



# September 2024 Branch

*Hope you all had an enjoyable summer and are ready to jump back into the fray. In the UK we have a new government to build relations with and – armed with our revamped News Recovery Plan – we also have a clear agenda and practical proposals to revitalise the industry and to champion journalism that is rooted in the public good.*

**W**ith luck, most of you have been able to take at least some time off and had a chance to recharge your batteries. But the news cycle is never ending and many of our members, particularly those covering the summer riots, have been especially busy.

On page two, David Ayrton reports on our work supporting photographers who found themselves under attack from rioters, and those targeted by the police who think they can take journalists' footage to help pursue their inquiries. This puts our members in danger, and we have continued to bring this to the attention of the National Police Chiefs' Council and our wider work on journalists' safety.

During the summer members voted on who should be the editor of the union's magazine, *The Journalist*, for the next five years. The result has been announced, and Christine Buckley has been re-elected for a fourth term.

And we're about to press send on a further all-union election, with members being asked to decide on my successor as general secretary of the union. The two candidates are Laura Davison, currently the NUJ's National Broadcasting Official, and the NUJ's president Natasha Hirst. A number of branches have already made plans to hold hustings events, and we're encouraging others to do the same and have a chance to quiz candidates ahead of making their choice of who to vote for to be the NUJ's next leader.

Before I hand over the baton to the union's next general secretary, it will be business as usual for me.

Following the UK General Election, we've started the process of reconstituting our cross-party NUJ Parliamentary Group, and met our new chair last week, Rebecca Long-Bailey, to discuss this autumn's political agenda. We have welcomed the promised repeal

## *Aid for Gaza*

Journalists in Gaza need your help to do their job in desperate circumstances.

The IFJ is supplying vital equipment and aid. Please donate to its safety fund.

Branches can email [jackiec@nuj.org](mailto:jackiec@nuj.org) to transfer from their management allowances.

**DONATE NOW**

of the anti-strike legislation and the New Deal for workers which will bring in more employees' rights, and we also applauded the proposed extension of reporting the gender pay gap to disabled and black and minority ethnic workers. Michael Calderbank, whose organisation Solidarity Consulting, liaises with ministers, MPs and peers in Westminster on behalf of the union, has written a curtain-raiser to the next Parliamentary session on page five.

As ever the industrial climate is busy with important battles ahead. Yet more cuts have been announced at the BBC and we'll be endeavouring to save jobs and to build support for a pause in this process and an urgent reappraisal of the BBC's income to protect grassroots



journalism and programming, one that recognises the central role the corporation plays in the UK's wider creative economy.

I will also continue my liaison with the government, and particularly officials within DCMS, on the safety of journalists. We will soon be launching our new online safety tracker – a tool which will enable journalists to report any abuse, harassment and intimidation they experience in the course of their work. This goes in tandem with the advice we provide on the ***Journalists' safety toolkit*** and ***Storysmart***, our suite of online training modules protecting members working in hostile environments and keeping them cybersafe. With further death threats made to reporters in Northern Ireland in recent days, it is work that is vital.

Last but not least – it's not that long to go now before the next Delegate Meeting in April 2025! You'll find guidance on how to write motions in this edition. Good luck with your discussions and potential motions in your branch meetings – and don't forget to put nominations to NUJ council and committees for 2025-2027 on your agenda.

**Michelle Stanistreet**

# CAMPAIGN

02



## Keeping safe

*David Ayrton, senior organiser and serving officer for the Photographers' Council, reports on the union's work with its members over the summer*

**T**he NUJ was quick to provide support for photographers targeted by far-right mobs this summer.

The union insists those reporting the violent protests and riots need to be provided with relevant safety equipment. Michelle Stanistreet, NUJ general secretary, said: "It is vital that employers are conducting full risk assessments, providing appropriate safety equipment and ideally deploying staff in pairs or teams. Journalists are increasingly

being targeted by these mobs and we have already reported an incident in Belfast to the police there. Those safeguards and protections must also be extended to freelancers by the media outlets engaging them."

The union contacted newspaper organisations to find out how they would be protecting their staff and the freelancers covering the riots. It was a mixed response - some newspaper groups appeared to be taking the risks more seriously than others. The union was concerned that, because of staff cuts and shortages, trainee and inexperienced reporters and photographers were being sent out to cover the disturbances across the UK. This information was shared with officials from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport who had contacted the union to find out our concerns. This is an important part of our work as members of the National Committee for the Safety of Journalists.

