

TOPIC 2: The question of limitations, protections, freedoms, and accountability regarding media (press, print, traditional online, and social).

I. Introduction to the Topic

To introduce the topic, our topic 2 is the question of the limitations, protections, freedoms, and accountability regarding media (press, print, traditional online, and social.) As global citizens, humans are highly closely connected through the internet; about 63% of the total global populations are reported to be highly reliant on the internet on a daily basis.

In this matter, Cyberspace security has been a controversial topic ever since the internet was created. Cyberspace security encompasses everything that relates to protecting our data-relationships between people and the collection, processing, and application of personal data and information from cyber attackers and terrors. It also covers legal issues that arise in connection with the use of information and technology across the national boundaries. As HRC, our aim for this debate topic is to promote the protection of people online while questioning how governments and social media platforms intend to execute this task. Social media platforms should also be held accountable for their promotion of harmful content, however, it should also be kept in mind (in delegates' resolutions) that governments should not use legislation as censorship for their citizens.

This issue and topic is a very significant and complex matter, thus, must be addressed with the main interest of protecting the human rights of the globe. The following report will be a comprehensive guide to all delegates to support them with their research and resolution writings.

Definition of Key Terms

Key term: Media

Encompassing all means of communication with the purpose of informing, raising awareness, education, socialisation, entertainment and agenda setting, in all forms including oral, written or visual images. In understanding the different aspects regarding the media, it is important to clearly understand and identify the purpose of that media, or media platform.

Key term: International Bill of Human Rights (IBHR)

Written and adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948, the International Bill of Human Rights protects all people and upholds democratic values of human dignity, equality, and freedom. The International Bill of Human Rights consists of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and two covenants: the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political rights. Altogether, enshrines 30 human rights and fundamental freedoms to

every human, regardless of demographic features; some of which being the right to life and liberty, freedom from slavery and torture, freedom of opinion and expression, the right to work and education, et cetera.

Key term: Cyber law

Cyber law is also referred to as IT law, it is a legal matter or a specific law relating to internet, cyberspace, and computer offences, especially fraud or copyright infringement.

Key term: Censorship

Censorship refers to the suppression of speech, writing, or ideas that are deemed as offensive or disruptive of the common good. Government censorship goes against the Human Rights of free speech and freedom of expression.

Key term: Information Communication Technology (ICT)

Information and communications technology is an extensional term for information technology that stresses the role of unified communications and the integration of telecommunications and computers.

IV. Key Issues including Background Information

Government censorship and the risk of Free Speech:

On the other hand, media platforms, including social media, face the challenge of what could be the distinction between what can be viewed as harmful content, and how it can be deemed as silencing freedom of speech - a freedom that is recognized internationally and in almost all national jurisdictions. . Tampering and intervening with content affects people's human rights to freedom of expression and privacy, which can lead to censorship. However, the issue is that governments want to ensure accountability, causing them to start regulating online content. As of July 2021, 40 social media laws have been adopted worldwide, while 30 more remain to be under consideration. Nevertheless, governments may use these laws that regulate online content may jeopardise human rights, as governments may use these legislations to limit the speech of others they do not approve of. a

The Cost of Freedom of Expression:

Similar to Muckrakers in the Progressive Era, journalists, at times, are not held to standard, being the human right disclaimed in the IBHR. When reporting on torture, corruption, discrimination, or misuse of power, journalists have addressed these violations of human rights in attempts of holding governments accountable, but at the cost of their own rights. Enforced disappearances occur to take one off the radar, murders occur to silence one's expression, and prosecutions occur to criminalize one for doing what is necessary for the greater good of man – that is the state of journalism nowadays. The murder of Georgiy Gongadze, the case of the missing booksellers in Hong Kong, the issue of free speech in higher education in America, or the Rwandan prosecutions of opposition members, journalists, and commentators on the basis of their speech and opinions – all threats that journalists, like any other human with views and opinions, face for simply advocating for what they believe, which is for the common good.

Utilisation of User-Data:

The very information of an individual in the real world is equally as important, thus should be respected to the same standard, as your data in the digital world. In an age of advanced personalization, social media is increasingly utilising technology that has learnt directly to accommodate and appeal to user's beliefs and values, interests, curiosities, and potential points of exploration. Data specific to users like usage patterns, behaviour, preferences, or engagement time – also known as social media mining – feeds to the algorithm to continue to process on its infinite bandwidth; and this data can go beyond these sites, like through cross-app tracking, or could last for a period of time, like in internet cookies or data retention. Besides the terms and conditions enlisted by the specific application or media platform, there are very few, and frankly not enough, laws and regulations behind the operations of social media. As use of social media will only grow from this point onwards, it is key to establish better cyber laws to address the uses of one's data and to maintain and inform on this transparency to users.

