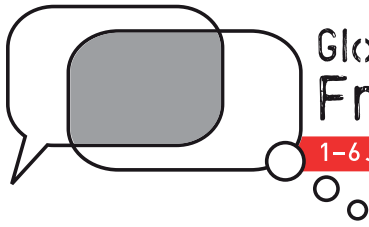


Global Forum on Freedom of Expression

OSLO,
NORWAY
JUNE 1-6
2009

A SUMMARY REPORT OF THE
WORLD'S LARGEST GATHERING OF
FREE EXPRESSION NETWORKS





Global Forum on Freedom of Expression

1-6 June 2009, Oslo, Norway

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528
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COUNTRIES
REPRESENTED

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TRAINING
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PLUS
LECTURES, FILMS,
THEATER, AWARD
PRESENTATIONS
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Global Forum participants organized a commemoration of the Tiananmen Square massacre on June 4, 1989 as well as an appeal to Chinese authorities to free writers and journalists in China.

WRAPPING UP, MOVING FORWARD

60 years after the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the internationally guaranteed right to freedom of expression remains under threat across the globe, and the need to unite the free expression community is greater than ever.

Towards this end, the Global Forum on Freedom of Expression was convened in Oslo, Norway during the first week of June, 2009. The Global Forum was represented by over 500 individuals, over 100 countries, over 200 organizations, independent musicians, poets, journalists and the most prominent international freedom of expression networks. In a unique gathering, the International Freedom of Expression eXchange (IFEX), the International PEN's Writers in Prison Committee (WIPC), the Human Rights House Network (HRH) and the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) all met in Oslo for their annual meetings, and to combine their energies during the Global Forum on Freedom of Expression.

The Forum convened at Oslo's House of Literature, a fitting location for an examination and celebration of freedom of expression. From the ground floor and up, the Global Forum put its mark on the building, hosting seminars and lectures, as well as informal meetings and networking sessions and even publishing its own paper, *expression*.

In this brief summary report, we look at the three key elements of the Global Forum on Freedom of Expression: Seminars and debates with key figures in the free expression community; training workshops where participants learned hands on skills in small groups that will empower them in their daily work; and cultural and networking events, where participants from across the globe were able to connect with each other, exchange views and information and plant seeds that can continue to grow long after the Global Forum is over.

SETTING THE STAGE

«Words can kill. And you can be killed by words. Words can heal and words can reconcile.» Thus spoke Jonas Gahr Støre, Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs, after international delegates were welcomed to Oslo by Chairperson of Fritt Ord, Professor Francis Sejersted at the Global Forum's opening ceremony.

«You know better than many others what freedom of expression really means, why it matters and how situations on the ground may differ,» Mr. Støre continued in his address to the audience of activists and journalists, thinkers and writers that had gathered for the opening ceremony.

«As human rights defenders and activists, many of you defend free speech in your own country or globally, every day, and all too many pay a high price in doing so.

You may live in a country affected by armed conflict, or in a country where democracy is falling apart, or in a country with widespread corruption.

You may have been put in prison or taken to court. You may have had to leave your home country.

You may have risked your own life. You may even have family members and loved ones who have paid the ultimate price.

Or you may live and work here in Norway where the debate boils down to the following question: How do we exercise this fundamental right as responsible citizens?»

The Foreign Minister's questions

touched upon many of the issues to be debated in the following days, and set the stage for a number of engaging principled and practical debates. But while opening the Forum, Mr. Støre also reminded del-

*Should I keep going?
Should I continue to
practice journalism in
a country controlled by
only 300 powerful men?
Lydia Cacho*



Mexican journalist Lydia Cacho speaking at the opening ceremony.



Osman Moallim, Coordinator of Somali Coalition for freedom of Expression, presenting a press freedom report of Somalia to the Norwegian Foreign Minister, Jonas Gahr Støre. Here with Elsa Chyrum.

egates that at the end of the day, these questions are consequences of the challenges facing people actively engaged in the struggle to defend free expression, and he urged the audience to continue in their efforts:

«Please keep on reporting, writing, witnessing and commenting, with your pens, your computers, your microphones, your tapes and your cameras.»

Mr. Støre was followed by an example of just the kind of human rights defender he acclaimed: Lydia Cacho Ribeiro, the Mexican journalist and human rights activist who was imprisoned for exposing the wrongdoings of people of power:

«I was confronted with the enduring dilemma» she told the audience.

