga served on the US delegation to the United Nations Human Rights Commission.



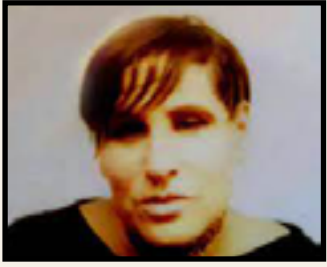
**Mike Barbero,**  
TLN's Vice President

A retired U.S. Army Lieutenant General. He has testified several times before Congress on security issues in the Middle East and has participated in numerous national and international media programs. He has four years of experience in the Middle East coordinating intricate political-military operations.



**Dr. Roudi Baroudi,**  
TLN's Senior Fellow

The CEO of Energy & Environment Holding with 40 years of experience in oil and gas, petrochemicals, power, energy-sector reform, energy security, environment, carbon-trading mechanisms, privatization, and infrastructure and has worked in program development with the World Bank, the IMF, the European Commission, USAID, the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, and the Italian Bilateral Protocols.



**Debra L. Cagan,**  
TLN's Distinguished  
Energy Fellow

A former State Department diplomat and Defense Department official from the Reagan to Trump administrations, including serving as Deputy Assistant secretary of Defense for Coalition, Peacekeeping, Humanitarian and Disaster Relief; Senior Director for European, Russian, and Eurasian security issues; Special Adviser for Strategic and Nuclear Policy for Europe; Senior Adviser to U.S. and NATO military officials.



**Peter S. Canellos,**  
TLN's Media Fellow

Editor at large at POLITICO, overseeing investigative journalism and major projects. He has also been POLITICO's executive editor, overseeing the newsroom during the 2016 presidential coverage, and the editorial page editor of The Boston Globe. He also edited the Globe's book, "Last Lion: The Fall and Rise of Ted Kennedy," which was a top-10 New York Times bestseller in 2009.



**Amb. John Craig,**  
TLN's Senior Fellow

Served as the U.S. Ambassador to Oman. Just after Sept. 11, 2001, he was appointed by President George W. Bush as a Special Assistant to the President for Combatting Terrorism. He served on the staff of the National Security Council with Gen. Wayne Downing, Deputy National Security Advisor. He is Ambassador-in-Residence at the Center for Global Understanding and Peacemaking at Elizabethtown College in PA.



**Abderrahim Foukara,**  
on behalf of Al Jazeera Media  
Network, winner of TLN's  
"Freedom of the Media" Gold Medal  
for International News Organization

Al Jazeera Network Bureau Chief in the Americas and host of Min Washington, a weekly current affairs show on Al Jazeera Arabic. Abderrahim is a recognizable voice on panels and media outlets such as NPR, MSNBC, and CNN. In 2001, Abderrahim was a visiting English and French Senior Editor on ALAfrica.com, one of the world's largest providers of African news and analysis.



**Klaus-Dieter Frankenberger,**  
TLN's Media Fellow

A non-Resident Senior Fellow at the American Institute for Contemporary German Studies. He was the Foreign Editor of the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung. Frankenberger is a Member of the Trilateral Commission and of the Scientific Council of the Institute for European Politics in Berlin. Frankenberger served as Congressional Fellow in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1985 to 1986.

**Social Media,** from p 1

ICANN a responsibility for running it—it remained tethered to the U.S. government—very gently but still tethered so that



**Berislav Jelinić**

*The question of credibility, the question of manipulation, rests upon the individuals and we go back to the roots of professional journalism where we need to coexist together with the question of who will be using whom and who will benefit, at the end.*

the American values—like free speech—would be preserved.

**Jelinić:** We are dedicated to in-depth investigative journalism that spreads fast through social media, spending sometimes even months to investigate stories and then within a few seconds—when published—it spreads widely via social media. In a small market it influences the business model. As soon as the news is out, save a small beneficial portion that is accredited to Nacional, the news goes viral and becomes a public good. Thus, it hurts the income structure of the company.

