CONCEPT NOTE

A panel co-sponsored by the members states of the Group of Friends for the Protection of Journalists, Reporters Without Borders, the Committee to Protect Journalists, and the International Women's Media Foundation

Headquarters of the UN, ECOSOC Chamber, Thursday March 14, 1:15 pm

Journalism and the empowerment of women: new challenges in the digital world

On the occasion of the 63rd session of the Commission on the Status of Women, the panel discussion will focus on the opportunities and challenges that the digital world represents for the condition of women, including for women reporters.

Information and communication technology in the media industry have a direct impact on gender equality and the empowerment of women. After investigations conducted by journalists in the traditional media industry, as well as the rise of the use of the popular hashtags #MeToo or balancetonporc and similar initiatives around the world, the issue of sexual harassment and sexual violence has gained more visibility through websites and social networks, with consequential shifts in social behavior and accountability.

On the other hand, as women’s engagement in the public sphere is gaining ground, journalists covering topics related to women and women’s rights face challenges and new vulnerabilities which are also amplified through social networks and online media platforms. Practitioners of the media industry, including women journalists who work in traditional as well as digital media, will illustrate some of the threats and violence they face when engaging on women’s rights – including online harassment, cyberstalking, invasion of privacy, defamation campaigns, rape threats, trolling, hacking, and sexual abuse through the use of email, websites, and social media.

At the United Nations, this issue is taken into account at the normative level. The resolution on violence against women that was adopted this year by the General Assembly referred to online violence. The UN General Assembly also adopted resolutions on the safety of journalists that shed light on the gender aspect of the protection of journalists, including women journalists and the specific risks they face online. The Secretary General’s report A/72/290 submitted in accordance to the resolution 70/162 produced suggestions on how to strengthen the safety of women journalists through a gender-sensitive approach. Member States of the group of Friends for the Protection of Journalists - Argentina, Austria, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cape Verde, Chile, Costa Rica, France Greece, Jordan, Latvia, Lebanon, Lithuania, Republic of Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, Tunisia, United States, and Uruguay - are particularly committed to the implementation of the resolutions on the protection of journalists as well as the UN plan of action that has been adopted under the auspices of UNESCO. The Secretary General himself showed his personal commitment by activating a focal points network within in the UN system.
Speakers from various backgrounds will share their experience and best practices on this topic and provide some suggestions and measures to be taken by relevant stakeholders in this area, with a special focus on the role of the UN and member states.

**Panelists:**

**Talia Lavin** is a writer and researcher based in Brooklyn, with bylines in the *New Yorker*, the *Washington Post*, the *New Republic*, the *Nation* and elsewhere. She writes with an emphasis on feminism, online radicalization, and social justice.

**Sandra Muller** is a French journalist and director of the newsletter “La Lettre de l’Audiovisuel.” She was named “Person of Year” by *TIME Magazine* in 2017. In her book “#BalanceTonPorc” she writes about the movement she generated when she created the new hashtag on Twitter exposing the sexual misconduct of a former boss two days before the launch of the #MeToo movement.

**Ana Kasparian** host and producer of the online news show The Young Turks, the largest online news show in the world. Her dedication to truthful commentary was honored in the Forbes “30 Under 30” list in 2016 and in the Daily Dot as one of the Top Women of YouTube. Prior to TYT, Kasparian has also served as a contributor to MSNBC and Pivot.

**Tracie Powell** (tbc) is founder and editor-in-chief of AllDigitocracy.org, an online platform examining the inter-relatedness of technology, policy, politics and how communities, especially those of color, access information. She writes about the media and media policy, specifically on issues regarding piracy, media ownership, diversity, government transparency and the business of journalism. She contributes regularly for the Columbia Journalism Review and The Washington Post and has contributed to the Poynter Institute and NPR.

**Hannah Allam** (tbc) was previously a national reporter for *BuzzFeed News* where she covered U.S. Muslim life. She spent a decade as a foreign correspondent at McClatchy, serving as Baghdad bureau chief during the Iraq War and Cairo bureau chief during the Arab Spring. She’s also covered foreign policy and race/demographics. Allam was part of McClatchy teams that won a Polk Award for Syria reporting and an Overseas Press Club Hal Boyle Award for exposing death squads in Iraq.

**Elisa Lees Muñoz** (moderator) is the International Women’s Media Foundation’s Executive Director. Elisa leads the organization to achieve its mission to support women journalists to develop their careers by providing training, tools and assistance so that they can work as safely as possible.

With the participation of:

- Mrs Marlène Schiappa: French Minister for equality between women and men and the fight against discriminations (tbc)
- Christophe Deloire: Executive Director of Reporters without Borders

Join the conversation online by using the hashtag: #ProtectJournalists