Content moderation:

As mentioned above, cyber laws are rather inadequate in moderating the various types of media coverage particularly in countering misinformation and in carefully considering the impact to its

audience. Of particular importance is the regulation of dangerous or abusive content. For instance, the publishing and promotion of videos and images depicting graphic imagery of critically injured human beings, animals, or depictions and retellings of traumatic experiences. Brands must moderate the content within their platforms to ensure constant safety for their viewers, ensuring appropriate filters to protect the rights of individuals and categorising content that can be accessed by minors.

This calls into question how media should be regulated. What should minors not see, what could be triggering to others. This issue also brings the discussion of is to be considered harmful content. However, it is difficult to define what should be deemed as problematic or harmful but media platforms have means to determine this - such as employing ethical standards; generating evidence about content that can harm, reviewing their algorithms on a regular basis and undertaking social listening about the impact of media.

Media Transparency: Media Transparency

This issue regards the lack of distinction in biased and unbiased writing, sensationalism and misleading headlines to attract clicks, censorship or internet surveillance, or straight-out fake news; Opinion vs Factual, and “Clickbait”. This brings the issue of whether people are obligated to state that their content has been under edits or their intention of posting such content, providing the right context and sources of information. Likewise, companies, journalists, editors, government officials should remain honest about how information is produced, distributed and handled and what standards are in place to use these for public consumption or even as basis for decision making. Accountability must be required from the publisher of these content, whether government or private individuals and entities.

V. Timeline of Resolutions, Treaties, and Events

This section should be a list of about 6-10 events that includes key dates, events & moments (dates or independence, conflicts...), any relevant draft or approved international or regional declarations, treaties, conventions, accords, summits or meetings. This section should give your delegates a sense of the trajectory & development of the topic over time.

Timeline of Resolutions, Treaties, and Events

Date	Description of event
1948	The International Bill of Human Rights laid down the ways in which a Government is obligated to act in or not to, in promoting and protecting human rights. In order to come into effect, one's Government must ratify the bill, and depending on your country's government, they will have ratified a number of the 18 International Human Rights treaties – among these rights is the ‘freedom of

expression’, which allows for the freedom of expressing your own opinions without the interference of authorities.

1983

(01/01)The day ‘the Internet’ was invented marked the start of a new way to communicate and interact with one another beyond geographic location.

2021 and after

Cyberspace and security continue to grow; The most global cyber security market is expected to grow to \$345.4bn by 2026, and issues regarding protections and freedom in Media are expected to grow and enlarge.

VI. Possible Challenges & Solutions

Keeping cyberspace security and human rights requires the ability to respond quickly and correctly to rapidly-evolving attacks that can strike anywhere within an IT infrastructure. Organizations need comprehensive security visibility, access to real-time threat intelligence, and an integrated security architecture that can support automated and coordinated threat prevention and response across the entire corporate IT infrastructure.

It will be most necessary for nations to recognize the need for additional neutral and objective efforts to build capacity in the areas of international human rights-related laws, national legislation and policy regarding cyberspace security.

Confidence building measures (CBMs), actions taken to promote transparency, for example, can help contribute to preventing conflicts, avoiding misperception and misunderstandings, and the reduction of tensions in cyberspace. Dialogue under UN auspices should continue to help strengthen international peace, stability and prevention of conflicts in the ICT environment.

VII. Recommendations for Resolution Writing including Research

The report concludes, adding that in light of increasing dependency on ICTs, there is an urgent need to continue to enhance common understandings between nations and intensify international cooperation. Delegates, please note and focus on the strong connections between cyberspace security and the human rights issue. It will help to regulate your research on how the specific nation’s human rights are abused due to the cyberspace insecurity, what previous actions a specific country has taken (that can be criticized or followed), analyze the problem in your country’s perspective, and try to present the solutions on craving a better and safer cyber environment.

VIII. Bibliography

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IX: Additional Resources

If there are any relevant maps, images or data that will help your delegates better understand the issue, include those in this section

Resource 1: [Are we Entering a New Era of Social Media Regulation?](#)

Resources 2: [Fostering Freedom of Expression](#)

Resource 3: [Bringing Transparency and Accountability to Online Political Ads](#)

