**Committee:** Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee (SOCHUM)

**Country:** Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK)

**Agenda Item:** Accomplishing Freedom of Press and Protection of Journalists Within Conflict Zones

 **Introduction**

In times of armed conflict, information becomes a two-edge sword, it can either protect a nation or tear it apart from within. For the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, press is not just a mere observer, but a potential weapon ­ — one that can either safeguard our sovereignty or be wielded by imperialist forces to destabilize it. SOCHUM, in this case, has a crucial role in our mission — to protect our citizens from imperialist forces that seek to strip away their rights and sovereignty.

**Background**

Over past decades, the DPRK has witnessed firsthand how Western-backed media organizations have distorted narratives, incited unrest, and interfered in domestic affairs under the pretense of promoting “freedom of the press.” A notable example is the detention of an Australian "journalist" in 20191, whose activities endangered our sovereignty all while bribing officials to secure their influence.

Journalists themselves are exposed to grave risks in conflict zones — including torture, murder, surveillance, and cyber harassment. In the 2021 case of French journalist Olivier Dubois, his abduction by an islamic terrorist group2 underlined how easily the unregulated press can fall victim to the dangers of chaotic environments.

Thus, important questions arise:

• How can we ensure journalistic integrity when access to conflict zones is not regulated or verified?
• What criteria can we use to tell apart genuine journalism from hidden activities aimed at destabilization?
In the absence of clear mechanisms, both sovereign states and journalists find themselves exposed to risk.

Without clear mechanisms, both journalists and sovereign states are left vulnerable.

**Current Media Conditions in Conflict Zones**

In various types of conflict zones, the need for state oversight and regulation of the press becomes abundantly clear:

* **Interstate wars** — such as the Russia-Ukraine conflict — demonstrates that during interstate wars, governments must safeguard their national narratives and restrict sensitive reporting to prevent the spread of propaganda that could undermine wartime cohesion; both Russia and Ukraine have implemented media controls as legitimate measures to uphold national security and public morale. State supervision of media in such contexts is not an infringement but a strategic necessity.
* **Uprisings**— such as in Syria — demonstrate that when media access is left uncontrolled, multiple armed factions and terrorist groups exploit journalism for their own agendas; in the absence of strong government regulation, chaos, disinformation, and foreign manipulation dominate the information landscape.
* **Transitional and post-conflict zones** often suffer from fragile institutions and non-functioning judicial systems, allow unregulated media to exploit instability, spread misinformation, and foster renewed divisions; in such scenarios, strong state control of information is essential to restore order and maintain national unity.

International law, including the Geneva Conventions, grants journalists protection. However, these protections are only applicable when conflicting parties obey international norms. In reality, especially in conflicts involving non-state actors or terrorist organizations, these rights are frequently ignored. Therefore, unrestricted journalist movement is neither practical nor safe.

**Position of the DPRK**

The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea firmly insists:

* Freedom of the press must not exceed the sovereign right of nations to defend their security and stability.
* Unregulated journalism in conflict zones eases disinformation, foreign interference, and national destabilization.
* States have the full sovereign right to regulate, control, and authorize journalistic activities within their borders.
* International organizations such as Reporters Without Borders (RSF) and the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) often politicize the issue of press freedom, selectively criticizing independent nations while overlooking violations in their aligned states.

**Proposed Solutions**

* **Creation of a UN-supervised International Journalist Accreditation Mechanism:
Only** accredited journalists, authorized by both the United Nations and the sovereign host state, should be permitted to operate in conflict zones.
* **Mandatory Sovereign Authorization:**
No journalistic activity should occur **without** prior registration and approval by the government of the territory concerned.
* **Adoption of a Code of Conduct for Journalists:**Journalists must abstain from espionage, disinformation, and activities threatening state security.
* **Protection Limited to Compliant Journalists:**
International legal protection for journalists must apply only to accredited individuals operating in accordance with both international and local laws.

**Conclusion**

The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea calls upon SOCHUM to recognize the undeniable reality thatprotection of journalists cannot exist in a vacuum detached from respect for national sovereignty. Only through verified accreditation, strict regulation, and sovereign oversight can freedom of information, the safety of journalists, and the peace of nations coexist in an orderly and just international system. We are looking forward to discuss upon these issues in the conference.

**References**

1. *Petrov, Leonid (6 July 2019).*[*"Luck had nothing to do with Alek Sigley's escape from North Korea"*](https://www.smh.com.au/national/luck-had-nothing-to-do-with-alek-sigley-s-escape-from-north-korea-20190705-p524j0.html)*.*[*The Sydney Morning Herald*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Sydney_Morning_Herald)*. Retrieved 10 July 2019.*
2. Gregory, James (20 March 2023). ["Jeffery Woodke and Olivier Dubois finally freed in West Africa"](https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-65017545). *BBC News*.