I liaised with the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) and individual police forces to ensure journalists were not impeded while doing their job. I also intervened to demand the return

of a photographer's confiscated equipment when he was detained during his covering of a protest action.

The union is working with the NPCC to update UK-wide guidance for police officers when dealing with colleagues from the media, and with the council and the National College of Policing to make a new training video for police officers to help improve relations between the police and journalists.

It will make the point that the press has the right to be there, but must also act responsibly. Central to this is the continuing recognition given by the NPCC to the UK Press Card Authority press card (the card issued by the NUJ).

Following reports that South Yorkshire Police demanded a photographer hand over images taken during the rioting in Rotherham, the union wrote to the NPCC saying any attempts to force photographers and videographers to hand over images was "an affront to media freedom and puts their safety at risk" and this is now being investigated by the NPCC. Michelle Stanistreet says any member facing this threat should contact the union for assistance.

## Action

• **Journalists' Safety Toolkit** - with advice for photographers

• **Storysmart** - training modules for hostile environments

• Photographers' **recruitment poster**

## General secretary election

**T**wo candidates - Laura Davison and Natasha Hirst - have been endorsed to stand as candidates for the post of the NUJ's general secretary. The successful candidate will succeed current general secretary Michelle Stanistreet, who is stepping down from the role.

The ballot will be run by Civica, the organisation appointed as the independent scrutineer for the election, and votes will be sent by post. Branches will be able to hold hustings with the candidates to help members make their choice.

Ballot papers will go out on Monday



Mark Thomas



Jess Hurd

16 September, with the closing date for receipt of ballot papers on Monday 7 October. The national executive council will endorse the successful candidate on Tuesday 8 October. Find out more on [the NUJ website](#).

## NUJ training

New dates have been announced for the free **Leadership in the Newsroom** courses for mid-career NUJ journalists, especially for those in underrepresented groups in the industry, to develop their management skills.

The courses, developed with support from the Google News

Initiative, are in-person and will run in locations across the UK and Ireland. Go to [the NUJ website](#) for more information.

Now is the time to think about becoming **an NUJ rep**. The union's four-stage programme shows how to put together a pay claim, deal with a bullying manager, create an

## Editor of the Journalist elected



Christine Buckley has been re-elected as editor of *The Journalist*, the NUJ's magazine.

The outcome of the election was ratified at a meeting of the union's national executive council on Friday 8 August.

Christine was elected on the first count with 1198 first preference votes. The quota was 1077. She was first elected in 2009 and has served three terms as editor.

Gerry Curran, NUJ vice president, said: "It takes courage and commitment to stand for election and I congratulate all who put their names forward. It was a diverse field reflecting many strands within the union. I wish Christine well in her new term. We are facing into a busy period within our union and there will be no shortage of news."

**Full result**

active chapel, negotiate a robust house agreement and all the skills needed to be a successful rep. **More information and autumn's dates.**

**NUJ Training Scotland** and **NUJ Training Wales** run a wide range of **professional training courses** for members, many online or hybrid. They are also open to members elsewhere in the UK and Continental Europe. **NUJ Active** gives twice-monthly updates on training.

# DONATE

# 04

## Keep giving to Gaza

*While the journalist death toll reaches unprecedented figures, donations are providing a haven for those reporting the war*

**A**s the anniversary nears of the attack on Israel by Hamas on 7 October and the ensuing deadly war in Gaza, the number of media workers killed now numbers around 150, according to a Palestinian Journalists' Syndicate (PJS) tally.

This is nearly 10 per cent of the journalist working community says Jim Boumelha, the International Federation of Journalists' treasurer.

"If the toll was to be extrapolated to NUJ members, it would be over 2,000, a figure impossible to comprehend," he says.

In the absence of international journalists, banned by the Israeli authorities from entering Gaza independently, their Palestinian colleagues are working day and night sending reports of the killings and destruction of homes and livelihoods.

Jim says: "As well as killing journalists, media newsrooms are being relentlessly smashed to smithereens - some 86 media institutions have been destroyed, including 22 local radio stations. Plenty of other journalists have perished in other global conflicts, such as Iraq or former Yugoslavia, but

none in such shocking circumstances and few continued to report the war in the way Gazan journalists are still doing today."

That is why he is urging branches and chapels, many of which have already made generous contributions to the cause, to continue to donate to **the IFJ's safety fund**.