Telecommunication act of 1996 (Section 230) says that no provider or user of interactive computer service shall be treated as publisher or speaker of information provided - but not the information content provider. In another words, online intermediary that host the public speeches are protected against range of laws that might otherwise be used to hold them legally responsible for what other say and do. Protected intermediary includes monthly internet service providers, range of interactive computer service provider including basically any online service of third party that publishes the content. There are important



**Anne-Elisabeth Moutet**  
*I would like to quote the British playwright Tom Stoppard who famously wrote, in his 1978 play on journalists, "Night and Day": "Comment is free, but facts are on expenses". To write a comment*



**Dr. Michael Haltzel,**  
TLN's Chairman Emeritus

Senior Fellow at the Foreign Policy Institute, Johns Hopkins University SAIS. He served as Democratic Staff Director, Subcommittee on European Affairs, Senate Foreign Relations Committee and European policy advisor to President (then-Senator) Joseph R. Biden, Jr. and has headed U.S. Government delegations to three OSCE review conferences

Social Media and its Role in Journalism

exemptions for some criminal and intellectual property-based claims as the article 230 has created some protection that has allowed innovation and freedom of speech online to flourish, at the time. This is set to be the root of the state of today when we start to recognize manipulation by social media. Thus, social media doesn't need to have any legal assistance, fact checking within the organization—they can simply put the content on the internet space. I see social media as a water system—water is everywhere, but not always usable. This is my way to portray the social media of today. The question of credibility, the question of manipulation rests upon the individuals and we go back to the roots of professional journalism where we need to coexist together with the question of who will be using of whom and who will benefit, at the end.

**Shevchenko:** Everything, not just news—all information



**Carl Szabo**

*Every single newspaper we talked about today, I can now access online, because of social media. Social media does empower us all, and thanks to it, we are now so much better informed in respect to every segment of our lives.*

is distributed through social media now. We can continue to fool ourselves into thinking that we (the media) control the system of news distribution, but we do not. All of it is up to algorithms and internal policies and strategies of big tech companies. Unfortunately, the majority of big tech players either don't understand the importance of independent news for local communities or do not care enough to give the control back to the content producers or at least invest in solving the

*piece, I sit down, type two hours, and I will produce an opinion article, using my experience and personal knowledge, but with little new research—and it will not cost my paper much. But if you need to send someone to Ukraine, they will need plane tickets, a rental car or car with a driver who knows the country; they'll need hotel rooms, a translator, a fixer; they'll*

problem. Facebook (Meta), for example, doesn't invest even nearly enough resources (money and manpower) to monitor all the content produced in Ukrainian and Russian languages, thus allowing massive misinformation to spread on its platforms at a time when



**Daryna Shevchenko**  
*In Ukraine, people's lives depend on what and how fast the social media platforms figure out—in*

trustworthy information in these languages is vital for people's survival.

And despite the huge power social media platforms have in the media world, we don't apply the rules of the media world to them.

And it is about time platforms stepped up their game and accepted the responsibility. Especially when it is not even an "all or nothing" situation. There are steps that can be taken even without investing enormous resources into the algorithm change, for example:

- verify and promote independent news sources;
- hire more people to monitor content and solve cases in local languages;
- make distribution partnerships with verified content producers;

If we solve at least 40% of the misinformation and fake news problem now—the progress will be huge and the impact largely noticeable. It is impossible to fix this in one go, but we must start working on this right now.

Section 230 of Title 47 of the U.S. Code enacted as part of the U.S. Communication Decency Act

**Szabo:** Section 230 is the law passed in 1996—in two parts. The first part basically says: "the people responsible for

*need a satellite telephone. They'll need to stay for weeks—possibly months. All this costs a lot. And yet fact-gathering will not always get many clicks, and therefore advertising revenue, that same revenue which pays for the plane tickets, the fixer, the hotel rooms, the flak jacket, etc. But it remains necessary if we are to produce proper newspapers.*

the statements are the people making the statements and not the platforms in which it happened". If I go to a bookstore and I buy a book—and it has a liable content in it—I'll sue the author of the book and not the bookstore. If the internet sites, and platforms (like Twitter

*respect of identifying fake news—hundreds of thousands of Russian trolls are blocking Ukrainian content about the war and war atrocities, spreading fakes or false narratives about the war Russia waged on Ukraine and we are finding ourselves in the limbo.*

and Facebook), along with the bookstores would be liable for the articles / papers content, then nobody would build them



**Peter Roff**

*There are people who believe the proliferation of inaccurate, often provocative information needs to be policed—if not by the platform companies*

or sustain them. Second part of Section 230: "If the platforms try to remove the content that their users find objectionable, they will not assume liability".