«Should I keep going? Should I continue to practice journalism in a country controlled by only 300 powerful men?» Embodying the spirit of the free expression activists gathered in Oslo, she continued:

«Of course, the answer was yes. Thousands of men and women are saying yes, it is worth it and for that we will endure torture, imprisonment and even death. Not because we are heroes, but because we believe in our own rights, and therefore, we defend the right of others.»

Cacho was followed by three other women speaking on the freedom of expression situation in their countries. Serkalem Fasil, who was prevented from traveling to Oslo and had her speech read to the audience, told of how she was arrested for her journalism in Ethiopia and was forced to give birth while in prison. Dr. Wangari Maathai, the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize laureate told of the environmental movement in Africa and the need to create understanding and raise awareness.

Malalai Joya was unlawfully suspended from the Afghan Parliament for raising her voice against warlords within the system of government. She spoke of a situation where corruption has become systemic and where religious extremism continues to facilitate oppression:

«When freedom of expression does not exist within the parliament of a country for its elected representative, one can easily feel what would be the situation for the ordinary people» she said, and concluded by expressing the fundamental truth and working thesis of the more than 500 people gathering in Oslo for the Global Forum:

«No one will donate us freedom of expression and other human rights unless we struggle to achieve them!»

Watch and read all the speeches at <http://expressionforum.org>

The training workshops delivered concrete, «hands on» instructions to small groups on a wide range of topics. The goal was to focus on skills that could be quickly internalized and applied to daily work. For a full overview and training documentation, visit www.expressionforum.org.

ONLINE CIRCUMVENTION

GFFE participants from around the world attended workshops on circumvention—how censored netizens can view blocked web-content.

Presenters from Coalition Sesawe, a global circumvention promotion alliance, and Alkasir, which has developed an innovative new circumvention tool, presented software internet users can deploy to see content online which authoritarian

governments try to prevent from being available in about three dozen countries, and particularly, in the 13 countries with high degrees of net censorship.

Participants from countries like Burma, Ethiopia, Kazakhstan, Sudan, Vietnam, and Yemen participated vigorously and have followed up to get advice, share experiences of their own and their colleagues, and build cooperative efforts to

improve cybersecurity and circumvention in not-free countries. «The training on how to circumvent Internet censorship was particularly beneficial» says Aloa Ahmed Alota from the Deyde Hydera Trust. «I will in four weeks replicate it for my colleagues here in The Gambia».

For links to the tools presented, visit <http://expressionforum.org>

CAMPAIGN STRATEGY-BUILDING

Representatives from civil society organizations, activists, donors and journalists took full advantage of the opportunities the Global Forum offered to deepen their awareness and skills around campaigning and advocating for free expression.

Participants filled all available spaces in the three training sessions. Led by Rafael Barca, director of Amnesty International

Argentina, the trainings focused on when campaigning makes sense, how campaigns can and should exert influence, and how to build an effective campaigning strategy. Each session made a point of exploring creative ideas for campaigning activities and strategies, and tips on when to use them.

Download the presentation at <http://expressionforum.org>



Rafael Barca conducted trainings on constructing campaigns.

FUNDING FREE EXPRESSION

The Global Forum provided an important arena for funders and NGOs alike to connect and reflect on funding challenges and opportunities in the free expression community.

IFEX launched the results of a survey of more than 60 diverse free expression groups looking into experiences and challenges in funding their work. Donors and free expression groups discussed the results, which revealed that IFEX members are finding it harder now than five years ago to acquire the basic resources to carry out their work and what appears

to be a shrinking field of possible donors specifically supporting free expression work.

Forum participants welcomed the unique opportunity to network with funders in IFEX's innovative donor clinics. Ten clinics were offered in a variety of languages where a diverse group of donors and free expression groups came together to learn more about each other, get advice, and explore potential connections.

Visit <http://expressionforum.org> for more on the IFEX donor survey.

I found the donor workshop to be extremely useful, as I was able to get a clear understanding of how they evaluate proposals and what they are interested in funding.



