



# The Causes of Political Reality - Understanding the present to shape the future

23<sup>th</sup> - 27<sup>th</sup> November 2018

**Press Team**

**Press Guide**

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# WORD OF WELCOME

Dear Press Team Members,

Welcome to BIMUN 2018 Press Team! We are your Editor-in-Chiefs who will be there to support you as you report on the actions and decisions made by the committees. The role that we envisioned was based on the idea that Press should be integral to the conference by holding the delegates and the committees accountable, thereby simulating the role that the Press has in real life. We are excited for this year's Press Team and cannot wait to work with you to make it successful.

We look forward to meeting you at [BIMUN 2018](#)!

Best,  
Kelli-Anne Tim  
Tina Novak

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

|                                    |           |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Function of the Press .....</b> | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>Introduction .....</b>          | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>Press Tools .....</b>           | <b>7</b>  |
| <b>Content Preparation.....</b>    | <b>10</b> |



# Function of the Press

## Introduction

Journalism has been under attack in the last years with the phenomenon of Fake News. The current President of the United States coined the term early on in his administration. As of August 8, 2018, the President of the United States of America, Donald Trump tweeted, “The Fake News hates me saying that they are the Enemy of the People...”<sup>1</sup>. Tensions have been growing between the current Trump administration and the Press. He has been targeting members of the Press who are viable and authentic news mediums within the United States of America. This makes the role of Journalists even harder as the truth becomes less apparent to the audience. For the President of the United States of America to attack the media sets a precedence for media to be questioned if they report news that they don’t like.

The United States of America, though influential in the world, is not the only place where the media have been under attack. Freedom of the Press is not a freedom that is granted to every journalist. There are regions where the media – unsanctioned by the government – are arrested and charged if they report the truth. In 2017, Carol Giacomo from the New York Times wrote an opinion essay that stated, “With some 163 of their fellow journalists in jail, the men and women of Turkey’s news media are understandably fearful ... some of those still working censor themselves in self-defense”<sup>2</sup>. There are many countries, majority of them are Western hemisphere, who give the right to the freedom of the Press. But there are still many countries who do not adhere to this universal right. Yet, there are many journalists who continue to risk their lives in order to report the truth and hold their governments accountable no matter the consequence.

It is for this reason that the Press needs to play a bigger role. It has become much easier for information to be spread through social media, which allows

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.rollingstone.com/politics/politics-news/trump-fake-news-violence-706754/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/04/learning/how-important-is-freedom-of-the-press.html>



for information to become truth<sup>3</sup>. Or at least a version of the truth that “feels is true”<sup>4</sup> and that can soon become fact, which is then shared across various platforms. It is, thus, more important that media hold themselves accountable when reporting on the news in order to combat the growing “fake news”<sup>5</sup>.

The Ethical Journalism Network was established in order to protect journalism and promote, specifically, ethical journalism. They define ethical journalism as “fact-based communications, humanity and respect for others, transparency and owning up to errors”<sup>6</sup>. It is, thus, important that the Press Team for BIMUN 2018 maintain these ethical values when reporting anything during the conference.

The following originates from the Society of Professional Journalists’ Code of Ethics and the Al-Jazeera Code of Ethics:

### **BIMUN 2018 Code of Ethics<sup>7</sup>**

- *Seek the Truth:* Facts are important when reporting on anything. The news stories that you write about must be founded in fact. Be mindful about sensationalizing news stories and distorting information to fit your perspective. It is, furthermore, important to present diverse views and opinions without being biased.
- *Respect Your Audience:* Remember that your audience and your subject are human. Endeavor to respectfully report the truth and present information with compassion. Maintain values of honesty, courage, fairness, credibility and independence.
- *Be Accountable:* If you make a mistake, do not be afraid to take responsibility for those mistakes and then correct it. Be open to taking criticism and growing as a journalist.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2016/jul/12/how-technology-disrupted-the-truth>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2016/jul/12/how-technology-disrupted-the-truth>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2016/jul/12/how-technology-disrupted-the-truth>

<sup>6</sup> <https://en.unesco.org/courier/2017-july-september/ethical-journalism-back-news>

<sup>7</sup> [https://cs.stanford.edu/people/eroberts/cs181/projects/2010-11/Journalism/index16e4.html?page\\_id=24](https://cs.stanford.edu/people/eroberts/cs181/projects/2010-11/Journalism/index16e4.html?page_id=24)



Your role as the Press is to report on the actions and decisions made within committees. You are there to ensure that delegates are not presenting speculations without fact. You are there to present information to audiences who are not able to have a voice in committee sessions. You are there to ensure that the committees at BIMUN 2018 are acting responsibly to achieve the goals of sustainability and peace for the global community. But in everything that you do, you must maintain the code of ethics.



## Press Tools

The Press Team will be an integral part of the conference as they interview delegates, report on the actions taken by the committee, and even interact with the delegates during committee sessions through press conferences.