I do not think having access to

one way to make this work. No matter what you think of the 2020 elections, we reached a point where a legitimate media outlet—created two centuries ago—The New York Post—had their twitter account suspended because they did what any investigative reporter would do—reported on the activities on Hunter Biden in Ukraine.

**Roff:** I think we reached a consensus now that the social media has become essential in delivering the news. I think it is useful to take a little bit of perspective about the evolution of the news industry. New York City used to have 13 daily newspapers—now it has 3 (four, if you count Newsday, which largely covers Long Island). The advent of Radio was viewed with hostility by print news publishers—some of whom tried to acquire radio stations and others who put a political pressure on FDR and the Federal Communications Commission to restrict cross ownership. If you own a news-

*(Twitter, Facebook, etc.) than the government needs to step in and either break up those companies or eliminate section 230 which is supposed to be "the cure" for everything wrong. On the other hand, you have the people who believe the cure for bad information (or misinformation) is more information more speech.*

paper in a major media market, you are prohibited from owning television station unless the government gives you a waiver. I was fortunate enough to join the UPI just as the internet was

Section 230 of Title 47 of the U.S. Code enacted as part of the U.S. Decency Act

social media is an inalienable right. I think they are a private business, and they get to do and criticize what they want. Facebook is experimenting with an oversight board to see how to improve combat against fake news.

**Moutet:** The elephant in the room is that too often the platforms act preemptively to delete posts, tweets, and accounts—essentially to defend themselves due to the costs associated as Carl Szabo mentioned—but causing worse results in terms of freedom of speech and accuracy of reporting.

Platforms should be flagging rather than censoring what they see as problematic content. Trying to get an independent overseeing body that would not side with the government but be guaranteed by law would be

taking off. We were trying to figure out what kind of the internet company we would going to be when we should have realized that we are a content provider and have always been. We should have put all our effort in providing a content for these new things called websites instead of putting it in newspapers that seems to be dying. What I am hearing now from Daryna and Berislav—is that the same kind of creative disruption that upset the traditional media—the terrestrial media, if you prefer—is now beginning to occur online. Is the social media static? Or is there going to continue to be competition that will be changing the internet and websites so that publications that have cracked the code to establish an online presence are going to be put in the position to having to crack to maintain it. ■

in Warsaw, Copenhagen, and Vienna. He has been decorated by seven countries of the European Union.



**Dr. Daniel S. Hamilton,**  
TLN's President

A Senior Fellow at the Foreign Policy Institute of Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies and a



Rule of Law and the Media: How Best to Protect Journalists

**Rule of Law**, from p 1  
that these journalists are silenced. We take the approach that it is really up to newsrooms to protect their journalists and their freelance journalists. We do recognize the difficulties the newsrooms are facing in addressing such incredibly huge issue. I cannot overstate the scope of these attacks. The fact that the Washington Post journalist would have to not only think about the story that she is writing, make sure that she has taken everything offline at least a week before she reports



**Vanda Felbab-Brown**  
*We should be far more generous than we are - in providing the asylum for journalists, for human rights advocates and for environmental advocates and other social advocates when it is clear that their lives and that of their families are under the terrible threat.*

it and then make sure she stays offline for two weeks after she reports it. Imagine being a journalist that must remain three weeks offline because of writing about the extreme's groups in Montana, or wherever. Despite those percussions, she is still incredibly targeted and in danger. Latest I heard from her is that one of her stalkers went to the protest here in Washington, D.C. asking people if anyone knew where she was.

**Foukara:** Even in the U.S. where press freedom re-

mains a very important value —journalists do get hassled and do get killed. It is very important to remember that. In the case of Shireen (Abu



**Elisa Lees Muñoz**  
*The litigation around these issues is really incredibly behind the need. We all need to think about how to protect journalists online. Back to the duty of care that newsrooms must protect their journalists—they have moved increasingly to security training and to training for online harassment. We have trained 27 newsrooms here and abroad (both big and small).*

Akleh)—we often hear that the killing of a journalist is a blow to press freedom, and it is, but it is first and foremost a blow to the journalist who gets killed, a blow to their family as their lives get turned upside down forever and then it is a huge problem for rest of us who continue to be alive and to engage in this profession. In the case of Shireen—if there's ever a silver lining in the killing of the journalist, one it is in that it has reminded us of all these

other journalists we are now talking about—yet again. We sit here in the U.S. and Mexico is a great case in point— how often do you hear about the plight of journalists in Mexico - right across the border. Not every day, unfortunately, and the numbers of journalists killed there is staggering.