Melissa Moore, FXI South Africa

«Seconds into the opening session of the International Freedom of Expression Exchange (IFEX) at the world's most expensive city, delegates learnt in detail about Beijing's sweeping internet censorship efforts and blog crackdowns hours before the 20-year anniversary of the massacre of June 4, 1989, making it extremely difficult and — and dangerous — for Chinese people to commemorate the victims.»
Tehelka, India

ENGAGING MEDIA

Local media coverage can play a critical role in the success of local advocacy and campaigning for free expression organizations. But organizations often struggle to gain traction with media and journalists.

«If we want to have a civil sector as an equal partner to the media, we should help the organizations specialized in FoE issues get the confidence media have. This can not be achieved only through seating and talking but through doing too.» says Milica Pesic, director of the UK-based Media Diversity Institute.

The MDI has done more than 100

hands on training over the last 12 years in different parts of the world, and trained free expression activists participating in the Global Forum both in engaging

«More is learnt from one poorly written but professionally analyzed press release than through distribution of dozens of good examples.»

*Milica Pesic,
Media Diversity Institute*

local media in campaigns and on media watchdogging.

«We can see that more is learnt from one poorly written but professionally analyzed press release than through distribution of dozens of good examples.

This is in particular important in designing a public campaign,» continues Pesic, who encouraged participants to bring their most successful press releases as well as their failures.



USING REGIONAL MECHANISMS

The Global Forum offered trainings dedicated to advancing understanding and practical usage of the regional human rights mechanisms under the African Union (AU) and the Organization of American States (OAS).

Participants learned how regional human rights mechanisms function and how to access them, including the human rights commissions, free expression rapporteurs and human rights courts.

These sessions offered attendees the

chance to learn more about how to prepare reports, gain consultative status and better understand the political landscape of the regional bodies. Trainers included former OAS Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression, Eduardo Bertoni, AU Commissioner and Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information on Africa (ACHPR), Pansy Tlakula; Executive Director of Article 19 Dr. Agnès Callamard; and Open Society Institute's AU Programme Director, Ibrahima Kane.

Other training workshops included sessions on how to monitor media for free expression violations and how using web 2.0 applications in digital activism. For a full overview, see www.expressionforum.org.

GLOBAL MOMENTS



Photo: Bjørn Grimstad

The Global Forum was interpreted into Arabic, French, Russian and Spanish and English. Volunteers from all over the world helped make it happen.



Photo: Bjørn Grimstad

The global free expression networks IFEX, WIPIC, HRH, IFJ and TODA (above) came to Oslo for their meetings during the Global Forum.



Photo: Elisabeth Eide

14 free expression organizations, including the Human Rights House Network (above) were represented on the University Square for the Marketplace of Ideas.

«Many key actors and stakeholders are not present. They will not even be heard, because their voices are silenced by the regimes in their home countries. The Global Forum on Freedom of Expression in Oslo shows the breadth of issues included in this term. The value of free expression is apparent throughout society, on all levels, to all degrees.»

The central part of the Global Forum on Freedom of Expression was to further the debate on free expression. Through a total of 28 seminars during three days, in addition to three keynote lectures, the diversity and magnitude of issues and panelists heard and questioned by the audience was inspirational. In addition to the seminars highlighted here, other themes was such as «Access to Information in a Hybrid Age» and «Where the Law Draws the Line.» For a full overview, see www.expressionforum.org

PRISON TESTIMONIES

Free thinkers lose their freedom worldwide every year, yet few lose the power to inspire, even while behind bars.

Imprisonment remains one of the most effective instruments of censure available to oppressive governments, and Governments continue to jail outspoken critics and dissidents the world over. In «Collateral Damage in the War on Terror: Prison



Jack Mapanje (right) and Sami El Haj during the session moderated by Sara Whyatt

Testimonies», journalist Sami El Haj and poet and scholar Jack Mapanje testified before the Global Forum in a moving session, telling how they were arrested and imprisoned, explored the nature of journalism and of poetry as speech to power, how they experienced authorities' fear of the free word in Malawi and in the War on Terror, and how they were able to continue to express themselves even when detained. Journalist Serkalem Fasil was prevented from leaving Ethiopia to share the story of her imprisonment which included giving birth to her first child while incarcerated.

El Haj now heads the Al Jazeera Human Rights Desk. He told of his six years spent in the Guantanamo Bay detention camp



and of the interrogation techniques and tactics employed to force confessions from prisoners there. He concluded his testimony by reading poetry which

he wrote on Styrofoam cups during his incarceration. The English translation was then read by Jack Mapanje, who then told of his own arrest and imprisonment.

