



## **BANGALORE MODEL UNITED NATIONS 2018**



# **IPC**

**ETHICS OF CREATIVE  
LIBERTY TAKEN BY THE  
MEDIA, WITH SPECIAL  
REFERENCE TO YELLOW  
JOURNALISM.**

BACKGROUND GUIDE - INTERNATIONAL PRESS CORPS (BMUN '18)

**FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD**

Dear delegates,

It is a great pleasure to welcome you all to BMUN 2018. Upholding tradition, BMUN will host the International Press Corps (IPC) as one of its core committees this year as well. As you all know, one of the main functions of the press is to report the proceedings of their respective committees at the end of each day along with questioning delegates during a press conference. The IPC plays a crucial role in the workings of the MUN as it will be you who will point out and cross-examine the statements that delegates will make during the conference as well as their country's stances on matters of international relevance, hence testing their knowledge on the matters of their state while simultaneously checking your abilities to cross-question with confidence. This is also a great time to let your abilities as report writers and journalists shine as you will be expected to submit a Pre-Summit Report (PSR) along with several committee reports during the course of the conference. Working in this committee, you will come to discover the power of words and their implications, the importance of creating an acceptable atmosphere for the media as well as the influential authority the media may sometimes hold over their own countries. The media has always had an immense duty when it comes to informing people. The media holds great pride in being transparent and maintains its answerability to the public domain as well. As members of this committee, we hope to see you uphold everything the IPC stands for while staying true to its intent.

As the Executive Board, we can assure you that in this committee you will be challenged, questioned and tested under pressure. However, we do hope that you discover the true extent of your own abilities and perform exceptionally. In case of any queries, please do not hesitate to send an email to [ipc.bmun2018@gmail.com](mailto:ipc.bmun2018@gmail.com). Once again, we welcome you and wish you all the best.

Regards,

The Executive Board

International Press Corps

BMUN 2018.

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The working of the International Press Corps at BMUN 2018 will be two-fold. The first half of the conference will entail observing the other committees and reporting their proceedings. The discussion of the IPC's agenda will take place in the second half, where a Joint Press Statement is expected as the outcome.

### **REPORTING:**

#### **Pre-Summit Report (PSR)**

A PSR is the International Press Corps' equivalent of a position paper. The report is written before the start of the three-day conference keeping in mind the policies of the respective news agency. The report must reflect the agency's political and media bias.

The report is to be done on the assigned topic and is to be about 800-1000 words. All sources must be given due credit.

**Topic: European Migrant Crisis**

**Deadline: 19<sup>th</sup> October 2018**

#### **In-Committee Reports (ICR)**

These are reports which must be handed in after a day of the conference. Each reporter will be assigned to a committee and it shall be their duty to draft a report on the day's committee proceedings. Press members must keep in mind their editorial policy while doing so. Two In-Committee Reports must be submitted through the course of the conference. The reports should not exceed 500 words.

Please find the agencies and the respective committee assigned to each below.

COMMITTEE	PRESS AGENCY
1.ECOFIN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Adelante</li><li>● BBC</li><li>● El Universal</li><li>● Het Laatste News</li><li>● Moscow Times</li><li>● Times of India</li></ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Pajhwok Afghan News</li> </ul>
2. LOK SABHA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Al Jazeera</li> <li>● Azzaman</li> <li>● Excelsior</li> <li>● Hurriyet</li> <li>● New York Times</li> <li>● Wafa</li> <li>● Koh Santepheap</li> <li>● The Himalayan Times</li> </ul>
3.UNHRC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Angonoticias</li> <li>● Bild</li> <li>● Fohla De Sao Paulo</li> <li>● Korean Central News Agency,</li> <li>● Pakistan Press International</li> <li>● Xinhua News Agency</li> <li>● Al Ahram</li> <li>● La Prensa</li> </ul>
4.FSC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Arab News</li> <li>● Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC)</li> <li>● Gulf News</li> <li>● Kyodo News</li> <li>● Standard Digital News.</li> <li>● Fox News</li> <li>● ANTARA News</li> </ul>
5.UNCTC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Azad News Agency</li> <li>● El Tiempo</li> <li>● Haaretz</li> <li>● Le Monde</li> <li>● The Copenhagen Post</li> <li>● Yonhap News Agency.</li> <li>● New Zealand Press Association</li> </ul>

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It is recommended that press members are well researched on the agendas of their respective committees, in order to facilitate effective reporting and active questioning during press conferences.