The IFJ's sister unions, including the NUJ, have contributed to what has been the biggest crowdfunding operation mounted by the federation, with even employers' organisations contributing.

Initially the donations were used to buy safety kits and power banks, later they paid for food, baby milk

and medications among other needs. More recently, using a model from Ukraine, the effort has been directed to building hubs for journalists to give them a roof over their heads and the means to do their job. A massive injection of funds from sister unions in Canada and Norway, as well as contributions from UNESCO, allowed PJS to build the first of two solidarity centres.

The journalists have free access to electricity, water, the internet and laptops as well as coffee and bathrooms. The centre is staffed by volunteers and an IT expert. It also serves as temporary headquarters for the PJS in Rafah and Khan Younis in southern Gaza, and provides food supplies and medicine parcels for 500 journalists and their families in the catchment area.

A second centre is being prepared in Deir al Balah as another social hub and a place to work and recuperate. Every penny donated by NUJ members will make a huge difference.





## Changing of the guard

*Solidarity Consulting's Michael Calderbank looks forward to the new Parliamentary term*

It's been all change at Westminster after Labour's landslide election victory in July. Of the 650 MPs, more than half (335) were elected for the first time and, sadly, that has meant goodbye to several members of the cross-party NUJ Parliamentary Group. It will inevitably take time to become familiar with all the new faces but work has commenced in seeking to identify potential allies of the NUJ. Following discussions with the officers, vice-chair Rebecca Long-Bailey, whose Salford constituency includes Media City, will step up to chair the Parliamentary Group in the new Parliament, with John McDonnell continuing as secretary and vice-chairs from other parties to be appointed.

Lisa Nandy is the new Culture Secretary but continuity is provided by the appointment of Stephanie Peacock as media minister, having served as shadow prior to the

election. A meeting with the new minister will take place when MPs return from their party conferences.

Jamie Stone has been made the Lib Dem culture spokesperson in the Commons, but a permanent appointment to the role of shadow Culture Media and Sport (CMS) secretary will take place after the Conservative leadership election. At the time of writing, the full membership of the influential CMS select committee

has yet to be determined, but Conservative MP, Caroline Dinenage, is expected to continue in the role as chair.

The King's Speech outlining the government's programme for this session contained

few measures specifically relating to journalism and the media, although the Employment Rights Bill will be important for workers in this sector and many others. Significantly, Labour's New Deal for Working

People promised to repeal recent Tory anti-union legislation, offer day-one employment rights, end fire-and-rehire, and move to scrap zero hours contracts.

A Private Members Bill on SLAPPs was lost in the fraught "wash-up" period following the election announcement so the group will work hard to ensure legislation to curb the use of litigation to censor the press and intimidate journalists reaches the statute book.

The Media Bill was rushed through and ensures prominence of public service broadcasters' (PSBs) channels on smart TVs and other devices and requires video-on-demand services such as Netflix to be covered by the Ofcom content code. However, the NUJ believes more should be done to protect PSBs and the group will be pressing the Culture Secretary to ensure greater funding for the BBC, particularly after the corporation's latest announcement of more than 100 job cuts.

Disappointingly, there has been no specific commitment on the regulation of Artificial Intelligence technology in the production of news and to protect content creators. The Parliamentary Group will continue to brief MPs on these threats and other key issues of concern to journalists across the UK and Ireland.



DM

## This DM instructs the NEC...

*It's that time of the year when NUJ branches will be agreeing the subjects and wording of motions to April's 2025 Delegate Meeting (DM) in Blackpool*

**D**M is the union's policy-making body and these motions are part of the democratic process which determines the NUJ's priorities and plan of work for the following two years.

Any member can suggest a motion or subject to their branch for discussion, debate and agreement, and likewise put forward amendments to motions from the preliminary agenda.

Before submitting your motion, to make sure it is accepted by the Standing Orders Committee (SOC), check it is within the rules and follows certain guidelines. Have the

union's current **rule-book** to hand during the drafting process.

Our **website** has lots of useful information about writing motions and the business of DM. The best advice is to keep it simple. As with subbing any copy, spell out initials and explain organisations, legislation or anything that other members/readers may not be familiar with. A concise motion is much better than one which contains all the arguments; these can be made in the speeches at DM. Make sure it says what you mean, imprecise wording can lead to unintended consequences.

