

UPF Europe Newsletter 8 June 2020: News Media in the Global COVID-19 Crisis

Jacques Marion
June 8, 2020

UPF EUROPE NEWSLETTER



[Assessing the Role of News Media in the Global COVID-19 Crisis](#)

We are happy to announce the UPF Peace Talks webinar series organized by UPF Europe and the Middle East. The "Peace Talks" webinar series was launched to offer a wide range of content related to the concerns and traditional conference themes of UPF, highlighting values of interdependence, mutual prosperity and universal values.

The next Peace Talks Webinar will be at 6 pm CET on June 9th 2020 on the theme "**Assessing the Role of News Media in the Global COVID-19 Crisis**".

Click on [this link](#) to register.

[Click here for the invitation.](#)

[Click here for the flyer in PDF format.](#)

[Click here for the flyer in image format.](#)

Backgrounder:

The Webinar will be hosted by the International Media Association for Peace (IMAP), a project of the Universal Peace Federation, and will feature leading media professionals from our Region.

Every nation faces continued lockdowns due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and massive health challenges and economic systems have stalled or teeter on the edge of a major collapse. During this civilization-level crisis, the media has played a vital role as a source of reliable information for billions of citizens. Information shared by mainstream and social media has been of paramount importance, not only for medical professionals but also for governments, our business environment, essential institutions and thousands of NGOs, which provide infrastructures to save lives of affected people.

At the same time, the media has come under severe criticism for allegedly exaggerating the size, impact, morbidity and mortality of the pandemic, thus inducing irrational fears and panic among many people. Furthermore, numerous journalists and media outlets have faced accusations for not sufficiently questioning government interests and even propagating conspiracy theories.

On a global scale, we are witnessing a fierce information war and battle of narratives concerning the origin of this new strain of coronavirus, the supposed cover-up in Wuhan by the Chinese communist regime and the belated reaction of the World Health Organization (WHO).

The International Media Association for Peace (IMAP), a new global project of UPF, provides an audience platform for media thought leaders to reflect on the challenges faced, lessons learned and recommendations for change to navigate the pandemic-tempered world.

Questions for the panelists may be sent by email to peacetalks@europe.upf.org.

Panelists:



Mrs. Cheryl Wetzstein, Senior Advisor, International Media Association for Peace (IMAP); former National Reporter, The Washington Times, USA

Cheryl Wetzstein is an award-winning journalist with 40 years' experience, beginning as a metro reporter in New York City and then 33 years at The Washington Times. Her newsroom positions included feature writer, assistant business editor, biweekly columnist and national reporter in Congress, the White House, the Supreme Court, and state legislatures. Later, on the Times' business side, she developed award-winning special sections, plus multiple sections around faith. She is currently Senior Advisor to the International Media Association for Peace.

Mr. Humphrey Hawksley, Author, former BBC correspondent and Asia Bureau Chief, United Kingdom

Humphrey Hawksley is a former BBC foreign correspondent. Joining in 1983, this work has taken him to crises on every continent. He was expelled from Sri Lanka, opened the BBC's television bureau in China, arrested in Serbia and initiated a global campaign against enslaved children in the chocolate industry. He is a documentary maker including 'The Curse of Gold' and 'Bitter Sweet', examining human rights abuse in global trade. He is a prominent commentator and an author of both fiction and non-fiction books. He is an expert on US China tensions in the Asia Pacific region.



Mrs. Lyudmila Fomicheva, President, Interfax-Northwest; Chairperson, Union of Journalists of St. Petersburg and the Leningrad Region, Russian Federation

Mrs. Lyudmila Fomicheva has been the President of Interfax-Northwest, a major news agency in Russia, since 2003 and Chairman of the Union of Journalists of St. Petersburg and the Leningrad Region since 2011. In previous years, L. Fomicheva was a member of the Board of the Union of Journalists and a member of the jury of the Golden Pen, a professional journalism competition in St. Petersburg and the Leningrad Region. In 2011, heading the Union of Journalists, she became the chairman of the Supervisory Board of the Golden Pen Contest.

Mr. Willy Fautré, Director, Editor in Chief, Human Rights Without Frontiers, Belgium

Willy Fautré is the director of Human Rights Without Frontiers Int'l and a member of the International Consortium on Law and Religious Studies. He was chargé de mission at the Cabinet of the Belgian Ministry of Education and at the Belgian Parliament. He started defending religious freedom of Catholics, Protestants and Orthodox in Communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe during the Cold War, in the mid-1970s. In December 1988, he founded Human Rights Without Frontiers. He is a lecturer in the field of human rights and religious freedom.