Mapanje spent three years in jail, but said the only reason why he did not disappear like so many others, was because of free expression activists around the world who let Malawian authorities know he would not be forgotten.

DRAWING CONCLUSIONS

Cartooning is a distinct medium of expression for its direct appeal, its accessibility and its immediate power to shock and offend.

In recent years, this distinctive quality has subjected editorial cartoonists to much controversy and debate. On Friday, June 5, they came together for the panel «Drawing Conclusions or Crossing the

Line: Cartoons and Offence,» to discuss their work in a free expression context.

The discussion was a demonstration of the cartoonists' skills to speak both verbally and visually, as they demonstrated a series of cartoons, both their own and others. Their discussion affirmed the belief that an editorial cartoonist's work should first and foremost criticize power.

In general, the cartoonists present agreed that the freedom to insult was an essential aspect of this function, and powerfully demonstrated the way in which they did so: Plantu, who recently published his 20,000th cartoon in Le Monde, even picked up his pen and began drawing new cartoons as he spoke. He was joined by Martin Rowson from the Guardian in the UK and Tony Namate from Zimbabwe.

Namate is working in a very difficult situation. Though his newspaper has been closed down by authorities, Namate continues to produce and distribute cartoons which harshly criticize President Mugabe, and to work as an activist through the Cartoonist's Rights Network. Despite the grave conditions and real dangers faced by cartoonists such as Namate, and the heated emotions that many cartoons can evoke, this seminar may have been the most cheerful and light-hearted of the forum.

For pictures and more, visit <http://expressionforum.org>



Martin Rowson from the Guardian demonstrates his cartoonist skills.

Photo: Carl Morten Iversen

«There was a fascinating panel on war and propaganda with journalists who had covered the conflicts in Gaza and Sri Lanka. This made for an interesting comparison. In both cases, the governments had simply excluded the press from the war zone. These governments recognized that they faced widespread criticism internationally, but were relatively unconcerned because they had broad support domestically»

FOR GOD'S SAKE

Is religious dignity more prone to offence than other kinds of dignity and if so, does this authorize special limitations on free expression? What is the difference between respect for religion and self-censorship?



Tariq Ramadan and Irshad Manji met for the first time at the Global Forum. Here with Anders Heger moderating.

Both Irshad Manji and Tariq Ramadan have criticized radical Islam. They are both outspoken about the need for change, though each employs a distinct approach. Following personal correspondence and a series of debates via radio and print, they met for the first time in Oslo, under the title «For God's Sake: the Line between Religion and Censorship».

This timely debate came as the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to freedom of opinion and expression, Mr. Frank La Rue came under extraordinary attack in the UN Human Rights Council during the

interactive dialogue on the first annual report of the Special Rapporteur. Mr. La Rue was forced to cancel his participation in the Global Forum to defend his report in Geneva, which asserted that the concept of «defamation of religions does not accord with international standards on freedom of expression.»

The hour long debate began along these lines by asking whether there should be a limit to what you are allowed to criticize when it comes to religion. As reformers of Islam, Manji and Ramadan have very different opinions on how

religion should be practiced in a modern society, as well as the level of criticism of religion that should be tolerated. In an intense and emotional exchange of ideas, Manji and Ramadan discussed issues like the Friday prayer, women's role in practicing Islam and a moratorium or an absolute ban on stoning.

Though clearly disagreeing on several accounts, the two intellectuals found common ground on the principle that there is no need for new laws to limit freedom of speech.

«Evoking particular attention towards the end of the gathering in Oslo, was when two well-known western Muslims crashed together: Swiss-raised Tariq Ramadan and Canadian Irshad Manji, both with origins from the Middle East. It was a hasty and discouraged collision»

SILENCED WOMEN'S VOICES

How will media meet the challenges of marginalization of women in media in the future?

«The thing (the authorities) are most angry about is my voice», says Philo Ikonya, president of PEN Kenya. She was joined on stage by Lydia Cacho Ribeiro, Irshad Manji and Malalai Joya, women of extraordinary courage who had all been forcibly silenced, but refused to keep quiet.

The panelists on «Silenced Women's Voices» were women who are not afraid to speak out in a world where, whatever the gains of the women's movements, it is still expected of women that they speak in a certain way, avoid certain subjects, and do not confront or dissent. All four

proved that you can take on injustice, corruption, prejudice, and be charming, witty and unbelievably articulate with it.