For Shireen—it is this sustained coverage and sustained pressure put on the Israelis, put on the U.S. government, put on international public opinion to remain engaged and to continue to pay attention to the killing of Shireen and I hope that for all the tragedy of her killing she will remain a symbol of the countless journalists who get killed and we don't often hear about it. Press attention and press coverage can lead to good things in terms of holding people accountable and dealing with the issue of impunity.

The lawyers of Shireen's family have submitted the case to the International Criminal Court -ICC (today), the Union of Palestinian Journalists have done the same, and we at Al Jazeera—our lawyers are also preparing the case to submit it to ICC. We do not know if this would lead to the prosecution of that particular Israeli soldier who shot Shireen but that is not stopping anyone from saying they will continue to pursue justice.

**Jerreat:** We are in danger of normalizing something (attacks on the press) that should not be normalized. What struck me recently when speaking to the international legal team defending Jimmy Lai, a founder of Apple Daily

in Hong Kong. In 2020, Hong Kong passed the National Security Law. Very quickly, Lai was charged in what many see as an emblematic case. He is in prison, facing three separate cases. International lawyers describe this tactic as “lawfare”—filing seemingly unconnected charges against one person.

Rana Ayyub in India who in January faced a tax evasion charge—often used as an attempt to silence journalists. In the same month, she faced over 26,000 online death and rape threats. And this is a new phenomenon—used to completely



**Abderrahim Foukara**  
*Because we are in a country (U.S.) where you can still demand accountability and where press freedom can put pressure on politicians and policy makers, whether they are the U.S. government or the Congress, you may get some traction sometimes, shining a light in a very sustained way on the killing of journalists, in this case Shireen Abu Akleh.*

discredit and smear a journalist. If you get down to the heart of it, all that is being attempted here is to stop a certain story from coming out.

**Foukara:** The issue of democratization of journalism—meaning—everyone now has access to the internet and can

call themselves a journalist—which is good—in a way. You want the world to be democratized. Everybody has a voice; everybody has a place at the table. However, not everyone that has a place at the table has either something good or constructive to bring to it or anything to add to the safety of us as journalists doing our job in a very complicated world. Online journalism is obvious-



**Jessica Jerreat**  
*Quite often we see this in other countries—seemingly unconnected cases—that work to sort of almost lay the case of someone (journalist) being “not trustworthy”, someone who breaks laws on a low level, or is involved in tax evasion.*

ly a double-edge sword. A lot of good things and lot of bad things happen online. On the good side, this event is part of it—some of us are tweeting the content of this conversation that we are having and also in terms of building up pressure on politicians (government or lawmakers)—this is a positive aspect.

On the other side of the equation—the internet - social media- can to harassment, and we know that harassment can sometimes be the first step towards suicide. The amount of disinformation we need to sift through daily is incredible. For each journalist killed there are two versions of why

### Speakers

September 19

“Freedom of Expression and Responsible Media: A New Equilibrium in the Making”

**Hon. Neemat Fren**  
Member of Parliament, Lebanon

“Protecting Free Expression and Information: A New European Framework to Combat SLAPPs”

**Hon. Diana Riba I. Giner**  
Member of the European Parliament, Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance

that person was killed. There is a version of people who really care for press freedom and the safety of journalists. But there is also a version of the other person who thinks that that particular journalist is out to get them and is not do-

ing their job and that they go beyond the bounds of professional reporting. Either way, killing is a journalist, directly or indirectly, is a crime that should not happen in the first place and when it does happen it must not go unpunished.■

Freedom of the Media Award Committee Members

**Committee**, from page 3

non-resident Fellow at the Brookings Institution. A former U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary for European Affairs; U.S. Special Coordinator for Southeast European Stabilization; Associate Director of the Policy Planning Staff for two U.S. Secretaries of State; and Director for Policy in the Bureau of European Affairs.



