

From the Executive Board

Dear delegates,

It is a great pleasure to welcome you all to BMUN 2017. 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 faults that delegates will make during the conference, 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 being informed. 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. Once again, we welcome you and wish you all the best.

Regards,

The Executive Board

International Press Corps

BMUN 2017.

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. The report must be submitted no later than the 25th of October, 2017 (11:59 pm). The reports and any queries regarding them can be addressed to **ipc.bmun17@gmail.com**.

Topic : Increase in Racial Discrimination in the Land Down Under

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. The reports should not exceed 500 words.

Committee	Countries
DISEC	Angola, Belgium, Germany, DPRK, Venezuela, United States
ECOFIN	Cambodia, Colombia, France, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Turkey
UNSC	Canada, Cuba, India, Japan, Mexico, Palestine
UNHRC	Brazil, Denmark, Indonesia, Iraq , Qatar, UAE
UNCOPUOS	Afghanistan, Egypt, Iran, RoK, Malaysia, Russia
Rajya Sabha	China, Kenya, Nepal, Pakistan, Panama, United Kingdom

Supplementary Reports

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

Photographs and videos could be used to accessorize the reports, but shall not be graded individually.

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 well 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.

Agenda: Protection of journalists and media professionals during armed conflict.

George Orwell once said that, *“If liberty means anything at all, it means the right to tell people what they do not want to hear.”*

News about every war involves gathering of highly sensitive information. The question remains on whether this information should or should not be released during wartime.

The working conditions of journalists in periods of armed conflict is continuously becoming worse day by day and covering a war is becoming more and more dangerous for journalists. Nowadays the use of more sophisticated weapons at war and the unpredictability of all sorts of attacks during war make it riskier for the journalists during an armed conflict. These situations prompted Reporters without Borders to an issue of the safety of media personnel in armed conflicts (Namely-“Declaration on the safety of journalists and media personnel in situations involving armed conflict.”) The declaration reminds belligerents of the principles of international humanitarian law that protect the journalists during an armed conflict. This calls upon the need to reaffirm the illegality of harming the journalists and obliging the authorities to take precautions in order to protect the journalists.

The number of journalists killed in the world in 2003 (42) is the highest since 1995. In recent years, one might also mention the deliberate targeting of journalists in the occupied Palestinian territories, the bombing of the Serbian State radio and television building in Belgrade by NATO forces in 1999 and the bombing, by US forces, of the Kabul and Baghdad offices of the Qatar. The last few years are littered with examples of journalists killed or injured in the course of their duties. In May 2014, Camille Lepage, a French photojournalist was killed in the Central African Republic (CAR). It is thought that she was traveling in a particularly dangerous area bordering neighboring Cameroon with a militia group. In Syria, over 60 journalists have been killed since 2011. In one instance, a British reporter and a photographer were captured and brutally mistreated by rebel groups, including being shot and severely beaten. Finally, as the current situation in the Ukraine becomes increasingly

unstable, the safety of journalists is a growing concern as Al-Jazeera television network.

In conflict zones and across the globe, the majority of information on the ongoing events of armed conflict is discerned, though in many forms, through a single means: journalism. For anyone operating in a conflict zone, risks are a part of daily life. However for journalists, then likelihood of those risks grows exponentially. Journalists are generally required to pursue the facts, figures, and truth at all costs. This frequently means exposing themselves to dangerous and often fatal situations. Put simply, journalists in armed conflict are subject to torture, extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances and arbitrary detention, as well as intimidation and harassment.

Protection of war correspondents

War correspondents fall into the ill-defined category of “persons who accompany the armed forces without actually being members thereof.” Since they are not part of the armed forces, they enjoy civilian status and the protection derived from that status. Moreover, since they are, in a manner of speaking, associated with the war effort, they are entitled to prisoner-of-war status when they fall into the hands of the enemy, provided they have been duly authorized to accompany the armed forces.

Protection of journalists engaged in dangerous professional missions

The participants in the Diplomatic Conference held in Geneva from 1974 to 1977 felt that in order to better respond to the needs of their time it would be advisable to include a special provision on “measures of protection for journalists” in Protocol I to supplement Article 4 (A) (4) of the Third Geneva Convention.

Article 79 states that journalists engaged in dangerous professional missions in war zones are civilians within the meaning of Article 50 (1). As such, they enjoy the full scope of protection granted to civilians under international humanitarian law. Journalists must be protected against the hostilities and arbitrary measures taken by a party to the conflict when they fall into that party’s hands.

Protection of “embedded” journalists

Some ambiguity surrounds the status of “embedded” journalists, that is to say those who accompany military troops in wartime. Embedment is not a new phenomenon; what is new is the sheer scale on which it has been practiced since the 2003 conflict in Iraq. The fact that journalists were assigned to American and British combat units and agreed to conditions of incorporation that obliged them to stick with these units, to ensure their protection, likens them to the war correspondents mentioned in the Third Geneva Convention. And indeed, the guidelines issued by the British Ministry

of Defence regarding the media grant the status of prisoners of war to embedded journalists who are taken prisoner. According to unofficial sources, however, the French military authorities consider “embeds” as “unilaterals” who are only entitled to civilian status, as stipulated in Article 79 of Protocol I. A clarification on this point would seem essential.

The way in which “unilateral” journalists surround themselves with armed bodyguards can have dangerous consequences for all journalists. “There is a real risk that combatants will henceforth assume that all press vehicles are armed. Journalists can and must try to protect themselves by such methods as travelling in bulletproof vehicles and wearing bulletproof vests, but employing private security firms that do not hesitate to use their firearms just increases the confusion between reporters and combatants”, said Reporters Without Borders secretary-general Robert Ménard.

Protection of media facilities as civilian objects

Radio and television facilities are civilian objects and as such enjoy general protection. The prohibition on attacking civilian objects has been firmly established in international humanitarian law since the beginning of the twentieth century and was reaffirmed in 1977 Protocol I and in the Statute of the International Criminal Court. It is, nonetheless, a war crime to attack certain objects to which special protection is afforded.

Inadequacy of means

In a message to Amnesty International dated 17 May, NATO contended that it had made “every possible effort to avoid civilian casualties and collateral damage... “during the attack on RTS, in accordance with the prescriptions of Article 57 (“Precautions in attack”) of Protocol I. Beyond the specific cases of RTS in Yugoslavia, Al-Jazeera in Afghanistan or Baghdad and the Palestinian radio-television offices in Ramallah, it may more generally be asked whether the bombing of radio-television facilities is the most adequate means to the sought end. According to Article 52.2 of Protocol I, the destruction of a military objective is not the only possible solution: it may be enough to capture or neutralize the objective. These other solutions may be justified from a military point of view in terms of economy and concentration of means, since the destruction of a military objective implies the destruction of materials and ammunition. But these solutions are justified above all from a humanitarian point of view, by making it possible to “minimize loss of civilian life”

Conclusion

It follows from the above that journalists and their equipment enjoy immunity, the former as civilians, the latter as a result of the general protection that international humanitarian law grants to civilian objects. However, this immunity is not absolute. Journalists are protected only as long as they do not take a direct part in the

hostilities. News media, even when used for propaganda purposes, enjoy immunity from attacks, except when they are used for military purposes or to incite war crimes, genocide or acts of violence. However, even when an attack on news media may be justified for such reasons, every feasible precaution must be taken to avoid, or at least limit, loss of human life, injury to civilians and damage to civilian objects.