Moderated by Ursula Owen of the Free Word House in London, their stories of courage and insights into free expression were shared through an intimate and animated conversation punctuated with laughter and applause from an appreciative audience. Their stories ranged from tales of domestic violence to false imprisonment, harassment and marginalization resulting from their decision to not be idle bystanders but to bravely exercise their right to free speech.

The panel put into practise something that women have often talked about, but not always succeeded in doing – which is making the personal political. They

told their personal stories beautifully and imaginatively, and then, without labouring the points, subtly and with nuance, connected these with their politics and the situations they find themselves in.

Watch the video at <http://expressionforum.org>



Philo Ikonya and Lydia Cacho discussing the role of women in media.

THE RIGHT TO DISSENT

In the War on Terror, individual's rights are sometimes sacrificed on the altar of public safety. Laws created to protect citizens instead are put to work against them.

Caught in a court battle and locked in either a jail cell or house arrest, Dr Sami Al-Arian had not spoken publicly for seven years. He broke this silence at the global Forum with a speech entitled «The

Ultimate Test of Democracy: The Right to Dissent – USA vs Al-Arian». He had to do so via Skype, since he is presently under house arrest in Virginia, and not allowed to leave the country. Al Arian's wife, Nahla (below), and daughter Laila Al-Arian were in Oslo to represent him at the Global Forum.

Al-Arian was soft-spoken, but firm in his defence of the right to speak out for the cause of the Palestinians, and simultane-

ously expressed some optimism after (the day before) having listened to President Barack Obama's speech to the Arabic world. A touching moment came when ex-prisoner from Guantanamo, Sami El Haj, came forward and entered the video frame and the two men shared their experiences, both having been imprisoned as alleged terrorists.

El Haj and Al-Arian both offer inspirational stories of resilience and hope in the face of power, and clearly demonstrated why freedom of expression is so crucially important in weighing the balance between individual liberties and state security. They both also remind that this fundamental freedom is often one of the most tragic victims of the War on Terror.

Read Al-Arian's statement at <http://expressionforum.org>



Photo: Bjørn Grimstad



Photo: Dalchows verden

«Discussing Managing Change in the Global Media Economy, Contributing Editor for US newspaper *The Nation*, John Nichols, said the consolidation of media ownership is a threat to Freedom of Expression. According to Nichols about six thousand journalists lost their lives last year.»

MARKETPLACE OF IDEAS

Believing that «liberal democracy is based on the idea that the truth or the best policy arises out of the competition of diverse ideas in free, transparent public discourse,» the Global Forum program committee conceived of the Marketplace of Ideas.

On Saturday, June 6, the thought became reality as 14 free expression organizations led by FK Norway descended upon the University Square in Oslo for a day of expression and campaigning to the Norwegian public. The Marketplace centered around a series of performances and the

British Council-supported Speaker's Corner, produced by the Central St. Martin's college of Art.

This was the first time for a Speaker's Corner in Norway, and Norwegians, unfamiliar with the concept, were at first reserved and hesitant at expressing themselves, but ushered on by journalist and filmmaker Erling Borgen, the Speaker's Corner was quickly put to continual and manifold use, as actors, activists, rappers, tourists, journalists and Saturday strollers all took advantage of the opportunity to express themselves freely.



The Speaker's Corner let people freely express themselves on the University Square



Nestan Tsetskhladze and Eter Turadze from the newspaper Batumelebi in Georgia.

Photo: Annar Björgli

AWARDING PRESS FREEDOM

During the Global Forum, Fritt Ord and the German ZEIT-Stiftung awarded their Press Freedom Prizes for journalism in Russia and Eastern Europe. The award aims to strengthen the independent role of journalists in the face of crackdowns and financial pressures that may lead to self censorship.

The prize was awarded to journalists and newspapers from Russia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Armenia and Georgia during a ceremony at the Norwegian Nobel

Institute, «The laureates present here today know better than many others what freedom of expression really means. You have taken on the mission to defend free speech in your own countries,» said Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs Jonas Gahr Støre in his keynote address, and continued «Let us use this week to exchange ideas and perspectives to enhance, anchor and promote freedom of opinion and expression.»

