

The Diplomatic Envoy

Words Without Borders



*A Special Edition on Press Freedom
and Information Access*

Summer 2025



From the Editor A Note to the Reader



The Diplomatic Envoy

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Dear Reader,

Thank you for taking the time to read The Diplomatic Envoy's 2025 Summer Edition on Information Access and Press Freedom.

The flow of information is a force that is constantly threatened and weaponized within the international system. A dynamic world of emerging technology and an ever-changing view of the media have put the freedom of press in the spotlight on the global stage. The vitality of journalists and their ability to communicate and both the incredible feats of our world, but also the dark horrors. Their work contributes to the security and stability of states, holding both individuals and governments accountable. In this edition, we aim to bring you in-depth analysis on several facets of what these problems look like. Within this magazine are six stories written by some of our best staff writers that cover various angles of this issue.

On behalf of the Editorial Board, we hope you enjoy reading our 2025 Summer Edition. If you'd like to become a part of our team, please scan the QR code on the back cover of this magazine or reach out to anyone on the Editorial Board. To read more of our work, visit our website, listed on the back cover of this edition.

Hazard Zet Forward!
Joseph Brennan
Editor-in-Chief



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North Korean Propaganda Influencers and the Battle for Information

Allison Bennett | Communications Liason



In an era where social media permeates nearly every aspect of global culture, even the world's most secretive state has begun to harness the power of online platforms. North Korea, long known for its rigid information controls and insular propaganda, is now experimenting with a new kind of soft power: influencers.

These carefully curated online figures, often young women in traditional dress or polished modern attire, broadcast idyllic portrayals of life in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to curious foreign audiences. They offer a rare and paradoxical glimpse into a country shrouded in mystery, blending classic propaganda with the gloss of 21st century social media marketing. As these influencers gain traction on platforms like YouTube and TikTok, as well as Chinese platforms like Weibo and Bilibili, they complicate the global conversation around North Korea, blurring the lines between state messaging and digital entertainment. This article explores the rise of North Korean influencers, their carefully crafted content, and what their existence reveals about a regime intent on rebranding itself in the digital age, while still fiercely battling to control the flow of information.

For decades, North Korea has been comparatively closed off from the rest of the world, reports CNN, as the regime places tight restrictions on free movement, free expression, and access to information. Internet use is extremely restricted, as even the privileged few who are allowed access to smartphones can only access a government-run, heavily censored network. Foreign materials like books and movies are banned, often with severe punishments for those caught with black market contraband. Possession of such contraband can lead to harsh penalties, including imprisonment or execution. The Committee to Protect Journalists has repeatedly ranked North Korea among the most repressive regimes in the world for press freedom, and the government under Kim Jong Un has only intensified information control since he came into power in 2011. According to Reporters Without Borders (RSF), The Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) is the

only permitted news source for North Korea's media, being the government's official mouthpiece.

Propaganda within North Korea isn't new with previous campaigns featuring Soviet-style posters, images of Kim Jong Un on a white horse, and videos of marching troops and missile tests. However, Experts say the emergence of YouTube videos, and similar North Korean social media accounts on Chinese platforms Bilibili and Weibo, illustrate a new strategy: reliability.

YouTube channels "Olivia Natasha- YuMi Space DPRK daily" and "Sally Parks [Song A Channel]" started to appear in 2022, both featuring cheerful North Korean women sharing vlog-style videos of daily life in Pyongyang, the nation's Capital city. While these influencers present themselves as ordinary citizens, they are widely believed to be part of a carefully orchestrated state media campaign. YumMi, for example, has posted videos showcasing grocery stores stocked with Western-style goods, trips to amusement parks, fishing in a river, a well-equipped indoor gym, and food preparation scenes set in clean, modern kitchens. In her first video, she shares her intent to show how people live their daily lives following the pandemic in the "ever-changing" Pyongyang to people outside the borders who may be curious about Pyongyang's current state. Song-A, the host of Sally Parks' channel, similarly posts upbeat videos exploring a packed water park, a science and technology exhibition center, and her first day back at school.

These influencers often speak in English, Mandarin, or subtitled Korean, signaling that their true audience is not North Koreans, but international. In fact, it is believed that these videos are produced by the regime's foreign media wing, the DPRK Today collective or the state-run KCIV, and merely disguised as grassroots content. In interviews with The New York Times and Radio Free Asia, North Korea defectors have emphasized that no real civilian would be allowed to post such content unsupervised grassroots content. In interviews with The New York Times and Radio

Free Asia, North Korea defectors have emphasized that no real civilian would be allowed to post such content unsupervised

Analysts say that influencer YuMi most likely comes from a privileged family, noting that many facilities she introduces are only enjoyed by those highest in the social and political order, even among Pyongyang residents.

Song A, the 11-year-old YouTuber, was identified as a daughter of a North Korea diplomat to London and great-granddaughter of Ri Ul-sol, an ex-marshal of North Korea's Army, in July 2022 by Thae Young-ho, a North Korean defector and a member of the People Power Party. Experts reporting to CNN say that although these representations are not completely false, but they are extremely misleading and do not represent normal life. It is also likely that these facilities are not open or operating regularly as the videos imply. The power supply in North Korea is reportedly not smooth enough to operate an amusement park, only allowing the parks to operate on the weekends or on a special day like when they film a video.

There have been many reports of North Korea's wealthy elite, such as senior government officials and their families, having access to luxuries such as air conditioning, scooters, and coffee. While the facilities shown do exist, they are not accessible to most people and are only granted to special people in special classes.

The rise of these influencers is not random-it is calculated. According to a 2023 report by the Korea Institute for National Unification (KINU), the North Korean regime is attempting to shift its global image from one of militant isolationism to one of misunderstood normalcy. The influencers' goal is not just to confuse or entertain, but to reframe North Korea as a "regular" country where citizens shop, laugh, go to cafes, and enjoy a good barbecue.

"The intent is to humanize the regime without ceding control," said Dr Sung-Yoon Lee, a professor of Korean history and politics at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy and Tufts University. "These vlogs



North Korean soldiers ride in an open van
Courtesy of Mike Bravo (Unsplash)

are part of a larger campaign to appeal to audiences on a subconscious level, by normalizing the regime through aesthetics, leisure, and digital familiarity.

This technique aligns with the concept of “information laundering,” wherein disinformation is presented in casual or entertaining formats to reduce suspicions and enhance credibility. Once propaganda is packaged like lifestyle content, it becomes more sharable, especially among younger users. The Washington Post notes that this mirrors broader trends in authoritarian regimes using social media to sanitize their public image, such as Russia’s use of TikTok influencers to downplay the war in Ukraine or China’s curated travel vlogs from Xinjiang.