The tools at your disposal are:

1. Interviews<sup>8</sup>: Interviews are a great source to better understand a bloc or specific country positions in the committee. They are giving you direct quotes that you can use to critically examine the direction that the committee is taking. It's important to remember that you are not there to simply present their position, but rather identify the facts and critically analyze the information that they give you. In an interview, you are in control of the conversation and the interviewee is there to answer your questions. Key ideas to remember:
  - Be polite.
  - Ask questions that are relevant to the topic and the interviewee.
  - Critically examine the information that they provide.
  - Pay attention to their tone and body language.
  - Make them feel at ease.
  - Be aware that the answers might not be completely truthful.

Interviews will predominantly take the form of **News Interviews**. News Interviews explain ideas, events or situations, which can give interpretation, background and further explanation to their audience. It can be used to emphasize aspects that you believe to be important to the committee. Ultimately, good interviews should be a good story, which gives insight into people or events. In the event, that the delegate provided you in an interview was untruthful then you can have a follow-up interview.

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.columbia.edu/itc/journalism/isaacs/edit/MencherIntv1.html>



2. Twitter: Reporters can tweet throughout the committee sessions. You can tweet a quote from delegates; important actions that are taking place within the committee session (i.e. Draft Resolutions, the results of Voting Procedure etc.); key information that is being discussed; pose a question being discussed in the committee.
  
3. Articles: You will be expected to write one article a day.
  - NEWS STORIES: News Stories focus on events or situations that will provide a context for the audience. This type of article is impartial, reports on the facts, and does not include any opinion. You need to frame the event or situation for your audience, but you must be an unbiased source of information. This article should be between 150 – 300 words. This piece is usually written in third person.
  
  - COLUMN<sup>9</sup>: Columns are articles of opinion. This piece can be written in third person or first person. These articles are there to inform and entertain their audience. It is used to express the columnists' opinion, but must be grounded in research – facts, quotations, data, etc. Columns have a clear topic and there is usually an overarching theme. They are approximately 300 words in length.
  
  - OP-ED<sup>10</sup>: Opinion pieces or Editorials are informed opinion pieces. This is where you can present your opinion on a topic area, idea or situation (such as committee sessions in general). You can start by presenting your opinion and then developing it with facts around that opinion or argument. It should not be longer than 800 – 1000 words. Most often, these pieces are not humorous and are rather an argument on the subject matter. This piece can be written in third or first person.

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<sup>9</sup> <https://journalistsresource.org/tip-sheets/writing/how-to-write-an-op-ed-or-column>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.ipsnews.net/publications/writingformediaopinionandcommentarypieces.pdf>



4. Press Conferences: They are scheduled for 15 - 30 minutes with 5 - 10 minutes allotted for speeches by the delegates (who are elected by the committee to represent them) on what the committee did so far and then a 10 - 15 minute question and answer period by the reporters.

You are the moderators and if you believe that the delegates are not answering your questions then you may interrupt them or ask them another question. You can ask tough questions to get the delegates thinking and offer the delegates an opportunity to defend their decisions in a different context. Press Conferences will be held on the second day of committee sessions with an opportunity for them also to be held on the third day of committee sessions.

5. Anonymous Leaks of Information: Delegates may send you anonymous notes, which you may then report on. Remember the Code of Ethics when dealing with this. Check what is on the anonymous note before reporting and remember to keep your source anonymous.
6. Gossip will be posted each day on the Press Team site. Please be mindful that we want to encourage a positive environment. So be aware of gossip that could be hurtful or make someone uncomfortable. The general rule is that positive shade is encouraged, but hurtful comments should be kept out of the publication of the gossip. Please type up the gossip and then send it to us, your Press Directors to upload to the site.



## Content Preparation

Here is a guideline for how to prepare for the conference:

- You are expected to be informed about the topics that are being discussed in your committee.
  - Read the Study Guide for the committee that you are assigned to.
  - Do more research outside of the study guide.
  - Research on the country positions of Member States that you believe will be influential in the committee. Be aware of Member States that are most likely to spread false information.
  - Understand the solutions that might be proposed in the committee by reading information by academic sources, think tanks etc.
  - Know where the debate will go during the committee sessions.
- If you feel that contacting the Chairs will help in your preparation, then we can facilitate that. During the conference, though, you may approach the Chairs with any questions that you might have. Of course, we would emphasize that it's important not to disrupt debate so approach the Chairs during unmoderated caucus or breaks. You may also interview the Chairs but be mindful to ask their permission before publishing any quotes from them.
- Understand how the Press reports on United Nations sessions.
  - Read the articles from PassBlue (<http://www.passblue.com>) and other mediums that report on the UN.
- Understand the format of how to write articles.
- Understand how press conferences work by watching press conferences done by the UN.
  - <http://webtv.un.org/meetings-events/treaty-bodies/watch/the-situation-in-syria-press-conference-13-april-2018/5769945630001/?term=?lanchinese&sort=date>
- Understand how to use twitter as a reporter



- There is a section called *Reporting with Twitter* in this article (<https://multimedia.journalism.berkeley.edu/tutorials/twitter/>) that can help you better understand how to report ethically with Twitter.