Remember, there will be plenty of opportunities at DM to celebrate the union's various successes and campaigns. The main object is to look forward to the new challenges the industry faces and how the union can respond or to propose ways the union and its rules can be reformed.

The convention is to say: "This DM instructs the NEC ..." followed by a set of action points, but this does not mean it is the NEC's job to carry out the instructions. If the branch's name is on the motion, it is the branch's responsibility to ensure it is carried out. So, if your branch calls for a special summit on an issue

close to its heart, the branch will be required to do the work once it has become a resolution.

Your motion may call on other bodies, such as NUJ councils and committees, to be involved in progressing the motion – make sure they are aware of this and happy to be included.

Once the deadline for motions has passed, that's it. However, branches can put forward Late Notice Motions relating to events that have occurred after the deadline. You will be expected to convince SOC there is a strong case for its inclusion, it's a device that should be used sparingly.



Jess Hurd

### Action

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Deadline for motions: 13.00, 25 November  
to be sent to [dmmotions@nuj.org.uk](mailto:dmmotions@nuj.org.uk)

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Deadline for amendments: 13.00, 28 February  
to be sent to [dmmotions@nuj.org.uk](mailto:dmmotions@nuj.org.uk)

•  
DM page on the [website](#)

•  
NUJ **Rule Book 2023-2025**

## Get Active

*The NUJ's website has a wealth of information, advice, guidance and useful materials*

### AI

Artificial Intelligence is a fast-moving technology which will affect all of us at work. Go to the **Journalism before Algorithms** website page for more information.

### Campaigns

The **NUJ's Pay Campaign** calls for fair pay and flexible working and provides practical support to chapels when dealing with employers and on the rights of freelancers.

**Let's Stop SLAPPs:** go to the **website page** to see the latest on our campaign to stop lawsuits brought by the powerful and rich against journalists to censor and stymie reporting.

**Recruiting students:** there's lots of info, FAQs and materials for branches and chapels to encourage local journalism, publishing and photography students to join the union **on the NUJ website**.

### Useful stuff

Freelance members can access help and useful information in the union's **freelance resources**, including **Protect your sources** and your rights as a journalist.



**Legal assistance:** one of the many benefits of NUJ membership is its legal advice.

**Health and safety:** advice, guidance and news.

The **safety toolkit** is a mobile-friendly resource to help media workers protect themselves and their journalism from harm.

**Photographers: the toolkit** has tips and a number for legal assistance when covering protests, and guidelines on taking photographs in public places.

**Storysmart:** is a set of online training modules to help journalists prepare to work in hostile environments and keep their data safe.

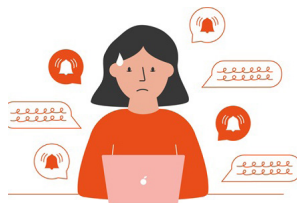
**TUC Organising at Work:** guide on building and maintaining strong workplace unions.

NUJ **recruitment materials**.

**Mental health:** find help for **post-traumatic stress disorder**.

The NUJ's guidance **Menopause is a workplace issue**

provides advice to reps and members on how to influence workplace policies and support women



during the menopause.

**Reporting on refugees:** inaccurate terminology and commentary can cause confusion and breed prejudice.

The **NUJ code of conduct** has set out the main principles of UK and Irish journalism since 1936.

### Donate

The **IFJ's safety fund** helps journalists across the globe, including in Ukraine and Afghanistan and those covering the Israeli-Hamas war.

The NUJ's **George Viner Memorial Award** provides bursaries for black and minority ethnic students.

**NUJ extra** helps members and their dependents who have fallen on hard times.

**NUJ extra**

### NUJ training

The union provides a free programme of **training for reps**. **NUJ Scotland Training** and **NUJ Training Wales** provide a huge range of professional skills courses.

**Social media:** Keep up with the latest breaking news, offers, campaigns, solidarity events and more on **Twitter**, **Instagram** and **Facebook**.

**REASONS  
TO JOIN**

**SOS**



### **We Offer Support and Help**

The NUJ is your lifeline if you get arrested or the authorities try to confiscate your data or images. We chase non-payers, represent and support you during disciplinary or redundancy procedures or if you are being bullied or have other work-related problems. We offer professional help with reporting guides and advice on ethics, networking opportunities and training to help you develop your skills throughout your career.

**Are you keeping good company?**

Join the NUJ today at

**[nuj.org.uk/join](http://nuj.org.uk/join)**

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