While the regime showcases a select image of itself to the outside world, it paradoxically continues to block its own people from seeing the world beyond. The influencers speak of enjoying North Korea’s serene life, but ordinary citizens are kept under intense surveillance. Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have documented repeated crackdowns on those caught consuming South Korean dramas or using Chinese USB drives to share outside news.

Indeed, while these influencer videos are broadcast to the world, the majority of North Koreans cannot even access them.

A 2022 BBC Panorama investigation highlights this contradiction by comparing YouTube vlogs with testimonies from recent North Korean defectors. One former teacher noted that “Every thing they’re showing is a lie. We never see those kinds of supermarkets. We’re hungry most of the time.”

another former resident commented on the presence of clean streets and smiling faces in the videos: “It’s a set. Like a play. And we’re not allowed to be part of it.”

The appearance of these influencers has drawn scrutiny from both governments and tech companies. In 2023, YouTube came under fire for allowing these state-affiliated accounts to remain online. While these channels were eventually demonetized, they stopped short of removing them entirely, citing a commitment to “access to information,” a decision that sparked debate about platform responsibility versus censorship.

In December 2022, YouTube’s parent company Google did not view these videos as propaganda, stating that they did not violate their policies.

Radio Free Asia reports that the change in Google’s stance coincided with the South Korean government’s decision to censor them there. A YouTube spokesperson told Radio Free Asia’s Korean service, “After review and finding the channels were not consistent with our policies, we terminated the three channels shared with us. Google is committed to compliance with applicable U.S. sanctions and trade compliance laws, including those related to North Korea, and enforces related policies under our Terms of Service.” This resulted in many of the channels getting removed from the website.

While the channels’ vlog style of propaganda indicates a shift in strategy for Pyongyang, the first North Korean state sponsored channel, called Uriminzokkiri, or “Among our race of people,” emerged as early as 2010, and deleted in 2017. Several more accounts under the same name were opened and

again deleted in 2018, 2020, and 2022.

Other North Korean sponsored channels like DPRK Today, Red Star TV, and Echo of Truth were also created and deleted one after another. These channels were not receiving much attention from viewers in other countries, and the few who did see them criticized them for being overwhelming and obviously propaganda videos. The change to the vlog style propaganda was a method to draw in more viewers, by introducing women and children, they attempted to show that North Korea can be a happy place to live, and that North Koreans have access to the internet, can upload YouTube videos, go to amusement parks, and visit good restaurants like the people in South Korea.

While only a few of these North Korean channels accumulated mass audiences, YuMi’s channel garnered around 22,220 subscribers and just over 1 million total views before being taken down. Other DPRK-affiliated channels such as “North Korea Now” achieved around 169,000 subscribers and 42 million views across more than 1,600 videos. Statistics like this signal that content about North Korea, whether pro or anti-regime, can generate significant engagement from people on the internet who may be unfamiliar with North Korean life, leading them to believe the propaganda set forth by these channels.

However, one YouTube channel remains, showing life in Pyongyang as a foreigner. Zoe Stephens, Zoe Discovers on YouTube, is a 31-year-old from Liverpool who has visited North Korea 30 times since March 2016, working as a tour guide, guiding countless tourists from Germany, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Australia around North Korea.

Zoe is quoted saying, “I went to North Korea as a tourist first, pretty much the same way as everyone else. I realized it is nothing like what the media says. So I decided that I wanted to start doing tours to show everyone what the media wasn’t showing – the human side of North Korea” reports The Korea Herald.

Zoe’s tours usually begin in Beijing China, and head towards Pyongyang, North Korea. She needs to,

undertake a one-hour briefing session on the rules every time she takes a group into the country. “I want to ensure everyone’s safety and help them challenge cultural misconceptions,” she said. “There are three general rules you follow as a traveler; when taking photos of any image of the leader, you have to remain respectful. You can’t take any photos of the military or construction sites and stick together as a group. Solo travelers aren’t allowed in the country and there has to be two tour guides with you at all times.” On her tours, Zoe hopes to encourage people to challenge their “misunderstanding” of culture in North Korea.

Despite viewers telling Zoe she is spreading propaganda, Zoe says she has never felt unsafe in the city and has made many friends through the years.

Within the description of Zoe’s YouTube channel, Zoe claims she is “here to give you a different insight into North Korea, from someone who has called it their second home for more than 3 years,” and “I’m not paid by anyone; including the company I work for, the North Korean government, or... anyone else you might think.”

Zoe claims that the people are the best part of the country, as she loves meeting “normal humans doing normal things.” Though, she says she struggles to stay in contact with friends in North Korea due to restrictions on international calls and social media.

When the COVID-19 pandemic began, North Korea quickly banned tourists, expelled diplomats, and severely cut back border traffic. The Associated Press calls this “one of the world’s most draconian COVID-19 restrictions.” This drastic action placed North Korea further from outside influence than ever before. In February 2024, North Korea accepted about 100 Russian tourists, the first foreign nations allowed into the country for sightseeing since the pandemic. Throughout 2024 a total of around 880 Russian tourists visited North Korea according to South Korea’s Unification Ministry, citing official Russian data. When North Korea reopened its borders following the global pandemic, British YouTuber

Mike O’Kennedy, 28, had to opportunity to take a five-day trip into the country. O’Kennedy was given a guided tour around Rason, a special economic zone near the borders of China and Russia.

O’Kennedy was a part of 13 international tourists allowed on the five-day trip from February 20th to February 24th arranged by the Beijing-based travel company Koryo Tours. Travelers on this trip came from the United Kingdom, Canada, Greece, New Zealand, France, Germany, Austria, Australia, and Italy. He also reported he encountered several strange situations such as a visit to a bottled water factory with no workers, school children performing a song and dance dedicated to their leader Kim Jong Un, having to keep the window blinds closed on the plane to “avoid seeing the country from the air”, and having to list every electronic device in possession at the border.

O’Kennedy explained, “That list had to match out items on the way out, not because they’re worried about what we might take with us, but because they’re concerned about what we might leave behind. You’re not allowed to bring anything that could be considered politically sensitive such as a book about North Korea or a USB containing external political content.”

In January, United States President Donald Trump boasted about ties with regime leader Kim Jong Un, saying “I think he has tremendous condo capabilities. He’s got a lot of shoreline.” President Trump was referring to the eastern coast site, where North Korea has opened a massive resort area the week of June 24, 2025, officially allowing service for domestic guests July 1. CNN reports that the country’s official KCNA news service claims, “Kim opened the Kalma beachside resort with waterparks, high-rise hotels, and accommodation for nearly 20,000 guests.” Russians appeared to be the only foreign tour groups granted access to the beach resort. Dr. Edward Howell, a North Korea expert at the University of Oxford, says, “Since 2020, Kim Jong Un has adopted an increasingly severe approach towards social control, quashing

any signs of the virus of outside information and ideologies entering the DPRK. If any Western tourists do come to the resort, the ruling regime will no doubt want to ensure that their actions and movements regulated and controlled.”

