



# **International Press**

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## **INTERNATIONAL PRESS**

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# **Background Guide**

**Guidelines on the Structure, Functioning and Reporting.**

| The present document intends to make you aware of the background of the problem. Its content does not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of KiiT-IS MUN 2017. |



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Report Prepared by:

The Executive Board

International Press

## **LETTER FROM THE HEAD, INTERNATIONAL PRESS**

**Dear Press Corps,**

I take immense pleasure to welcome you to the International Press (IP) at the KiiT International School Model United Nations 2017 Conference. The IP guarantees to be a challenging and exciting endeavour that would put you on your toes all the time, be it new or experienced reporters offering a unique and non-traditional Model United Nations experience.

Having previous experience organizing many Model UNs and being a part of IP, I am very much excited to bring the IP to life at this conference. Journalists live in a world with a vast dynamism and entropy and they work in changing environments. They require critical minds that can gather, analyse and report the information obtained on a wide range of topics. Journalism, as a profession is very rewarding, might I add, a firm dedication to the pursuit of youth. This is also a profession that plays a very key role in the international affairs. A simple statement by a state can be the cause of a huge war if misinterpreted and it is the journalist's responsibility to overcome individual perceptions and not to deviate from the facts. Presently there are countless journalists around the world committed to uncover the truth and hold governments and states as a whole, accountable for their actions. However, it is quite unfortunate that many parts of the globe, even today, do not have access to a free press.

At this point, I would like to put forth Socrates's version of Plato's 'Parable of the Cave'. He describes a situation where many prisoners are chained in a cave such that they just can see the shadows in front of them casted by the fire lit behind them. They stayed there for too long that they started designating those shadows with names and these shadows are the closest these prisoners could get to reality. He then describes the philosopher as one of these prisoners who gets a chance to go free, but choose to come back to the others and educate them, as he truly perceives reality and understand that those shadows are nowhere close to its essence. This allegory acknowledges that the philosopher must be prepared to sacrifice his/her life in the pursuit of truth as it is this commitment to the truth that comprises everything called happiness in life. Do you not agree that a Journalist would best fit into the description of a Philosopher

mentioned above in their pursuit of truth? I am definitely looking forward to work with you in this pursuit.

Regards,

Siva Teja Ghattepally

Head, International Press,

KiiT International School Model United Nations, 2017

## **INTERNATIONAL PRESS**

The International Press (IP) is neither a traditional committee of the United Nations nor an authentic part of any of the other UN committees. Here, the IP refers to the collection of international press agencies that gather from all the corners of the world to report on the activities of the proceedings of various United Nations committees. Each agency is unique, emerges from a particular state and has its own cultural and ideological context with respect to its host stage. Whether placed at the war fronts transmitting the vital information of the happenings around the globe or embedded in the halls of the United Nations, the IP are integral components of The United Nations' strategy to promote development, democracy, human rights and peace.<sup>1</sup> The origins of Journalism as it is, are difficult to pin-point. Many historians believe the roots of journalism began from the early ages of Mesopotamian and Indus valley civilizations where an individual is appointed by the respective heads of the locality or a country to reach every corner of the land and relay the most important announcements of the state.

However, these announcements were limited to what the so called 'Heads' wanted to relay and were very particular to matters of huge importance to the state. Also, this practice, by itself, takes immense time in transmitting the information to each and every corner of the land. The scripts of Renaissance in Europe offer a different perspective to the concept of Journalism where priority was given to the transfer of information and philosophy in public gatherings by philosophers such as Plato, Socrates and many more.

This approach of journalism was entirely directed towards the philosophical improvement of the society. However, the first documented records of journalism emerge from ancient Rome in 59 BCE and the Tang Dynasty (618-907 CE) in China. In these

cases, hand-written news sheets were distributed to the government officials and selected class of the population that highlighted important social and political events. Despite the relatively low distribution rate and high amount of government control in the past, journalism continued to grow at an exponential rate due to the increasing literacy rates and technological advances, such as steam and electric printing presses. By early 18th century, newspapers were being published in many countries around the world and reportorial freedom started becoming a fundamental component to journalism as a profession. Although developments in the field of journalism has been different based on the country, the central role of the press in the United Nations emerged through its predecessor: The League of Nations.

