



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on May 5, 2015

## While Attacking Free Press, UN Touts “World Press Freedom Day”

Even as a United Nations kangaroo “court” was prosecuting a journalist and seeking to imprison her for seven years, the UN held its annual “World Press Freedom Day.” However, while the festivities were ostensibly aimed at promoting freedom of the press as “essential for the shaping of a new global sustainable development agenda,” more than a few critics were pointing out that the dictator-dominated global organization is actually one of the world’s leading threats to the ideals on freedom enshrined in America’s First Amendment. A global coalition of liberty-minded organizations even issued an [open letter](#) highlighting the threat. But top UN officials, led by Bulgarian communist and UNESCO boss Irina Bokova, celebrated the day without the slightest acknowledgment of the irony — or hypocrisy.



From [blacklisting and threatening journalists](#) and [whistleblowers around the world](#), to [waging a global war on free speech](#) and [seeking control over the Internet](#), the UN, widely ridiculed as the “dictators club,” has developed a sordid reputation when it comes to press freedom. Ironically, perhaps, on press freedom day, the UN was busy solidifying that reputation. Even as it was celebrating bogus press freedom, a self-styled UN “court” in The Hague was pushing to have Lebanese reporter Karma Khayat and her associates imprisoned for “obstruction of justice.” UN “prosecutors” claim Khayat and the TV station she works for revealed details about witnesses in a case surrounding the 2005 assassination of then-Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri. Khayat, though, argues that the UN tribunal is actually just seeking to silence the Lebanese press and force it “not to criticize the tribunal in the future.”

“I am there to defend freedom of speech and freedom of press,” she told the BBC last month, just weeks before the UN was set to hold its press freedom day on May 3.

While the prosecution of a journalist in an illegitimate UN court may be among the most extreme examples of the global body’s hostility toward a real free press, it is hardly the only one. On April 30, a coalition of dozens of liberty-minded organizations from around the world lambasted the UN’s “abysmal track record of press freedom.” In an [open letter](#), the groups cited an array of other examples of UN abuse against journalists. “These instances paint a disturbing portrait of taxpayers unknowingly funding anti-democratic actions they would never tolerate by their own governments,” the coalition explained, demanding a “full explanation” for the UN’s “attacks on the press.”

“At the foundation of any free and fair society is a government that respects the freedom of the press



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and upholds that principle by guarding against any efforts to dilute the open exchange of news and ideas,” continued the letter, which was signed by several American organizations including Campaign for Liberty, American Civil Rights Union, Americans for Tax Reform, and more. “Taxpayers should never be put in a position where their hard-earned contributions to government coffers are used to support organizations that do not respect the freedom of the press. Unfortunately, in the case of the United Nations, this is exactly what taxpayers around the world are being forced to do.”

The coalition also noted that organizations all over the globe have a message for the UN. “We will not tolerate our governments wasting taxpayers’ money on organizations that do not respect the values we cherish most,” they said, referring to anti-free press UN outfits. “We call on governments to cease funding organizations that operate behind closed doors absent openness and transparency.”

One of the examples cited in the letter took place last year in Moscow amid a UN World Health Organization meeting plotting global taxes on tobacco. *Washington Times* writer Drew Johnson, who was there, recounted his trip in a [recent column](#) ridiculing the UN’s “world press freedom” day. He noted that members of the press were “threatened and physically removed” from the controversial WHO summit even as unelected bureaucrats plotted further fleecing of the public. Indeed, as *The New American* [reported at the time](#), Johnson and other members of the press were escorted from the room by guards so the UN bureaucrats could approve their global tax scheme sheltered from public scrutiny.

“While a core function of the U.N. is to promote and protect press freedom worldwide, the United Nations is one of the most serious threats to a free press in the world today,” Johnson explained, adding that, chillingly, the WHO attacks on the free press were nothing new to the organization. “The organization blacklists journalists, bans reporters from its events and tries to silence the media, all while urging countries throughout the world to embrace freedom of the press.”