These figures highlight a nuanced success. Although state-run influencers do not match the scale of independent YouTubers, they effectively exploit recommendation algorithms to amplify selective narratives. With enough finesse, even channel growth in the tens of thousands can translate into meaningful visibility, especially when that content is packaged to look authentic and shareable. As the world grows increasingly interconnected, the battle over who controls the political, global, and digital narrative, and who gets to participate in it, has never been more critical. North Korea’s entry into the influencer age is not just a curiosity; it is a calculated maneuver by a regime desperate to soften its global image without relinquishing control over its population. The polished vlogs of YuMi and Song A, as well as the curated experiences of foreign influencers like Zoe Stephens, paint a portrait of North Korea that is not entirely false, but is dangerously incomplete.

These videos are not neutral glimpses into daily life; they are propaganda reimagined for the digital age. By humanizing the regime, downplaying oppression, and projecting an image of normalcy, they contribute to a growing confusion between entertainment and state messaging. This tactic is especially effective on global platforms where algorithms reward relatability and emotional appeal over accuracy or accountability. For younger audiences who may lack historical context, these influencers can seem just like any other travel vloggers or lifestyle creator, further blurring the lines between reality and illusion.

The most striking irony remains while the regime projects a more “open” and cheerful face to the world, it continues to tighten its grip on its own people. Most North Koreans will never see these videos. They cannot post their own content, question their leaders, or access the global internet. Their stories remain



Children line up in front of a mural in Pyongyang, North Korea
Courtesy of Thomas Evans (Unsplash)

tent, question their leaders, or access the global internet. Their stories remain censored, their realities hidden behind the glossy filters of propaganda vlogs.

The presence of these influencers raises hard questions for global platforms like YouTube and TikTok, whose stated missions of “information access” must now contend with the weaponization of content.

The rise of North Korean influencers is a sobering reminder that press freedom and information access are not just ideals, they are ongoing struggles. While the state may try to rewrite its narrative one vlog at a time, journalists, activists, defectors, and critical thinkers must continue to push for the truth, amplify silenced voices, and resist the allure of curated illusions. Only then can we hope to replace carefully staged spectacles with real stories and bring genuine light to one of the world’s darkest corners.

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Trump Administration’s Censorship and Attacks on Media

Jaxon Carey | Staff Writer



Courtesy of Markus Spiske (Unsplash)

On May 1, 2025, an executive order was passed by President Trump titled “ENDING TAXPAYER SUBSIDIZATION OF BIASED MEDIA” which directed the immediate ending of federal funding for NPR and PBS. This executive order follows the barring of a reporter writing for the Associated Press from the oval office, affecting the ability for The Associated Press to report on current events.

This clashing between the White House and the media represents the culmination of an evolving relationship that started with the Obama administration and was built upon by the Trump administration. Throughout the years, the White House has been growing ever distant from the press, supplementing established journalists and media with social media posts. This relationship, from seized phone and email records to direct removal of White House access, raises questions over the future of reporting and information.

Currently, President Trump is distancing the White House from the media in the same way former President Obama did. In 2013, the Obama administration’s campaign to prevent government leaks meant distance from reporters and journalists. The Committee to Protect Journalists notes that during the Obama administration, “Reporters’ phone logs and e-mails were secretly subpoenaed and seized by the Justice Department.” At the time, David E. Sanger, who is the current chief Washington correspondent for the New York Times, stated that “This is the most closed, control freak administration I’ve ever covered.”

While directly limiting journalists’ ability to report on current events, the Obama Administration facilitated the usage of social media to provide administration-sponsored information that cut out traditional media outlets. One example is Twitter Town Hall, where former president Obama used Twitter to receive questions and then provide answers from the population. This allowed the administration to directly skip reporters and journalists when providing information to the public. While accessible for the general population, this online approach provides an opportunity for the

administration to lean into prepared answers while ignoring sensitive topics.

Peter Grier, staff writer for Christian Science Monitor, noted back in 2012 that “The whole thing is another example of how the Obama Administration in particular, and politicians in general, are increasingly bypassing the established channels of the mainstream media.” The Obama administration rapidly escalated the rate in which traditional media was skipped in the information process. In Grier’s words again, “Would you rather answer questions shouted at you by the White House press corps in a mass session, or pick what you want to answer in a quiet room and then peck away on a laptop?” The distancing from traditional media allowed for the Obama administration to pick and choose what questions to highlight, what questions to ignore, and what questions would give them access to a prepared answer. This all happens without reporters being able to hold them accountable.

It is this evolution that President Trump has capitalized on. Under the Trump administration, the White House has seen its furthest departure from traditional media and reporters. The new relationship replaces reporters and journalists with Truth Social and Instagram posts. At the same time as reporters and journalists are devalued, the White House has escalated attacks against established media outlets. All of this occurs while social media floods consumers and citizens with more information and news than they can keep track of. Without the power traditional reporters and journalists had, there is no longer any barrier sifting and sorting the information the Trump administration provides.

Firstly, the departure of President Trump towards social media and away from traditional media means control over information. President Trump, through his launch of Truth Social, didn’t just skip past reporters to convey administration information. The creation of his own social media platform gives President Trump almost complete control in the release of information to the population. Announcements that previously

would have been made by the official White House Press Secretary to a room of reporters are now made on social media. When President Trump wanted to announce the details of a call to President Putin, or to provide information on Iran, he did so on Truth Social. President Trump can choose what questions to answer, if any, and any reporting on this information has to be taken from his website. Journalists have a decreased role in the information process and thus decreased power to ask questions and make assessments. Without the power to ask questions and make assessments, all information must be taken as-is, which threatens to create an over-reliance upon unquestioned and potentially politically motivated information.

Journalist’s decreased role and power results in unquestionable information. When the Trump administration’s official Instagram account claims “\$7.1 TRILLION SECURED IN TRADE COMMITMENTS,” no journalist is in the room to ask, in front of a camera with the news watching, where those numbers came from. The Trump administration can choose to deliberately ignore comments and questions relating to the verifiability of their numbers. Despite the supposed claim that the White House was ballooning the real numbers, Fortune notes that upon questioning about the sources of President Trump’s claims, the White House never responded. There is a level of unaccountability for information that is exasperated by social media, leaving citizens confused and overwhelmed.

