

Women Journalists and Freedom of Expression: Challenges in the Americas

Virtual Seminar
Friday, March 12, 2021

Context

March 2021 marks the second anniversary of the Report of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) '[Women Journalists and Freedom of Expression](#)', which, under the leadership of the Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression, documents and analyzes the disproportionate effects of violence against the press when they are exerted against women journalists. The Report concludes with the formulation of 46¹ recommendations to different actors to contribute to ensuring conditions for the exercise of journalism in the Americas as a profession free of violence against women who exercise it.

The IACHR and its Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression have drawn attention to the forms of gender-based violence that journalists face in the exercise of their profession, as well as the disproportionate impact that certain forms of discrimination have on them and their work. The increase in acts of violence against women journalists, including murders, sexual violence, online violence and increasing occurrences of criminal prosecution of women journalists denouncing violence against women are of particular concern. These types of violence are compounded by the prevalence of gender stereotypes and prejudices, which might deepen intersectional discriminations based on ethnicity or race against vulnerable groups, particularly against indigenous and Afro-American women; and impose additional barriers to their work.

In the context of the aforementioned challenges, and on the occasion of the month of La Francophonie, the Permanent Mission of Canada, the Permanent Observer Mission of France and the Observer Mission of Switzerland, to the OAS, as well as the IACHR's Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression, have organized a virtual seminar to discuss the current challenges faced by women journalists especially in countries where freedom of expression is at threat and in the context of the covid-19 crisis.

Objectives

In line with the values of La Francophonie, of promoting democracy, inclusion and freedom of expression, the Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression of the IACHR (RELE in its Spanish acronym) seeks to establish a dialogue with relevant voices to make situations that affect women journalists and writers, visible, discuss the causes of the roadblocks they encounter and suggest next steps at the regional level, with both State and Non-State actors, that could help address these challenges.

Based on the discussions, RELE will prepare a note of conclusions on the following specific challenges:

- An online environment free of violence against women journalists;
- The challenges met by women journalists, writers and bloggers in contexts of crisis and the issue of criminalization and fair treatment;
- The importance of giving a public voice to women: the positive role that could play newsrooms, journalists and the civil society.

PROGRAM

¹ 28 recommendations to the States, 7 recommendations to the media; 3 recommendations to Universities and Schools of Journalism; 1 recommendation to trade unions, schools and journalists' associations; 5 recommendations to online platforms, and 2 recommendations to civil society.

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Monday, 8 March 2021

Social Media Campaign - the Voice of Women Journalists

Friday, 12 March 2021

11:00 – 11:10 Welcome remarks

- HE Mr. Luis Almagro Lemes, Secretary General of the Organization of American States

11:10- 11:25 Introduction

- H.E. Mr. Hugh Adsett, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Canada to the OAS
- H.E. Mrs. Anne de La Blache, Ambassador, Permanent Observer of France to the OAS
- H. E. Mr. Jacques Pitteloud, Ambassador of Switzerland to the United States and Observer to the OAS

11:30 - 12:30 Women Journalists, writers and bloggers, challenges in the exercise of freedom of expression and role in crisis situations

Conversation with the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression, Pedro Vaca V.

- Mariángela Urbina, El Espectador, Colombia
- Laurence Debray, Journalist and Writer, France
- Winnie Hugot Gabriel, Le Nouvelliste, Haïti
- Nicole Anliker, Neue Zürcher Zeitung, Switzerland

**12:35 – 12:45 Women and Freedom of Expression in the Americas-
Remarks**

- Mrs. Jennifer Clement, Writer and President of PEN INTERNATIONAL

12:50 – 13:00 Conclusion of the webinar

- Mr. Joel Hernández García, President of the IACHR

13:00 END OF SEMINAR