Johnson also highlighted another incident last year in which UN “peacekeeping” boss Herve Ladsous obstructed journalists’ cameras to prevent the filming of public question-and-answer session in Sudan. When that failed to deter the reporters, the briefing was cancelled, and UN bureaucrats later attempted to strong arm media organizations into taking down the footage they did manage to obtain. Just a few weeks later, the UN was exposed blacklisting a reporter who had criticized the WHO, even stopping e-mail updates and refusing to answer questions. Last week, the UN was [exposed targeting a whistleblower for exposing widespread rape of children by UN “peace” troops](#) in the Central African Republic.

Last summer, meanwhile, *The New American* reported that the scandal-plagued chief of the UN World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) was [threatening a journalist with criminal penalties for reporting on official allegations made in formal complaints](#) against him by his own subordinates. If the reporter did not comply immediately by taking down the official complaint and publishing an apology, WIPO Director-General Francis Gurry and his attorney vowed to “seek independent legal advise [sic] to bring defamation proceedings against you in any competent jurisdiction.” Critics said such totalitarian behavior — [along with sending sensitive U.S. technology to dictators, retaliating against whistleblowers, and other assorted scandals](#) — was outrageous and unacceptable.

Johnson with the *Washington Times* also slammed the UN and called out its hypocrisy in his column on UN free press day. “Simply put, the U.N. is despicably hypocritical on the issue of press freedom. I know. I’ve seen the U.N.’s attacks on the media firsthand,” the *Times* writer continued, pointing to his experience at the Moscow summit. “The U.N. is a fraud of the highest order when it comes to press freedom. The U.N. should be the greatest global advocate for the freedom of the press. Instead, the



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organization is one of the world's most serious threats to press freedom."

As *The New American* has also reported extensively, the UN has also been taking increasingly bold steps to assault free speech and free expression on the Internet. Under the guise of advancing what the [UN ludicrously refers to as "human rights,"](#) for example, [the global body has been waging a full-blown assault on free-speech rights,](#) even openly pressuring governments to criminalize so-called "hate speech," originally a Soviet plot to stop criticism of its savagery worldwide. When it comes to the Internet, the UN has for years been seeking to usurp jurisdiction over it to push regulation, taxes, and even censorship. As if to confirm critics' worst fears, the UN agency seeking to control the World Wide Web, the International Telecommunications Union, [recently appointed a Chinese Communist operative who claims censorship is in the eye of the beholder to lead the disgraced outfit.](#)

"In 2015, States are accelerating to reach the Millennium Development Goals and shaping a new global sustainable development agenda," said UN boss Ban Ki-moon, communist UNESCO boss Irina Bokova, and UN "Human Rights" boss Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein in a [joint statement](#). "Freedom of expression and press freedom are essential to success at every level." Ironically, the UNESCO boss, whose political party participated in some of the most savage persecution of journalists in human history before the ostensible fall of the communist regime in Bulgaria, vowed to spearhead a "plan of action" on journalist safety. The UN's lip-service to "human rights," of course, is beyond insulting, especially considering the [presence of many of the world's most brutal autocracies on the UN "Human Rights Council."](#)

The statement by UN leaders on press freedom offered the obligatory nod to journalists killed around the world, primarily by UN member regimes, before rambling on about "sustainable development" and "gender equality" in the media. "We need every voice to speak out and be heard — especially those of women," the UN bosses continued. "Twenty years after the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, women remain underrepresented throughout the media, at decision-making level but also in the coverage of issues. We cannot let this stand. Men and women must participate equally in making and sharing the news." How the gender composition of the media or "[sustainable development](#)" might be related to press freedom was not immediately clear.

What is clear is that the UN and its largely autocratic member regimes represent a serious threat to the God-given rights enshrined in the U.S. Constitution's First Amendment — freedom of the press, speech, religion, and more. The fact that U.S. taxpayers continue to be the primary financiers of the UN's brazen attacks on press freedom and its broader war on liberty and self-government is a disgrace. Congress must end all handouts to the UN and ultimately get the U.S. government out of the "dictators club" once and for all.



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