While journalists are being replaced by social media, attacks against journalists and established media outlets increase. These attacks have created a war of credibility and information. Both sides of this war—the White House on one end and journalists on the other—weaponize claims of bias, democracy, and misinformation in their attacks. As a move to limit journalists’ credibility and coverage, the White House made an unprecedented move to take control of the White House Press Pool. The Guardian reports that the Trump administration made the decision to

remove the independent White House Correspondents Association from their ability to decide what reporters could be in the White House. This takeover immediately allowed for the Trump Administration to remove a HuffPost reporter from the press pool in addition to the Associated Press reporter also being removed. CNN notes that an appeals court has ruled that the ban can stay, meaning the Trump Administration now has the ability to choose which journalists it chooses to admit.

Behind this escalation against journalists are claims of fairness and democracy from the Trump administration. When defending the decision to limit reporter access to parts of the Pentagon, NPR cites Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth as saying “While the Department remains committed to transparency, the Department is equally obligated to protect [classified national intelligence information] and sensitive information.” This rhetoric echos a direct tie to the Obama administration’s campaign against government leaks, and a direct tie to the Obama administration’s limitation of journalist’s abilities to report as a result. Both administrations have used the premise of national security to limit journalists’ ability to report freely.

National security isn’t the only defense behind the upheaval of journalists and traditional media outlets. NBC News, The New York Times, National Public Radio, and Politico were removed from their dedicated Pentagon Press Corp workspaces on February 14, 2025. NBC reports that when defending the decision, John Ulyot, current Pentagon spokesperson, stated the decision was made “In order to broaden access to the limited space of the Correspondents’ Corridor to outlets that have not previously enjoyed the privilege and journalist value of working from physical office space in the Pentagon.” This wording frames the decision as one made for fairness and openness in government and reporting, without revealing why these specific news networks were targeted.

It is important to note that NBC News, The New York Times,

National Public Radio, and Politico have audiences and reach in the millions. With NBC being the 2nd most watched network of 2024, The New York Times having nearly 11 million digital subscribers, Politico’s claimed 26 million viewers per month, and NPR’s 43 million sized weekly audience, millions of subscribers, listeners, and readers have watched their network’s capability take a hit. This positioning, where classical reporting is made more difficult, leaves the public with a disorganized traditional media and a flooded social media.

NPR, with millions of listeners and over a thousand radio stations broadcasting NPR programming, has faced more roadblocks and limits to their capabilities. Noting the previously mentioned executive order from the Trump administration, NPR is set to lose their federal funding for promoting biased media. In the specific wording of the executive order, the Trump administration stated that neither NPR nor PBS “presents a fair, accurate, or unbiased portrayal of current events to taxpaying citizens.” Similar to other cases of limiting journalism, the rhetoric behind the decision echoes freedom and fairness for the taxpayer.

At the same time as journalists are facing increased roadblocks to their coverage, the Trump administration has rapidly increased legal attacks on journalism. The U.S. Press Freedom Tracker has recorded the rapid deployment of the FCC against media outlets. This includes

an investigation launched by the FCC into KCBS for their broadcasting of ICE agents’ locations during operations, which the FCC claims violates the public interest. This also includes threatening Comcast licenses for alleged news distortion, again citing a violation of the public interest.

In addition to utilizing the FCC, President Trump has personally launched a \$20 Billion lawsuit into CBS for their “60 Minutes” interview of Kamala Harris. The lawsuit alleges that the editing of the interview was “deceptive” for the public. This lawsuit has already resulted in Bill Owens’ departure from the show, who cited worries over editorial independence.

Journalists are also facing attacks on their credibility. The Press Freedom Tracker found that President Trump has called the media “enemy of the people” in over 70 different posts, and called media outlets “fake news” over 1,500 times. DW finds that President Trump has called the media “corrupt” and “illegal” in front of the Department of Justice. Apart from attacking media outlets, President Trump is known for verbally attacking and threatening reporters personally. When asked a question about his \$400 million jet from Qatar by an NBC News journalist, President “Trump snapped at the question—which Alexander did not finish—and threatened an investigation into NBC’s parent company Comcast,” per Yahoo!news. This includes a direct quote, “you’re a real, you know, you’re a terrible reporter.”



Newspapers about President Trump
Courtesy of The Now Time (Unsplash)

The impact of this collective attack against established media outlets is found in two parts. While traditional journalists are left reeling, social media is left to fill the gaps in public knowledge.

Firstly, it aids the Trump administration's abandonment of traditional media for social media. By limiting established news networks and their abilities to conduct journalism and reporting, the public is left with an ineffective journalist pool, combined with attacks against media credibility, have seen a 30% decline in Republicans' trust of the media. This imbalance, where one side of the political spectrum is sharply becoming antagonistic towards established media sources, hints towards future dependencies on the Trump administration's social media accounts. If information isn't gained from established media outlets, the only place left where statistics, data, and information is shared is from the Trump administration.

The Trump administration's embracing of social media means that information comes first to Instagram and Truth Social, and second to reporters and journalists. This increases the dependence of both the public and journalists on administration provided information from social media. There is a grand replacement happening, with a future focus on direct administration to public providing of information all without the presence of journalism as a buffer.

The second part of this impact is the shifting of traditional media to align to President Trump's viewpoints. Axios compiles an examination into how journalists are under pressure due to fear of retribution. An example included a clip of President Trump being criticized that was cut from a documentary before showcasing on PBS. PBS is one of the networks that President Trump directed funding to be withheld from due to their supposedly biased media.

Executives from ABC News have also reportedly told *The View* that they need to tone down their political tone. Bob Iger, Disney CEO, affirmed that while he supported the show, they needed to downplay their political rhetoric.

This is despite *The View* ranking as the most watched daytime talk show in the first quarter of 2025, and despite the decision from Disney and ABC News to settle a lawsuit worth \$15 million with President Trump over fake news.

This shifting and pressure leaves journalists and reporters unable to do their jobs. Through lawsuits, FCC investigations, threatening FCC investigations, and the removal of funding, the Trump Administration has sent a clear message of compliance to media outlets around the nation. Ultimately, verbal insults and legal action have some journalists afraid or intimidated, with newsrooms instructing journalists to temper down their reporting on President Trump.

The intimidation is compounded by the recent physical attacks against journalists who are covering what is happening in Los Angeles. The Guardian reports that several journalists have been physically attacked by law enforcement while attempting to report in Los Angeles including a CNN News crew being physically detained. The culmination of these attacks saw a reporter shot in the leg by a rubber bullet from law enforcement, a reporter shot in the head by a rubber bullet from highway patrol while wearing his press pass, and a reporter getting hit from what he believes was a 40mm sponge grenade.