**Anne-Elisabeth Moutet, TLN's Media Fellow**  
A French journalist, writer and broadcaster. She writes comment and analysis for The Telegraph and UnHerd in London and comments the news on France Info and France 24 TV, the BBC, Deutsche Welle and Österreichischer Rundfunk. Contributions to other media include the New York Post, the Spectator, Perspective, Le Spectacle du Monde, The European Conservative (Vienna), and the Centre for Policy Studies' CapX along with radio & TV appearances for multiple channels.



**Michel El Murr, winner of the 2021 “TLN Freedom of the Media award for International Reporting”**  
MTV Lebanon CEO - a leading TV network in Lebanon, covering the Pan-Arab world, along with other continents. His investigative reporting on corruption, foreign meddling in Lebanon, including Hezbollah, and various government mishandlings gained wide popularity, particularly amongst the Middle Eastern youth.



**Peter Roff, TLN's Media Fellow**  
Newsweek contributing editor. His weekly website column focuses on American political and media issues including the importance of defending first amendment rights. He authored a thrice-weekly online opinion column as a contributing editor for U.S. News and World Report. His writing has appeared in The New York Post, The New York Daily News, Investors Business Daily, The Daily Caller, The Detroit News, The Houston Chronicle, The Orange County Register, and other newspapers throughout the U.S.



**Doug Saunders, TLN's Media Fellow**  
The Globe and Mail's international affairs columnist. He has won the National Newspaper Award, the Canadian counterpart to the Pulitzer Prize, on five occasions, including an unprecedented three consecutive awards for critical writing in 1998-2000, and awards honoring him as Canada's best columnist in 2006 and 2013. He has also won the Stanley McDowell Prize, the Schelling Prize in Architectural Theory, the National Library of China Wenjin Book Award, and the Donner Prize.



**Natalie Sedletska, winner of the 2021 “TLN Freedom of the Media award for Investigative Reporting”**  
An award-winning investigative journalist from Ukraine and Editor-in-Chief and host of “Schemes: Corruption in Details”, a weekly program with Radio Free Europe and the Ukrainian First National TV channel. Her extraordinary reporting on government corruption and misuse of public procurements, along with revealing of the corrupt judiciary system, earned Sedletska global support.



**Mujo Selimović, winner of the 2021 “TLN Freedom of the Media award for Commentary and Criticism”**  
Publisher of the award-winning Oslobođenje daily newspaper and owner of the Oslobođenje TV station, stands as a light of media independence in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Western Balkans. In recognition of his work, Selimović was elected in 2019 as a board member of the WAN-IFRA World Printers Forum, headquartered in London. Oslobođenje is a longstanding partner of the EU Mission and the USAID office in Bosnia and Herzegovina, on programs designed to fight widespread corruption.



**Dr. Sasha Toperich, TLN's Executive Vice President**  
Former Director of the Mediterranean Basin, Middle East, and Gulf initiative at the Center for Transatlantic Relations, at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies. Former Presidential Envoy from Bosnia and Herzegovina to the U.S. A Nonresident Fellow at the Soran University Research Center in Iraqi Kurdistan and the Chairman of the Board at the Mediterranean Development Initiative (MDI) in Tunis. UNESCO Artist for Peace.



**Shaun Waterman, TLN's Media Fellow**  
Award-winning journalist and cybersecurity correspondent at Newsweek who has worked for the BBC, United Press International and POLITICO, and an expert on cybersecurity and counterterrorism who has presented at leading conferences like Hacker Halted and the Aspen Security Forum. His reporting on the Sept. 11 Commission and the tortuous process by which some of its recommendations finally became law in the 2004 Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act earned him a “Dateline Washington” award from the Society of Professional Journalists in 2005.

### SPECIAL THANKS

**Ari Schwartz**  
Program Coordinator  
TLN

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Media Coordinator  
TLN

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Media Research Assistant  
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Photographer  
Award Ceremony

**Peggy Irvine**  
piDesign



## Freedom of the Media 2022 Award Ceremony



**Sasha Toperich**  
Executive Vice President  
TLN



**Daniel S. Hamilton**  
President  
TLN



**Jen Judson**  
President  
National Press Club



**Yolanda López**  
Acting Director  
Voice of America



Major General  
**Volodymyr Havrylov**  
Deputy Minister of Defense  
(Ukraine)

### TLN 2nd Freedom of the Media Award Ceremony September 17, 2022



Debra Cagan and Jennifer Griffin



Daryna Schevchenko and Daniel S. Hamilton



Debra Cagan, Željko Ivanović and John Craig

**TLN Gold Medal for Public Service** for a U.S. based news organization/individual, is awarded to **Jennifer Griffin**, national security correspondent for Fox News, for her outstanding commitment to the highest standards of journalism, including her advocacy and support for U.S. veterans through numerous organizations and events.