BANNED BOOKS

The Beacon for Freedom of Expression is a bibliographical database on freedom of expression and censorship world wide. During the Global Forum, they opened the exhibition Censorship in a Global Perspective, hosted by the Norwegian National Library exhibiting banned books.

The exhibition showcased a great variety of books banned for an equally great variety of reasons: books attacking regimes, religion, the establishment in general, or just for being deemed obscene. Both the Bible and the Qur'an were exhibited, alongside Harry Potter books and Salman Rushdie's Satanic Verses which led to a fatwa being issued on Rushdie by the Ayatollah Khomeini 20 years ago.



Photo: Bjørn Grimstad

«Zimbabwe protest musician Viomak, who courageously uses her music to expose human rights abuses and promote freedom of expression, will definitely find her involvement in this Forum a very relevant and conducive platform for her to share with others her unbearable experiences as a censored and banned political artist.»

EMPOWERING ART

During the Global Forum, Indian photographer Achinto Bhadra displayed his exhibition *Another Me: Transformations from Pain to Power* at the Norwegian Theater.

Another Me is a collection of photographs of women and children as young as eight years old, who are victims of abuse and trafficking. They were all given the opportunity to re-imagine themselves in the photographs in order to express and process their experiences.

«In their previous lives, they were either beaten or abused, so some were very loud, some very quiet. During the shoot, the girls went through a transformation. Those who were loud became quiet, and those who were silent started speaking» said Achinto. «Some could be shy, some

could be proud. It was a very special mission, but the girls had good memories. What we have got are images of their transformation from then, to a dream» he continued.

In cooperation with a counselor and a specialist in child protection, the project was carried out at a girls' shelter near Kolkata, where girls who have been abused can seek protection. Out of 126 images of girls and children who were guided by Achinto and the counselors in their artistic transformations, 50 were presented in the photographic exhibition in Oslo.

The photographed girls' came up with ideas themselves of who they wanted to be identified with or transformed to. «These characters are all power characters, like gods and goddesses, and policemen and somebody wanted to be a spider,» Achinto said to Norwegian broadcaster NRK in an interview during the forum. Achinto underlines that these are not beautiful pictures. «These are real stories of abuse,» he says to NRK.



Photo: Bjørn Grimstad

GLOBAL FILMS

In cooperation with the Norwegian Films from the South festival, Global Forum participants were treated to a short but strong film program during the Forum. The films all represented freedom of expression both as expressions themselves and through their thematic.

Pray the Devil Back to Hell is the tale of the women who united to end the civil war in Liberia, paving the way for Africa's first female head of state, while *A Jihad for Love* chronicles the stories of gay and lesbian Muslims across the world.

In *Letters to the President*, Petr Lom offers a glimpse of the inner world of Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. In making the film, Lom was given permission to travel with Ahmadinejad to the Iranian countryside, capturing a more private President, and a different perspective that mainstream news coverage.



Photo: Courtesy of Petr Lom

«Mr. Edetaen Ojo has been elected convenor of the International Freedom of Expression eXchange (IFEX), the largest network of freedom of expression organisations in the world [during] the Global Forum on Free Expression (GFFE), which brought together more than 500 journalists, free expression activists and writers in a week-long programme that ended on June 6.»