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Journalism Fights the Rise of Authoritarianism in India

William Coppola | Associate Editor



Courtesy of Ravi Sharma (Unsplash)

On January 1, as the rest of the world rang in the New Year, Mukesh Chandrakar was brutally beaten to death and dumped into a septic tank in Chhatisgarh, India. Local authorities eventually arrested Mr. Chandrakar's cousin, Suresh Chandrakar, and three others for the murder. The motive for the murder was revealed to be Mr. Chandrakar's work as a local journalist covering corruption in a roadwork company headed by Suresh, which led his cousin to plan his murder. Mukesh Chandrakar's death marks just one of the dozens of journalists who have been killed, attacked, and persecuted in what Reporters Without Borders (RSF) calls "one of the most dangerous places in the world for media." Despite being the world's largest democracy, India ranks 159th out of 180 on RSF's press freedom index, far below authoritarian countries such as Zimbabwe and El Salvador. A variety of groups, laws, and conflicts have made reporting in India a deadly occupation. From Hindu nationalists to Marxist militants to organized crime groups, a multi-front war against the truth is being waged against journalists every day in India.

India is the world's most populous country and one of the most diverse. The Indian constitution officially protects 22 different languages, and the United States Department of State estimates that there are 2,000 distinct ethnic groups within the country. Most of the world's Hindus and Sikhs live in India, and significant portions of the world's Muslims and Buddhists live in the country. Many of the founders of the modern Indian nation, such as Jawaharlal Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi, championed this vast diversity and sought to create a secular and tolerant republic. Even before the establishment of India, they were challenged by Hindu nationalists, who rejected pluralism and wanted to mold India into a Hindu nation. The modern-day champion of Hindu nationalism is Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his party, the *Bhartiya Janata Party* (BJP). Modi has long held negative views of the media and refuses to give press conferences or interviews to journalists he deems to be hostile. The

BJP has also frequently used the law to attack journalists who investigate government or Hindu nationalist wrongdoing. Journalists are charged with crimes such as sedition or terrorism, and the offices of media outlets are raided on corruption charges. In line with the rising nationalism, there is a rise in attacks against journalists. The Associated Press reported that during sectarian riots in March 2020, several journalists were attacked by rioting Hindu nationalists. Nationalists attempted to prevent them from documenting the violence and made multiple attempts to determine if they were Hindu or not. One journalist was beaten by a nationalist mob after documenting the group vandalizing a Muslim cemetery. The attack only stopped when the mob learned the journalist was a Hindu himself. Attacks like these are only growing more common in India as government officials have ignored or even tacitly endorsed violence against critical journalists. In April of 2022, five journalists were attacked while covering a BJP rally, one was berated with accusations that he was a "jihadi," a reference to his Muslim faith. More chilling are the recent murders of journalists covering Hindu nationalism, one of the most prominent being the murder of Gauri Lankesh. Lankesh worked in the southern state of Bengaluru and ran her newspaper, *The Gauri Lankesh Patrike*. In September of 2017, she was shot several times in the back while walking home from work, according to the *Colombia Journalism Review*. Police believe her murderers were tied to far-right Hindu networks and murdered her in retaliation for her reporting that was ardently anti-nationalist and pro-pluralism. Lankesh made a career out of talking to the outcasts of Indian society and trying to bring them together. Most famously, she reached out to Marxist militants and attempted to begin talks with them and the government that would eventually lead to their reintegration into society. Hindu nationalists saw Lankesh's actions as treasonous, and she faced several threats from the far right for her efforts. While her death sparked nationwide protests for greater protection of journalists, many on

the Hindu right celebrated her murder.

Perhaps no area in India highlights the threats that journalists face than the northern states of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). The region has been a hotbed of violence since the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947. The only Muslim majority state in India, Kashmir enjoyed a semi-autonomous status until it was revoked in 2019 by the Modi government. This was followed by a period of intense repression from the government and a six-month media blackout. Two laws have been instrumental in the government's efforts to silence journalists in Kashmir: the Public Safety Act (PSA) and the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA). The PSA grants the government the ability to detain any individual deemed a threat to the security of the state for up to two years, and the UAPA allows the government to broadly declare that individuals or organizations are terrorists and take sweeping action against them. In 2023, the prominent Kashmiri news outlet *The Kashmiri Wallah* was banned by the government in Kashmir. Initially founded in 2009, *The Kashmiri Wallah* covered the violence in the region and the daily struggles of its civilian population. After the reversal of J&K's autonomy in 2019, the Indian government began harassing its journalists and editors. The editor and founder of *The Kashmiri Wallah*, Fahah Shah, was detained several times starting in 2020. According to *Al Jazeera*, Shah was told by Indian law enforcement to take down anti-government articles and to stop writing critically of the government. After refusing to do so for two years, he was arrested in 2022 for violating the UAPA. *The Kashmir Wallah* and Mr. Shah are just some of the countless journalists and news outlets threatened in Kashmir. Since Mr. Modi's second term began in 2019, RSF reports that 25 percent of journalists detained in India are Kashmiri, even though the population of Jammu and Kashmir makes up just under 1 percent of the Indian population.

When Jagendra Singh began an investigation into a rape committed by a state minister, he could not have known that it would lead to him getting doused

in gasoline and set on fire by a group of policemen. Even after the attack, he was still in shock, asking, "Why couldn't they have just arrested me?" According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, Singh worked as a freelancer for several local newspapers. He had built a reputation for relentlessly uncovering corruption and standing by journalists who worked to do the same. Shortly before he was set on fire, Singh was ruthlessly beaten by cronies of the state minister and warned to stop reporting the rape case. Undeterred, Singh continued to report on the case until his death. Two weeks after the attack on Singh, another journalist was killed. Just like Jagendra Singh, Sandeep Kothari was abducted by a group of men connected to an organized crime group, beaten, and burned to death. Kothari was reporting on a perilous topic in India, the so-called "sand mafias." These are organizations that illegally mine sand and other materials, often causing serious environmental harm. The RSF found that during Modi's first term, five years from 2014 to 2019, 13 of the 28 journalists killed in India were covering stories related to the sand mafia. In addition to being burned, reporters were gunned down

or run over by SUVs and dump trucks.

