

The 2nd December Declaration

On 2nd December 1766, the Swedish King enacted a 'Gracious Ordinance Relating to Freedom of Writing and of the Press', the world's first legislation guaranteeing the right to a free press.

Today, journalists around the world depend on this right to uncover corruption, provide transparency and demand accountability. However, verbal threats and hate speech increasingly put this function at risk.

On the 250th anniversary of this important legislation, we call for greater worldwide efforts to protect all media professionals, wherever they may be challenged.

We, the undersigned, believe in the need to strengthen and support free, independent and professional journalism, however and wherever necessary. Professional journalism is our most effective means of countering disinformation and combatting hate crimes. It is the best weapon we have against all types of prejudices. Journalists are on the front line when it comes to protecting freedoms in society - and women journalists are often the most vulnerable and exposed. They are targeted, not only because they report on the abuse of power, but because they are women.

We therefore draw particular attention to the specific dangers facing women journalists and underline the urgent need to do more to counter the growing hostility felt by women across the globe towards their right to freedom of expression.

We denounce those who use threats and hate to silence the women who are making their voices heard. This constitutes not only a threat to quality journalism, but also to equality and ultimately to democracy itself.

We wish to use this historic day to pay tribute to all women journalists who are defying death threats, sexual violence, physical and psychological abuse, hate speech or online intimidation to pursue their professional calling. Women who continue, despite such pressures, to provide citizens with the information they need to make informed decisions about their lives, their communities, and their governments.

The 2nd December Declaration is an initiative by WAN- IFRA, the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers and the Fojo Media Institute.

It is presently being offered to publishers and journalists all over the world, providing them with a possibility to display their support to women journalists and their conviction of the need for free, independent, professional journalism.

Please turn to www.wan-ifra.org to sign the Declaration.