In 1919, Jan Smuts, considered one of the key men behind the idea and ideology of the League of Nations, published the pamphlet *The League of Nations: A Practical Suggestion*, in which he stressed that the League could only be successful if it received the support of 'a powerful international public opinion.' In Smuts' view, informing and educating the public to think in a broader human international perspective could help achieve this influential public opinion. Using the press to pass on the information to the international community became a focal point of the League of Nations' mass media strategy. On the 16th of September, 1925, a delegate from Chile stressed that "the league must stimulate among the people that new spirit which the war produced and which the League of Nations is trying to spread throughout the world.....the Press is the vanguard of these ideas." Journalism, then, became a powerful tool for the League to inform and educate the public about their activities and reducing the risk of international misunderstandings at the same time. The League of Nations continued to emphasize the crucial role of the press by convening several international conferences for press experts and forming the League of Nations Association of Journalists.

While the dissolution of the League of Nations and the outbreak of the World War II represented severe setbacks for international unity and freedom of information, the important role that the press played in the League was carried over to the United Nations. UN General Assembly Resolution 59(I) of 14th December, 1946 highlighted the need to address freedom of information as a fundamental human right. Likewise, Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted on 10th December, 1948 emphasized

the importance of the freedom of expression and opinion which media sourced depend upon for seeking and reporting on serious international issues. This incubation and establishment of the United Nations Correspondents Association (UNCA) shows another strong resolution from the UN to maintain a strong international press.

The UNCA is an organization of approximately 200 professional journalists, those from major news agencies, publications and broadcasters around the world. The organization also provides reporters with a direct avenue for resolving disagreements with the UN Secretariat. Moreover, the UNCA also sponsors press briefings, awards and journalism fellowships at the UN. Considering the undoubted development of the Internet and the increase in citizen journalism enabled by social media, it follows that the media's crucial role in international affairs will only continue to grow in the future.

As agents of the press, you must respect the role of the press in the past, while pushing its goals and aspirations into the future.

#### **WHAT JOURNALISTS SHOULD BRING –**

It is very strongly recommended but not necessary that the journalists bring the following items with them to committee sessions.

1. Laptop
2. Notepad
3. Pen/Pencil
4. Audio recording device.

Again, as mentioned above, it is not mandatory that you have access to any of the aforementioned items and, given proper prior notice, arrangements for the same can be made. The above suggestions were made keeping in mind individual's comfort working with specific pens / pencils and their own comfortable notes. Please contact the Head, IP if you have any concerns.

## **OPERATING GUIDELINES**

For the KiiTIS Model United Nations conference, the journalists will be assigned a news agency from a specific country (details regarding the news agencies are mentioned below) and will be tasked with researching and analysing that particular country's political landscape and relation with the press agency. In some cases, press agencies will be free from governmental control, while other press agencies will be strongly influenced by government.

## **JOURNALISTS**

Over the course of the 2/3-day conference, journalists of the IP will be required to produce a minimum of 2/3 news stories respectively for public dissemination, one for each day. Also, the journalists would be asked to choose the news agency they like to be a part of, while registering. Please note that all the rights of the allotments are solely vested among the Head, IP and the Secretariat. Journalists will be responsible for gathering content via attending conference committee sessions, interviewing delegates, researching topics and fact-checking claims. Journalists will also be required to understand any ideological or political agendas that their press agency might have and will be responsible for translating those agendas into their news items and approach to their activities. The journalists will also be responsible for creating professional-grade articles that are well researched, comprehensive, captivating and contain different, relevant perspectives on the issues being discussed. 'Rush Jobs' will not be accepted and will be immediately returned to the delegates for a re-write. Working in a newsroom demands professional quality production under tight, sometimes almost impossible, deadlines. Articles will be posted online with hard copied also available for distribution.

Kindly note that producing the hard copies of the articles would be a decision of the Secretariat. Journalists would be graded not only on the quality of the article, but also based on the attitude towards the journalistic principles and the innovation brought into the newsroom.

## **PHOTOGRAPHERS**

Photographers would not only cover the various proceedings of the committees, but also work in coordination with the Editor and Journalists towards the necessary footage.

Photographers would be graded on the composition of the photos and the coordination with the journalists and editors.

## **EDITORS**

Editors form a bridge between the Head, IP and the journalists and the photographers. They decide the deadlines both ways – the one where journalists submit them the articles, and the one where the edited articles are submitted for publication. They are also responsible to decide the nature of article and guidelines a journalist must keep in mind. The editors are also responsible to direct and guide the photographers for any necessary photo / video footages that would add to the material of the articles.

Editors would be graded on the basis of the final outcome of the articles of the respective agencies, along with the work management among journalists and photographers.

## **NEWS AGENCIES**

1. Fox News
2. Xinhua
3. Al Jazeera
4. Reuters

**BEST OF LUCK WITH YOUR PREPARATIONS!**