**TLN Freedom of the Media Award for Explanatory Reporting** is awarded to **Maria Ressa**, CEO of *Rappler* in the Philippines, for her outstanding commitment to fight corruption, promote government transparency, and safeguard freedom of expression.

**TLN Gold Medal for Investigative Reporting** for an international news organization/individual, is awarded to **Olga Rudenko**, editor-in-chief of the *Kyiv Independent* in Ukraine, for her outstanding courage in defending freedom of expression in Ukraine, her efforts to promote reliable reporting on Russia's war on Ukraine, and her continued work in exposing corruption and injustice.

**TLN Freedom of the Media Award for Commentary and Criticism** is awarded to **Željko Ivanović**, President of the Board and former Editor-in-Chief, and **Vijesti** in Montenegro, for their valuable contribution in exposing corruption, promoting accountability, and defending freedom of expression in Montenegro and the Western Balkans.

**TLN Freedom of the Media Award for International Reporting** is awarded posthumously to **Shireen Abu Akleh**, Al Jazeera Arabic, for her outstanding courage and professionalism in bringing news from the Israeli-occupied Palestinian territories, and for the way she inspired many others, particularly women, to pursue careers in journalism.

**TLN Freedom of the Media Award for the best Next Generation Journalism Reporting** is awarded to **Vladislav Davidzon**, *Tablet's Magazine* European Culture correspondent & *Odessa Review* founder, for his extraordinary creativity in exposing to the world stories of ordinary people shaping the history of their time.



Daniel S. Hamilton, Abderrahim Foukara, and Sasha Toperich



Vladislav Davidzon and Sasha Toperich



**Sheila Coronel**  
Toni Stabile Professor  
Columbia Journalism School, New York



**Teresa Ribeiro**  
OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media

## TLN Freedom of the Media 2021 Awardees

**Jackson Diehl**, The Washington Post, (U.S.)—TLN Gold Medal for Public Service

**Fairouz Ziani & Al Jazeera Media Network**, (Qatar)—TLN Gold Medal for Investigative Reporting

**Michel El Murr**, MTV Lebanon, (Lebanon)—TLN Freedom of the Media Award for International Reporting

**Natalie Sedletska**, Radio Free Europe, (Ukraine)—TLN Freedom of the Media Award for Explanatory Reporting

**Mujo Selimović**, Oslobodjenje Media Group, (Bosnia and Herzegovina)—TLN Freedom of the Media Award for Commentary and Criticism



State of the Media in the Middle East and Gulf

**Middle East**, from p 1  
they could not criticize the regime. This situation with regard to government monopoly over the kind of information would reach the citizens, was broken apart in 1997 by the Government of Qatar—who set up Al Jazeera—the first outlet available across the Arab world. There are English language newspapers in the Middle East countries. The origin of these newspapers came about because the governments understood that the foreign diplomats did not speak Arabic, so the governments wanted to make sure that the diplomatic corps had access to “right stories”—so to speak. Most of these newspapers relied on independent journalists who never developed any other journalistic activities of their own. In the Middle East, due to language barriers, the local journalists have more access than the foreign journalists”.

**EGYPT**  
**Matthews:** Space for criticism of the Egyptian government is practically—zero. This is trend that has been increasing for years now. This is not just the case on matters that are purely political, but also subjects that one would think are innocuous. So, it has gotten to the point where you cannot criticize the building of a bridge or putting up a stop sign without risking backlash. Much of the space for constructive criticism has vanished and that is a pity. The trend we see of the military moving into the private sector has affected media and entertainment as well. The military doesn’t just own concrete plants and factories, but newspapers and increasingly Public Relations firms. Egypt is indeed a very challenging environment for journalism, but it’s such an important country for the region, with a popula-

tion of over 100 million people, mostly under the age of 25, and Cairo is still a beating heart of the Middle East. One of the saddest things is that we have seen a lot of journalists who would engage in honest, critical, and yet constructive journalism forced out of the media space in Egypt.