The Guardian, Nigeria



International Publishers Association

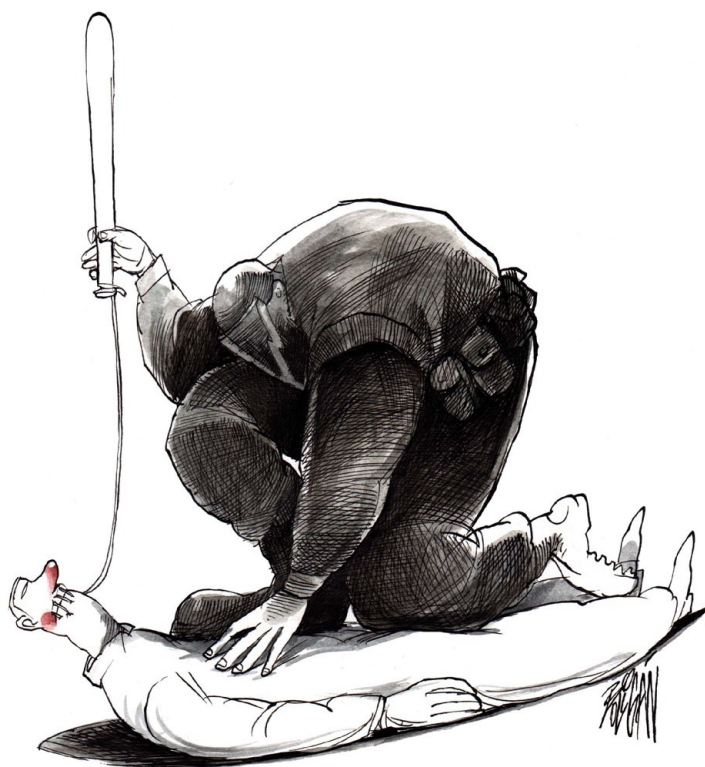
FREEDOM TO PUBLISH

Herman Spruijt, President of the International Publishers Association awarded the Association's annual Freedom to Publish Prize to the Tunisian Observatory for the Freedom of the Press, Publishing and Creation (OLPEC) in a moving ceremony during the reception at Oscarsborg Fortress.



OLPEC was founded by Sihem Bensedrine, Neziha Rjiba and Mohamed Talbi in 2001. Its principal goal is to serve as a monitoring body for all forms of media and literary censorship in Tunisia, and to make these issues public. Just a few days before traveling to Oslo to receive the IPA Prize, Neziha Rjiba received threats by telephone. «OLPEC and its members continue fearlessly to highlight censorship in publishing and defend freedom of expression in the face of threats of jail and physical or other forms of attack» said Spruijt as he awarded the prize, and continued:

«Sihem Bensedrine, Neziha Rjiba and Mohamed Talbi have consistently stood up for the right to freedom of expression and have suffered greatly as a result.» Mohamed Talbi accepted the prize on behalf of the three with a moving speech on the need for NGO coordination and cooperation in the face of oppression, and was warmly applauded by the gathering in the Oscarsborg gallery.



THE BOAT TRIP — WHERE EXPRESSION REIGNS

The Oscarsborg fortress on Kaholmen Island, central in the Norwegian imagination for its crucial role in defending against the German invasion of 1940, has long ago disbanded its military purpose. Today it is a museum, and during the Global Forum, the Norwegian Cartoonist's Gallery opened Expressions, an international exhibition of editorial cartoons.

On Wednesday, June 3, 300 Global Forum participants challenged the Nordic elements, as rain and cold winds made its mark on a boat trip through the Oslo Fjord to the island.

«In a liberal democracy freedom of expression is one of its most important values. And the work of cartoonists knows no language barriers, as the exhibition demonstrates» writes Chairperson Helge G. Simonsen of the Norwegian Center for Cartoons and Freedom of Expression of



S M Shameem Reza and Kristin Skare Orgeret

the exhibition.

«Expressions», featured submissions from 60 cartoonists from 22 countries. «The themes include threats against individual rights and freedom; lies and abuse of power; suppression of public information, global and environmental challenges» says curator Vigids Wolden.

From among the pieces submitted and exhibited, *Violencia* (above), by Angel Boligán Corbo, was awarded 30,000nok for "best editorial cartoon as a statement and as a work of art." The prize was awarded by the Norwegian State Secretary of Culture, in Oscarsborg's open rotunda.

Though the weather did not improve, dinner was served indoors, and spirits stayed high during the trip, which also included the awarding of the International Publishers Association's Freedom to Publish Prize to the Tunisian organization OLPEC (see sidebar).

«Journalists were portrayed as heroes, defending truth and an open public sphere under conditions of severe political oppression, persecution, and many times even at risk of torture and death. Yet journalists were also criticized for doing sloppy research, for being sensationalistic and sticking to a simplistic black-and-white approach, as well as for frequently adhering to a merely commercial rationale.»

European Center for Journalism, Belgium/The Netherlands



Expression **Digital Literature Public Sphere** Interculturalism **Campaigning** Accountability Sexual Identity Coalition Conflict **Journalism Media** Twitter **Press Freedom** Online **Activism** Cartoons **Strategy** Defamation **Human Rights** International **Protest** Offence **NGO** Fundraising Rule of Law **Web 2.0** Blogosphere **A2I FoE** Democracy **Monitoring** Propaganda **Censorship** Imprisonment **Theater** Religion Circumvention **News** Surveillance **Film** Reporting **Network Advocacy**

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