Unfortunately, those who commit or order the murders often get away scot-free. Jagendra Singh initially survived the attack and lived to see a police report get filed, saying that his burns were self-inflicted. Ultimately, only five police officers were suspended in connection with the attack, and Singh died of his injuries. To this day, the forensic report on the Singh case maintains the attack was a suicide attempt, even though Singh himself ridiculed the idea while he was in a hospital. As of 2025, there has yet to be a single conviction in the now decade-old murder of Sandeep Kothari. The eight men accused of killing Gauri Lankesh are currently free on bail. This persistent violence, coupled with government persecution, has created a climate of fear in the Indian media. As independent journalists are killed, shut down, or scared out of the profession, pro-government media outlets called "Godis" fill the vacuum. By no means does this mean that Indian journalism is dead. India maintains the world's second-largest market for news media, with over 17,000 daily newspapers and over 400 news TV channels. The Indian Readership

survey found that in 2019, 36 percent of the Indian population read the newspaper at least once a month. This gives India the largest newspaper readership in the world. The *Guardian* found that many Indians are looking towards internet-based podcasters and YouTubers, including Mukesh Chandrakar, for critical reporting on the government. As authoritarianism rises in India and the rest of the world, journalists remain one of the first lines of defense that the free world has. The government and those in power are routinely criticized, scolded, and mocked by an undaunted Indian press that continues to shine light on the darkest parts of Indian society.

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A newspaper stand in Kolkata, India
Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

Information Access: The Multi-Faceted Impacts to American Society

Gabriella Fernandez | Staff Writer

As the world continues to develop technology at a rapid pace, people consume information at increasingly larger amounts every day. Information access is a key tenant of American society and democracy as a whole. It is the reason many Americans lash out at mentions of censorship and why controlling any form of information access is viewed as authoritarian in nature. While most of these debates occupy Americans' minds in the domestic realm regarding the security of civil liberties outlined in the Constitution, there are crucial concerns regarding American national security in terms of data and data transmission that reach beyond our physical borders. The primary focus of these security concerns stems from one key aspect of information access — data.

Data is used in various ways in our language and society. In day-to-day life, people refer to data in various contexts: personal data, content data, and regular statistical data. Data is arguably the most valuable resource when it comes to developing AI, deepfake, and online tools. This ignites debates of who gets access to data and how this data is stored and how it is transmitted. These questions are relevant to information access with regards to both civil liberty security and national security.

Debates surrounding information access in the domestic realm focus on the presence of misinformation, disinformation, fake news, and biased reporting. As the American Library Association's Journal of Intellectual Freedom and Privacy discusses, there is a history of censorship and legal battles regarding information access in the United States. This is not a new problem; however, the rapid emergence of the internet and 21st century technology has added another layer to this complex field. While the article's analysis focuses on the Communications Decency Act and Children's Internet Protection Act that focused on protecting children from offensive or obscene content online, it also addresses the more current attempts by social media companies to censor certain content. Major companies like Facebook and X have come under

fire for "content moderation" with the goal of removing disturbing content like pornography and gore. This is largely in part to people viewing it as censorship and a restriction on their freedom of speech and information access. The ALA also highlighted the accusations against social media sites for censoring information with a politically biased intent. This is an important aspect of access to information today regardless of the ongoing debate about factuality behind the accusations.

The rise of fact checking services in recent years has been a sign of the threat of misinformation, biased information, and fake news on society currently. Fact checkers are meant to evaluate content on social media sites, claims by prominent figures, and information present online to weed out the effects of incorrect information being spread and believed as fact by people across the globe. Further, the emergence of AI analysis tools that can more quickly and easily weed out and identify key information help to address incorrect information being spread online. For example, the U.S. Government Accountability Office's Director Brian Mazanec highlighted how "...Ukraine is using AI facial recognition technology to identify Russian operatives and help the Ukrainian government debunk false social media posts and misinformation from Russia." This points to a further issue with the emergence of mis- and disinformation — it's intentional use by foreign adversaries. This molds the issues of domestic information access and national security threats.

The American Security Project (ASP) discusses this issue in its analysis of disinformation affecting American society and national security. It mentions the risk of foreign adversaries promoting disinformation domestically to undermine its leaders and weaken the U.S. government's position. This can particularly be an issue with information regarding public health and safety. A concerning capability Russia now possesses is the ability to spread disinformation using Western AI chatbots according to the Center for European Policy Analysis. The CEPA also includes discussion on

how China and Russia target Americans' faith and trust in U.S. institutions and government through media campaigns and dissemination of disinformation. As their bot networks continue to spread these narratives, they disperse through nations and reach western nations, specifically Americans. Due to America's protection for free speech and citizens' ability to access the world of information online, there is limited control the U.S. government has on limiting this foreign disinformation. Due to free speech protections, companies are truly able to dictate what information "abides by their policies" and the U.S. government has limited say.

This grows the concerns of targeted foreign disinformation influencing Americans, their trust in political processes, and their influence on politicians based on the information they are taking in. The spread of foreign disinformation can easily become a larger national security threat and one the government has been aware of and views as a threat to our functioning democracy. The United States needs to find ways to combat disinformation against its politics for the sake of its viability as a functioning democracy. As the discussion between Jed Willard and Matthew Wallin highlighted on the ASP Flashpoint Podcast, there is a shared responsibility between platforms, users, and the government to combat the fear that is being sowed through disinformation that has caused people to become more polarized and become susceptible to more disinformation.

Taking a step back, the conversation revolves around how information from China and Russia to any country across the ocean reaches the United States. Ultimately, how does the United States combat foreign disinformation reaching Americans? The answer can be found by using submarine fiber optic cables that lie along the ocean floor connecting nations all over the globe. These cables underpin the whole global internet system and our modern age of globalization. They are responsible for transmitting streaming videos, financial transactions, diplomatic communications, and intelligence between countries. According to Kentik,

there are 550 active cables which total 1.5 million kilometers, or 930,000 miles, of undersea cables. Suffice to say, if one or more of these cables that provide data, internet, and information to countries is broken, it becomes a serious security issue.

It is important to have a basic understanding of how these cables work and what is required to have control over or access to them. First, fiber optic cables transmit large amounts of light at very long distances using Dense Wavelength Division Multiplexing. They are reinforced by marine-grade polyethylene with steel strength being the cables encasing. This helps combat any damage that may come to the cables from storms, harsh currents, marine life, and deep-sea fishing tools. Cables are run through secure facilities, known as cable landing stations (CLS), on the shores of each nation they connect which have minimal marine traffic. The CLSs are the main center for all the information and data that is received from the cables to then be dispersed to the proper channels in the nation of its location making these a central aspect of national security.

