

## **GLOBAL PLATFORM FOR QUALITY JOURNALISM**

By bringing more than two thirds of humanity to a standstill, the health, political and economic crisis of Covid 19 will have terrible consequences on all our societies. And we are certain today that it will continue to do so for some time.

This "Great Confinement", as already defined by the International Monetary Fund, in reference to the "Great Depression of 1929", does not leave any continent or sector untouched, and the media, whatever their nature, are unable to escape this destructive wave. Many media companies have already closed down, millions of jobs have disappeared and journalists, even though quality information is essential for citizens in times of crisis, are suffering the full impact.

It is time to protect media, save jobs and support the most precarious workers.

But it is also time to prepare for the future, a future of quality, [ethical](#) and solidarity-based journalism that respects labour rights and fundamental freedoms.

The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), the world's leading organisation of the profession with 600,000 members in 146 countries, today proposes a strong and immediate global stimulus plan to save the most badly affected media and the most precarious journalists; and calls on all national governments to commit to quality journalism in this time of misinformation through strong political and economic measures that will ensure the survival of quality media and professional journalists.

Many IFJ affiliates around the world have already achieved significant progress and strong commitments from governments or employers' federations:

- To ensure the physical and psychological safety and protection of media workers;
- To enable journalists to circulate freely in times of general confinement;
- To provide journalists and media workers with the means to live and work decently with exceptional financial assistance, despite a drop in income.

From the onset of the pandemic, journalists have amply proved the essential role they play educating their citizens, contextualising the non-ending number crunching, explaining the science and, most importantly, unravelling the narrative played by politicians, asking the tough questions and exposing institutional failures. Thanks to their engagement, journalism as a public good, kept on thriving as the backbone of our democracies.

Unfortunately, at the same time, too many states are taking advantage of this crisis to increase their authoritarian power, strengthen their systems of surveillance of the population or to jail journalists while some media companies reduce salaries without negotiation, cut benefits or lay off staff.

The IFJ and its affiliates around the world will be at the forefront of tomorrow's journalism, globally and nationally, and will continue to promote the quality, ethical and solidarity-based journalism it has been standing up for since its creation in 1926.

The IFJ therefore proposes a "Global Platform for Quality Journalism" to save and protect jobs in the media industry and create a future that promotes a sustainable, ethical and publicly supported information economy.

**Information must remain a public good.**

## **URGENT MEASURES - SUPPORTING MEDIA PROFESSIONALS**

- The IFJ calls on all governments to immediately open negotiations with the GAFAM – Google, Apple, Facebook, Amazon, Microsoft - to collect a tax on revenues generated within their national territory.
  - o These companies pay no tax in the majority of countries where they collect revenues, estimated at \$900 billion worldwide.
  - o Taxing these revenues at 6% could inject \$54 billion into journalism.
  - o The IFJ calls for these funds to be managed jointly by representative unions of journalists and media workers and national employers' organisations.
- The IFJ calls on these organisations to use the funds to support as a matter of priority public service media, private, independent media and national and local media not owned by multinationals. These media should demonstrate the financial need for it.
- Any journalism-recovery stimulus should be seeded with the necessary support to revitalise adequately staffed newsrooms able to deliver trustworthy news and

information, and should not be allowed to be used to prop up doomed business models that have failed.

- The IFJ wants these funds to be used as a priority to support independent, co-operative and non-profit media enterprises.
- The IFJ calls on all governments to give priority support to precarious journalists (including freelancers) by creating a social protection fund, a national minimum wage, exempting them from income tax and granting them bank loans at reduced rates.
- The IFJ wants public service media, private media and national and local media to be able to benefit from reduced national taxation provided that :
  - o Social dialogue and trade union rights are respected, in line with relevant ILO Conventions;
  - o Dismissals are prohibited if the company makes a profit;
  - o The annual accounts are public and transparent;
  - o There is diversity and equality between women and men ~~are demanded~~;
  - o Companies that have received funding may not, for a period of five years, engage in mergers and acquisitions or leveraged buy-out activity that would result in job cuts or wage reductions.
- The IFJ calls on companies to reserve seats on their boards for workers' unions ;
- To strengthen the media economy, the IFJ encourages the creation of national media advertising programmes to promote issues of national interest.
- The IFJ recommends that governments reform media ownership rules to allow for greater pluralism of information.
- In line with the EU Whistleblower Directive, the IFJ calls on governments to legislate urgently for the protection of these citizens acting in the public interest.
- The IFJ considers it necessary that independent press distributors, who are involved in the distribution of print media, should be supported by tax exemptions.
- The IFJ calls on governments to strengthen journalists' authors' rights in order to increase their income.
- The IFJ encourages governments to fund free digital subscriptions for the youngest (6-18 years) as part of access to education and information, in line with UNESCO's commitments, and proposes that families with a media subscription get tax credits.

- The IFJ calls for media literacy initiatives at national level to combat misinformation and false news.

## **IN CONCLUSION,**

- ⇒ The IFJ proposes to the world employers' federations to support this ***Global Platform for Quality Journalism*** and to ask their national members to implement it.
- ⇒ As an associate member, the IFJ calls for formal support from the United Nations and its agencies (UNESCO, ILO, OHCHR) as well as regional political and economic entities to follow up the ***Global Platform for Quality Journalism***:
  - the 47 members of the Council of Europe;
  - the 55 countries of the African Union;
  - the 35 states of the Organization of American States;
  - the 22 countries of the Arab League;
  - the 21 members of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation.



**International  
Federation  
of Journalists**

**Younes Mjahed  
President**

**Anthony Bellanger  
General Secretary**

**The IFJ has received the support of the Global Union Federations**



**ITUC/CSI** : International Trade Union Confederation – 200 millions members / **UNI-Global** – 20 millions / **PSI** : Public Services International – 20 millions / **IndustriALL** – 50 millions / **EI** : Education International – 20 millions / **BWI** : Building and Wood Worker’s International – 12 millions / **IUF** : International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations – 12 millions / **TUAC** : The Trade Union Advisory Committee to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) – 58 millions / **ITF** : International Transport Workers' Federation – 20 millions.