**Supplementary Reports**

Aside from the committee reports, press members will also be required to write/draw supplementary reports. This could be interviews with delegates/EB members/the Secretary General, satires, cartoons, poems or any article relevant to the conference.

Photographs and videos could be used to accessorize the reports and shall be graded individually.

**Videos**

Every delegate is required to submit at least one video, apart from those accompanying the Supplementary Reports.

**Tweets**

A Twitter handle will be created to which press members shall be allowed complete access. Though these are not subject to judgement, they serve to inform the Executive Board how well the press member is able to capture newsworthy moments and structure them into precise statements.

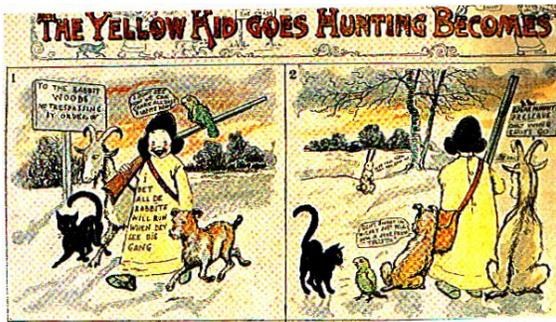
Further details and any queries regarding the reports and the twitter handle shall be touched upon on the day of the conference.

**COMMITTEE AGENDA: Ethics of creative liberty taken by the media, with special reference to Yellow Journalism**

**“A good newspaper, I suppose, is a nation talking to itself.”**

— Arthur Miller

The main purpose of the press is to keep the public informed and use news as a utility to empower the people. However, a drastic increase in spreading of fake news has been observed lately. The circulation of malicious lies, the ineffectiveness of fact-checking, the varying but strong political opinions, racism and sexism and the emergence of the so-called post-truth era appear to challenge a fundamental cornerstone of ethical journalism – that facts matter for democracy and that people want to be well-informed about their government and the society. The press seems to be losing ground with the government and in the public domain as a result.



**“I believe in equality for everyone, except reporters and photographers.”**

— Mahatma Gandhi

Yellow journalism, or the yellow press, is a type of journalism that presents little or no legitimate well-researched news and instead uses eye-catching headlines to sell more news articles. Techniques may include exaggerations of news events, scandal-mongering, or sensationalism. Yellow journalism across international boundaries cause unnecessary tension among states and raise hostility among the citizens of the two countries as well.

Frank Luther Mott (1941) defines yellow journalism in terms of five characteristics:

1. Scare headlines in huge print, often of minor news
2. Lavish use of pictures, or imaginary drawings

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3. Use of faked interviews, misleading headlines, pseudoscience, and a parade of false learning from so-called experts
4. Emphasis on full-color Sunday supplements, usually with comic strips
5. Dramatic sympathy with the "underdog" against the system.

### **History:**

The Spanish-American War is generally considered the first media war. During the 1890s, journalism that sensationalized impactful events were a major factor that led to this war. Newspaper owners used exaggeration to sell millions of copies of their newspapers and this style was then termed “yellow journalism”.

Newspapers like “New York Journal” and “New York World” relied on these amplified headlines to increase their sales. Journalist William Hearst envisaged a war with Cuba would not only sell his papers but would also make him nationally prominent. His star reporters ensured this by writing reports that tugged the heartstrings of Americans. Hearst authorized this in spite of knowing that the rumors were overblown. These reports described the horrendous tales in Cuba. Stories of female prisoners, tortured children and other crimes filled the newspaper. The final nail in the coffin was when the battleship Maine sank. Despite the lack of evidence, Hearst incontrovertibly accused the Spanish. Soon the American public demanded involvement. Present day historians consider the Spanish-American War to be driven by yellow journalists. It may be considered a hyperbole that yellow journalists caused the war. However, it is certain that if it wasn't for yellow journalism the mood of the people would have been different and the course of events could have been altered.