Dr. Rubina Möhring, President, Reporters Without Borders,



Austria

Dr. Möhring has been the President of Reporters Without Borders in Austria since 2001., defending Freedom of Information. She is a longtime TV journalist, special correspondent, and representative of the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation, ORF, on the tri-national TV-channel, 3sat. She is the co-founder and moderator of the monthly TV-Talk, Media-Quartett, on Okto-tv, Austria. Dr. Möhring is a historian and longtime university lecturer on journalistic studies at the Universities of Vienna, Innsbruck, and the postgraduate Danube University, Krems. In 2016, she received the Golden Order of Merit of the Republic of Austria.

We are an international and interreligious network of individuals and organizations, including representatives from religion, government, civil society and the private sector dedicated to achieving world peace. UPF supports the work of the United Nations, particularly in the areas of interfaith peacebuilding, peace education, and the strengthening of marriage and family.

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Universal Peace Federation

Europe and Middle East

To: UPF Representatives, Ambassadors for Peace and Friends

From: UPF Europe and the Middle East

Re: Peace Talks – June 9, 2020

Date: June 5, 2020

Greetings from UPF Europe and the Middle East

We are happy to invite you to join the panel of the Peace Talks webinar organized by UPF Europe & Middle East, that will take place on Tuesday, June 9, 2020 at 18:00 CET (Central European Time).

The Peace Talks webinar series was launched to provide a platform for leading figures from the worlds of religion, politics, academia, business, and the media to contribute to the process of outlining the kind of world that needs to emerge from the current crisis, highlighting the values of interdependence, mutual prosperity and universal values.

The Webinar will be hosted by the International Media Association for Peace (IMAP), a project of the Universal Peace Federation.

THEME: “Assessing the Role of News Media in the Global COVID-19 Crisis”

DATE and TIME: Tuesday, June 9, 2020 at 18:00 CET (Central European Time)

BACKGROUNDER: Every nation faces continued lockdowns due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and massive health challenges and economic systems have stalled or teeter on the edge of a major collapse. During this civilization-level crisis, the media has played a vital role as a source of reliable information for billions of citizens. Information shared by mainstream and social media has been of paramount importance, not only for medical professionals but also for governments, our business environment, essential institutions and thousands of NGOs, which provide infrastructures to save lives of affected people.

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UPF is an NGO in General Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations

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On a global scale, we are witnessing a fierce information war and battle of narratives concerning the origin of this new strain of coronavirus, the supposed cover-up in Wuhan by the Chinese communist regime and the belated reaction of the World Health Organization (WHO).

The International Media Association for Peace (IMAP), a new global project of UPF, provides an audience platform for media thought leaders to reflect on the challenges faced, lessons learned and recommendations for change to navigate the pandemic-tempered world.

PANELISTS:

- **Mrs. Cheryl Wetzstein**, Senior Advisor, International Media Association for Peace (IMAP); former Senior Editor, The Washington Times, USA
- **Mr. Humphrey Hawksley** Author, former BBC correspondent and Asia Bureau Chief, United Kingdom
- **Mrs. Lyudmila Fomicheva**, President, Interfax-North-West; Chairperson, Union of Journalists of St. Petersburg and the Leningrad Region, Russian Federation (tbc)
- **Mr. Willy Fautre**, Director, Editor in Chief, Human Rights Without Frontiers (HRWF), Belgium
- **Dr. Rubina Möhring**, President, Reporters Without Borders, Austria

After the presentations, there will be time for Q&A. Questions may be sent to peacetalks@europe.upf.org

Please find below the [link to register for the Peace Talks webinar](#)

https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_SgLw_eFQQayF3dKUS4dr3A/

We hope you will join us for this important and timely discussion.

Sincerely yours,



Mr. Jacques Marion
President,
UPF Europe and Middle East



Mr. Peter Zoehrer
Coordinator,
International Association Media for Peace



**UNIVERSAL
PEACE
FEDERATION**
EUROPE AND THE MIDDLE EAST

Peace Talks *Webinar Series*

Assessing the Role of News Media in the Global COVID-19 Crisis

ZOOM Conference - Tuesday, June 9, 2020, 18:00 CET

The Webinar will be hosted by the International Media Association for Peace (IMAP), a project of the Universal Peace Federation, and will feature leading media professionals.

PANELISTS:



**Mrs. Lyudmila
Dmitrievna Fomicheva,**
President, Interfax-North-
West, Russian Federation



Mr. Humphrey Hawksley,
Author and former BBC
Foreign Correspondent,
United Kingdom



Mr. Willy Fautré,
Director and Editor in Chief,
Human Rights Without Frontiers,
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Mrs. Cheryl Weitzstein,
Senior Advisor, IMAP,
former *Washington Times*
National Reporter, USA



Dr. Rubina Möhring,
President, Reporters
Without Borders, Austria



Mr. Peter Zöhrer,
Coordinator, IMAP,
Europe and Middle East

MODERATOR:

[Click here to register](#)