While no single nation owns these cables, they are largely owned by conglomerates of private telecommunication companies that have invested in such cables to expand and improve their services. Only 1 percent of these cables are owned in part by government entities. However, in 1958, the International Cable Protection Committee was formed to set standards for the installation, maintenance, and protection of this critical infrastructure to the international system. The major submarine cable fabricators and key stakeholders in this field are the U.S. based SubCom and Alcatel and China's HMN (Huawei). Currently, SubCom and Alcatel combined have about 87 percent of the market share while HMN has about 11 percent. These companies are largely responsible for financing and developing new subsea cables currently being built and then have crews that will be able to fix the lines when damage occurs. For example, as reported by the Center for Strategic and International Studies, SubCom received a \$10 million contract

from the Department of Transportation to operate the United States' 'Cable Security Fleet'. On the other hand, China maintains a state-controlled company called the SB Submarine System (SBSS) which has played a major role in repairing international cable lines. All these aspects of utilizing subsea cables expose the U.S. to security risks that must be mitigated.

Subsea cable security is a necessity due to the age of globalization that has made countries increasingly interdependent on each other. For example, the CSIS analysis highlights how \$3.9 trillion a day pass through these cables for one major international bank. If that ability were taken away, there would be major repercussions and money lost affecting nations' GDP and financial stability. Internet connectivity is required for sizable portions of transactions and services that make up our GDP. Military and intelligence communication systems run through these cables that connect their locations internationally, and even secure, encrypted government communications pass through the commercially used subsea cables.

There are a multitude of ways undersea cable infrastructure opens the United States to foreign threats. First is the worry that has followed HMN's rapid growth and relevance in recent years. They have provided 18 percent of recently laid cables in the last 4 years and built or repaired 25 percent of all cables. While there are signs of slowing growth according to CSIS, there are security concerns over the CCP's access to data and information passing through the cables they have their hands on. This concern has led the United States to block subsea cable projects from Chinese companies involving U.S. investments and firms. Along with the concerns that China could monitor data through the cables or even cut entire countries from the internet by damaging cables, the U.S. and its allies have diverted planned cable systems to regions that are not vulnerable to China.

Fears of foreign adversaries interfering with and damaging subsea cables, however, are not unfounded. The SBSS ships that have been repairing

damaged cables have been hiding vessel locations from international radio and satellite tracking services, inducing fears of potential foul play as reported by of CSIS. Furthermore, in 2023 there were 2 cables from Taiwan to its Matsu Islands that were cut, preventing internet access in the islands for an extended period of time. This was blamed on 2 Chinese vessels that were in the area. This follows the 27 instances Chinese vessels in Taiwanese waters have resulted in cable disruptions since 2018. Even since then, in early 2025 there were more disruptions between Taiwan and its offshore islands again. As the United States is connected to Taiwan and the Philippines through bilateral and trilateral cables, these incidences create concerns about these disruptions affecting the United States. Perceived threats grew when in March of 2025, China released its new deep-sea cutting ship produced by the China Ship Scientific Research Centre (CSSRC). While the CSSRC claims that it is developed for mining, it is believed that this "intention" gives China plausible deniability when it comes to cutting cables, according to the Pacific Forum.

Even beyond China, Russia has also been a concern in the undersea cable security equation. Russia, lacking ocean access connecting it to significant nations, has much less at stake when it comes to undersea cables. This makes it much less hesitant to disrupt the system when the opportunity arises. Also in October of 2023, there were two cables connecting Sweden and Estonia that were damaged in the Baltic Sea. Signs pointed to Russian and Chinese vessels operating in the sea as likely sources of the sabotage. Russian ships the Yantar and Losharik, have been tracked lurking near cable routes while in the possession of tools capable of cutting or tapping the cables. Russia's threat to cable security grew when the Deputy Chairman of the Russian Security Council stated that the undersea cables could be targeted.

The threats posed to undersea cable security thus far have been largely reflective of current great power competition in the international order. However, the use of undersea

cables as instruments in this competition is not new, it started all the way back during World Wars I and II. Throughout this period, the allied nations viewed control over the undersea cables as control over global infrastructure which is indispensable when engaged in conflict. The Lowy Institute included this example in its analysis of undersea cable competition writing that, "In the weeks leading up to the outbreak of war, roughly a third of all stories in American newspapers about the crisis originated from Germany. Following the cutting of German cables, this supply of information dried up..." This is reminiscent of the effects losing cable access would have on nations supplying information globally today. The loss of the ability to transmit information through cables globally could be a major loss of influential soft power abroad. Additionally, tense regions like the South China Sea and Red Sea, are "choke points" in cable

networks. This is an easy on-ramp to further tensions and conflict with the potential to draw in multiple parties to the conflict. As we look to both the domestic and international realms in considering the security threats that come with information access in the United States, a complicated picture appears. Both domestic factors such as the information reaching Americans and international factors and the ability to spread information on a global scale, pose challenges to national security policy. Foreign adversaries are a threat on both threats as the desire to undermine the American government and American society persist. This is a call on American policymakers to develop sound policy that both protects Americans and our assets in the information sphere. These challenges surprisingly go far back in time, yet they are still evolving with the growing globalized world order, much like the United States itself. And as the United

States is constantly evolving to keep up with current challenges, its policy regarding information access must follow suit.

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A phone displays adds and news with a newspaper lying behind it
Courtesy of Matthew Guay (Unsplash)

Media Oversight and Ethical Accountability in Global Organ Donation Systems

Juliana Vitolo | Staff Writer



Courtesy of Jesse Orrico (Unsplash)

The words “organ donor” on a license may seem simple. However, without press freedom to dismantle corruption and safeguard the truth, that simple label can carry consequences that expand far beyond what people may imagine. Organ donation is a critical portion of modern healthcare systems, offering life-saving opportunities to individuals who suffer from end-stage organ failure. However, the integrity of organ donation processes is susceptible to failures in healthcare systems, corruption, and unethical decision-making. Press freedom plays a crucial role as a watchdog, ensuring truth and accountability stay within organ donation systems. Limiting press access not only silences the voices of affected families and patients but also weakens public trust and the ethical foundations of healthcare. Recently, the United States had shed light on this global issue. It is essential to maintain accountability in systems, drawing on case studies from the United States, India, and China to illustrate the global implications, especially in life-saving systems like organ donation.

Investigative journalism has been a vital source to assist in uncovering flaws in the organ procurement organizations (OPOs) and government oversight. In the U.S., the Associated Press reported findings in Kentucky where the OPO had continued to prepare for patients’ organ procurements even though the patients had shown signs of life. Thankfully, the preparations had been terminated before an organ procurement had happened, however, these instances extremely damage the trust built between healthcare systems and OPOs with patients and patients’ families. This issue raises ethical questions and prompts government interventions which enables better collaboration between OPOs, hospitals, and the U.S. organ transplant system. Additionally, this has led to hesitation among people who contemplate whether to name themselves organ donors, which ultimately hurts those waiting for transplants to improve their quality of life.