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### CASES:

#### 1. Aarushi Talwar Murder Mystery - 2008



The Aarushi Talwar murder mystery has for long fed the Indian media's urge to sensationalize news. The media has scaled new heights of irresponsibility by spreading fabricated and slanderous stories. Even before clinching corroboration was found, journalists decided to

pronounce their judgements.

The case revolves around the double-murders of 13-year-old Aarushi Talwar and 45-year-old Hemraj, who had been employed as a live-in domestic servant by her family in May 2008. After her body was found, Hemraj was seen as the prime suspect. However, when his body was recovered from the terrace a day later, the police and media suspected honor killing by the parents and publicly questioned a 13-year-old's character. The CBI court sentenced the parents to life imprisonment, but they appealed in the Allahabad High Court. The Indian Supreme Court admitted the appeal and they were acquitted on the grounds of lack of evidence in August 2018, while the case remains unsolved even after 10 years.

#### 2. FOX NEWS vs SNOPE'S



In 2016, a legal battle between Fox News and the website Snopes was fought, as Fox News accused Snopes of defaming it in one of its articles.

Snopes is a website that unmarks false

information being spread around. Fox said that the main motive of Snopes in doing so was to attract traffic to their website. However, Snopes was unable to understand the basis of such allegations considering Fox was better at sensationalising headlines. Even though Snopes claims that they only do fact-checking, it practices his own kind of yellow journalism through clickbait. Fox on the other hand has been accused several times of presenting news in a way that stirs up emotions in the viewers.

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### 3. Fake news in the US 2016 presidential elections

News such as the following were spread during the presidential elections in USA and Trump's win was attributed to fake news and propaganda-

- a) Hillary Clinton is in very poor health because of a serious illness
- b) During her time as U.S. secretary of state, Hillary Clinton approved weapon sales to Islamic jihadists, including ISIS.
- c) Pope Francis endorsed Donald Trump for the election prior to the presidential election.

An average of 30% of previous Obama voters believed these myths. The “fake news” term, popularised by the US President Donald Trump, is so prevalent now that it is hard to believe that just a few years ago the term was barely used. Along with the increase of fake news, however, an increase in the usage of the ‘post-truth’ term has also been witnessed, with the Oxford Dictionaries declaring the ‘post-truth’ to be its international word of the year in 2016. The ‘post-truth’ as a concept is defined as ‘relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than what appeals to emotion and personal beliefs.

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### **QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER**

Truth and honesty have always played an important role in the world of journalism, because the most basic goal for journalism is to tell people the truth, which mean giving the facts, and information transparently. Tight deadlines, stiff competition between agencies and a high class working atmosphere often pressurize the journalists, which lead to plagiarism or even worse, fabrication. This degradation of the truth and honesty in journalism may result in the assault of trustworthiness of both the media professions and the journalists themselves.

In an era where yellow journalism has clearly overthrown the true meaning of journalism, it is evident that this issue must be brought to light. Viable solutions may include checking credibility of sources, setting up of fact-checking units and incorporating digital literacy into school curriculums, but there are other questions that arise as a result.

- How can solutions to the issue of yellow journalism be reached and implemented on an international scale?
- How can the International Press Corps strike a balance between the freedom of press and the ethics of creative journalism?

### **LINKS FOR FURTHER READING**

1. <https://publicdomainreview.org/collections/yellow-journalism-the-fake-news-of-the-19th-century/>
2. <https://www.thequint.com/voices/blogs/aarushi-murder-case-end-to-media-trials>
3. <http://mentalfloss.com/article/48736/innocent-origin-yellow-journalism-how-yellow-kid-fueled-pulitzerhearst-rivalry>