**SYRIA**  
**McKay:** Syria was challenging to get all sides of the story, including perspectives of the government, of the FSA, SDF, and of so many groups operating there. It is hard to be of a neutral voice, with a level of attacks from the people who do not want the other side to even be heard. Even as a foreign-



**SEAN MATTHEWS**  
*It is interesting to observe that the U.S. was in Iraq 20 years, and it has not managed to induce the freedom of the press in the society.*

er, when you want to present all sides - that is not what the people there want to hear. So, I think there is a role foreign journalists can have—to be this sort of arbitrary vessel, to communicate different sides. Those local journalists working on the ground have their agenda and allegiances. There is a rise of local citizen journalism and that had a great impact in

places where there were heavy conflicts, we really relied on the people who took footage or who would break down situations on twitter. Syria was also a big space for disinformation at the time as people would be posting footage from Iraq from 2003.

**JORDAN**  
**Matthews:** I started my career as a journalist at The Jordan Times, which is majority government owned. The Jordan Times is one of the last traditional in-print newspapers of the levant region. It was also a great place to observe and learn about media in the Middle East, along with meeting a lot of really committed local journalists. In some ways the Jordan Times is a proxy case for the lack of investment and interest we are seeing in traditional print-newspapers. During the Arab Spring, there were journalists from the Jordan Times going to Syria. At one point they even had correspondents across the region. Unfortunately, today the paper is much smaller. Jordan is also a good bellwether for press freedom in the Middle East, as it has a legacy of permitting more criticism and free expression than many of its neighbors. Today, Freedom House ranks Jordan as not free, and one of the things they cite in that ranking are restrictive media laws. I know that there is a lot of concern among local journalists about the cyber security law and other measures Jordan has taken. With that said, one reason we know this is because it has been expressed publicly by prominent journalists. That is not something that would even be possible in some neighboring countries.

**IRAQ**  
**McKay:** The first thing that I found interesting that I was

not expecting was to see how many Iraqis were behind Russia in the invasion. And that is thanks to a strong Iranian influence in Iraqi media. In my time in Iraq, there was certainly room for dissents. Iraq has a young population that wants to rule their country—and they don’t want the U.S. nor Iran’s presence there.

**AFGHANISTAN**  
**McKay:** Media space was one of the biggest successes to come out of Afghanistan in the last 20 years. Some incredible



**Holly McKay**  
*Often what I saw was a freelance and independent journalist doing incredible work, great photographers providing important photos—and then what was disappointing—there was this sort of ban in 2014 after several journalists were kidnapped and sold to ISIS, and so the western press decided it was dangerous to work in Syria, so they stopped taking their stories. That was sad to see.*

news outlets and journalists came out. They took objective stands on what was going on in their country. So many women became journalists. I decided

to stay after the fall and after Kabul fell, I stayed at the hotel for a few days and I decided to talk to the Taliban, as they were the only way to get out. The Taliban wanted to take me to the Uzbek Consulate. They said welcome and asked if I would like to stay. I was taken aback a little as this was not what I was expecting and at the end, I got a letter from them that allowed me to stay so I went back to Kabul. It was really that first month that was just bizarre. Strangely enough that was the time I had the most freedom as a journalist as they wanted to create an impression of openness. They did not know what to expect. Walking to government offices, there was no security. It was fascinating as you could drive to places that was dangerous before. I’ve looked at the internet and twitter and there was sort of stories of chaos, of people killed in the streets, and it just wasn’t accurate. This was not what I saw happening on the ground. People would come and say the Taliban would have a kill list of so one and so on, and when I dug into it—it was a list of people that got government property so they were going to collect it (if you had a government car or a government gun—they would collect it).

I did a story where the photos going viral (retweeted by main-street outlets)—an example: a woman in black burka and looked like she had a chain on her ankle with her husband leading her down the street—and if you did reverse imaging—that was a picture from 2003 in Iraq and someone photoshopped the chain to her ankle!

So, this was an effort to present Afghanistan now under the Taliban and when I dig further, I found that lots of these photos originated from India and Pakistan! Afghanistan became



**Ambassador John Craig**  
*In the Middle East, due to language barriers, the local journalists have more access than the foreign journalists.*

a proxy war ground, like what was the case with people claiming the fire was still happening in Panjshir, so I went there and there was clearly no fire, yet there was a video (from the video game!) that tried to say that it was. As there were very few foreign journalists left, the Taliban would pick at me and scream asking why the American outlets were claiming these things that are not true. I didn’t know what to say, so the Taliban said—well, if this is the case—we do not want journalists here. It was quickly that they started closing their openness. There was so much disinformation and it seemed if the narrative was anti-Taliban, it was going to be taken as Gospel as opposed to trying to still be that objective voice.