Similarly, the Washington Post mentioned that the investigation found that the OPO known

as Network for Hope was caught pressuring doctors of the Kentucky hospital to begin procuring the patients organs. It is important to note that OPOs do not engage in direct patient care. They are called in from different hospitals if a patient is in a state where organ procurement could be an option. However, there are many reports regarding OPOs placing extensive pressure on hospitals and doctors to continue with organ procurements even if there a doubts in the patient’s status. This has led to several reforms in response to the findings in various hospitals across the nation. The limited attention and press coverage surrounding organ procurement raises concerns, as it may contribute to the ongoing challenges in saving lives. These reportings shine light on the failures in healthcare and organ procurement systems and the importance of press freedom.

These issues have not only been a problem in the U.S. Internationally; the press and media around the globe have been pushing to ultimately expose unethical organ procurement practices. According to the India Times, the Indian state government has cancelled transplant licenses after uncovering forged documents from Dhanalakshmi Srinivasan Medical College and Hospital in Perambalur and Cethar Hospital in Trichy. These hospitals performed illegal organ transplantations by submitting fake documents to hide procuring organs to give to someone related to the patient. The government is now taking steps to build a new committee for OPOs and create a new and detailed standard operating procedures. Just across the border, Bangladesh faces related challenges, though the manifest differently. Al Jazeera covered an investigation into organ trafficking in Baiguni village, Bangladesh where impoverished residents were persuaded into selling their kidneys for money. The residents were left with chronic health problems and minimal financial gain. Without press freedom these reports would most likely remain unknown since local village authorities and organ brokers suppress information. This highlights the significance of how free press is a global

safeguard to ensure accountability and transparency in healthcare systems.

On the other hand, in countries where press freedom is restricted, unethical practices have been suppressed and have prevented public awareness and accountability. The McCain Institute explains how in China, the number of organ transplants reported compared to the amount of voluntary organ donors does not match up. China previously relied on harvesting organs from executed death row prisoners but in 2015 the Chinese government officially banned the use of prisoner organs for transplantation. Congressional testimonies have estimated that thousands of prisoners in China have had been forced to undergo organ transplants. Although this is a longstanding issue, it is not well documented. These cases all highlight the universal need for press freedom to ensure ethical practices in organ donation systems are being performed.

Trust from the public plays a vital role in successful organ donation systems and transparency is important to foster this trust. Transplant International highlights the well-developed organ donation model in Spain that exemplifies a comprehensive ten step framework to conducting an integrity driving organ donation system. The Spanish system focuses on public education and continuously producing updated data on organ procurement and transplantation outcomes. Ultimately, this reinforces the public’s trust in the OPOs in Spain. These efforts have been recognized as Spain has become the global leader in organ donation numbers. In contrast, as mentioned previously China’s media coverage is tightly controlled which unfortunately provides the public with a lack of accurate information and distrust in China’s OPOs. This distrust has caused individuals to refrain from registering as organ donors, making organ donation shortages and ethical concerns worse.

Aside from systematic failures in OPOs, press freedom is critical in ensuring patients and families are advocated for in the organ donation process. As a Patient Care Technician and nursing student, I have witnessed families being

bombarded by OPO representatives that discuss organ donations of their loved ones and it's extremely overwhelming and difficult to process during such a grieving time. Families need to rely on accurate information in order to trust that they are making a lifesaving decision to donate their loved one's organs. The National Library of Medicine published a report about Brazil which highlighted the inequalities in the organ transplant waitlist system. Publicizing these issues prompted policy changes to ensure fairness was part of the waitlist process. This demonstrates how press freedom not only exposes systemic inequities but also empowers families with the transparency and trust necessary to make informed decisions during profound loss.

Incorporating global governance efforts further shows the importance of the media oversight. In June 2024, the World Health Assembly (WHA) developed a monumental resolution titled "Increasing availability, ethical access and oversight of transplantation of human cells, tissues and organs." This resolution emphasizes the need to integrate organ donation into national health systems, ensure donor protection, combat trafficking, and strengthen governance and transparency.

Ultimately, these examples demonstrate that press freedom is not simply a supporting factor in organ donation systems but a fundamental safeguard. Without journalists uncovering malpractice and systemic inequities, unethical behaviors may persist unchecked, destroying the trust that is essential to the donation process. Organ procurement occurs at the intersection of medicine, ethics, and vulnerability. Families confronted with sudden loss must have confidence that the system they are conversing with is ethical and transparent. The press plays the unique role of ensuring that this confidence is grounded in fact rather than blind trust.

Looking into the future, countries must consider not only the technical and clinical aspects of organ transplantation but also the structures of accountability that come with it. Stronger partnerships between healthcare institutions

and media outlets can help promote transparency without damaging the sensitivity of loved ones trying to manage donating their loved ones' organs. Ethical training for OPO representatives, public access to accurate statistics, and global reporting on best practices can continue to reinforce trust globally. Moreover, international collaboration is crucial: unethical practices in one country affect the trust others hold in another country. In order to preserve the benefits of organ donation, it is crucial to understand the integrity and careful practices that accompany its overarching system.

Free press brings ethical breaches to light, ensuring that systems remain aligned with the values they claim to uphold. The Spanish model illustrates how trust and transparency can drive success, while the Chinese example highlights the dangers of secrecy and censorship. The experiences of Brazil, India, and Bangladesh show that media exposure can catalyze reform and amplify the voices of those most at risk. Organ donation is one of the most profound ways societies transform tragedy and vulnerability to hope. For this to be realized it must be safeguarded by accountability and truth. Press freedom provides the necessary oversight to prevent abuse, protect vulnerable populations, and maintain public trust in a system that deals with life and death.

Press freedom is not a luxury but a necessity in organ donation global systems. Transparent reporting preserves the integrity of the system itself, fosters ethical decision-making by families, and strengthens public trust. International comparisons show that although systems with limited media settings confront issues, ethical violations, and decreased involvement, those with high levels of transparency and press freedom like Spain achieve greater results and more public confidence. The press's involvement is still crucial as organ donation continues to save lives around the world. Without restriction or excessive pressure, ethical journalism guarantees accountability in systems where mistakes are really life or death. Restricting journalist access compromises

public confidence and endangers human lives. Maintaining press freedom surrounding organ donation is crucial for healthcare systems around the globe.

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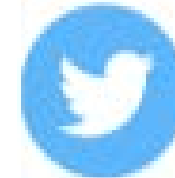


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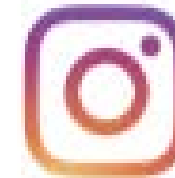
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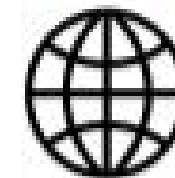
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