**ISRAEL**  
**Matthews:** Israel has a strong press that is free to be critical of the government, unlike anywhere in the Middle East. It’s always interesting for me to speak with sources who say they disagree with something that I published, or the wording in an article, but are still willing to speak with me. That doesn’t happen in much of the region. There is acceptance

and openness to talk between all political spectrums.  
Two countries with vibrant media debates in the Middle East today, are Israel and Lebanon.

I think one challenge we see in the journalism space in the Middle East today is a blurring of the lines between activism and investigative journalism. This is something that is more pronounced in Arabic news outlets, and in-part it is because passions are so high in the region and camps are so divided. Sometimes this is done without the journalist even realizing it. I believe it is dangerous when serious investigative journalism becomes conflated through editorializing. And an important point is that one way governments discredit articles is by labeling it the work of activists with a political agenda, instead of the work of journalists based on facts. This is a challenge all regions face, but because political passions are so high in the Middle East, and much of the space for honest criticism has been taken away, the danger is greater. The Middle East is also the home of geopolitical rivalries, and journalism has been caught up in the information between regional actors. ■

ILLIBERAL DEMOCRACY Editorial Independence and Europe

**Democracy**, from page 1  
away small freedoms, then you take away more freedoms and then this slide into something of a gray zone between



**András Simonyi**  
*One of the regrets I have is that Madeleine Albright shutdown the Voice of America and Radio for Europe. Madeleine was a dear friend and I love her—but this was a big mistake. They did not realize that these countries are going through a very difficult transition, and we might think you can fast-track the transition from the dictatorship to democracy—which you cannot.*

the dictatorship and democracy where the democratic institutions are actually disguising to the benefits for the authoritarian regime. Institutions are there—but they are empty. And no institution is more important than the media. If you ask me what keeps Victor Orbán in power—is the lack of media, the lack of media diversity, the full control of the media sector



**Željko Ivanović**  
*In the last fifteen years, Đukanović owned more than ten media outlets, half of them finished in bankruptcy by now, because people don’t want to read fake news. However, just a month ago, Đukanović launched a new TV station and new online portal, through*

and of state-owned TV, Radio, and all media. And please—whatever you do—do not side with Russia and China. It will come back to bite you! Putin is looser. My encouragement to you and as the introduction, I want to emphases again—nothing is important then free media. We are here to help you and we will help you. We will do it not because we love

*some businessman connected with him investing more four million Euros. In small Montenegro, there is no way to have the return of this investment in a hundred years so it raises the questions for what reason is this investment and who would forward funds knowing there is no return of investment. Conclusion is that this could be black money from organized crime—and with such investment—you can know in advance what to expect from such media outlets.*

you (and we do love you) but because it is in our national interest to help you. ■



**Enric Borràs**  
*We are also worried by the Strategic Litigation Against Public Participation (SLAPP) phenomenon. As MEP Diana Riba explained yesterday, it is a growing threat for social activists, human rights defenders and for journalists. Usually, the promoters of this kind of litigation don’t think they can win the case in court, but rather try to silence critical voices by putting pressure on them and questioning them in front of public opinion.*

Speakers  
September 20

Remarks by Debra Cagan  
TLN Distinguished Fellow



**Debra Cagan:** “We must not lose our ability to argue. This is how we defeat the false narrative. So argue. Argue!”  
With all of the challenges facing journalists and a free press today, I remain optimistic. I come away from this conference, enlightened by the everyday bravery of

Closing Remarks  
by  
Joel Starr,  
TLN Senior Fellow



journalists, challenged to encourage a more civic-educated public and awed by the fact that our First Amendment still inspires individual reporters around the globe to establish, strengthen, and yes, hold accountable democratic institutions through a free press.  
I guess the following Churchill quote still holds, but maybe with one addition. He said: “Democracy is the worst form of government ever invented; except for all the others.” I would add:  
“Thanks to a free press.”  
Thank you for coming.  
Keep writing.  
**Keep fighting.**