

## 25th ISOJ Global roundup: Part 1: Lightning presentations about the state of journalism around the world

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- Chair: **Dawn Garcia**, director, **John S. Knight Journalism Fellowships, Stanford University**
  - **Manasseh Azure Awuni**, founding editor in chief, **The Fourth Estate, Ghana** (Nieman/Harvard)
  - **Faisal Karimi**, founder and director, **Afghanistan Institute for Research and Media Studies, Afghanistan** (JSK/Stanford)
  - **Efrat Lachter**, investigative journalist, **Channel 12 News, Israel** (Knight-Wallace/Michigan)
  - **Ángel Nakamura**, multimedia journalist and research fellow, **Mexico** (UT Austin)
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Dawn Garcia [00:00:02] Good morning. Good morning, America, right? I'm pretending to be Rosental. I'm Dawn Garcia, and I'm the director of the John S Knight Journalism Fellowships and I'm happy to be here and have a chance to do this twice today, because we have so many great people on our panel this afternoon. This is the global round up lightning presentations. We have a little more time this time. So I want to just, well, I just want to thank Rosental for this amazing event. I was just saw him this morning having coffee. And, you know, this is a generous, innovative, charismatic guy. And I just want us to give one more round of applause. So just a bit about me and our program and then I'm going to get this started. So the JSK fellowships, John S Knight Journalism Fellowships at Stanford brings together every year 15 to 20, great journalists from around the world to spend nine months at Stanford. And our fellowship is aiming to empower great journalists to become leaders in the field and to coach. We help coach them to become resilient leaders and work on solutions to journalism's most urgent problems. And that includes defending press freedom around the world. More than 1000 journalists, from more than 80 countries, have been fellows in our program at Stanford, including me, some years back. I want to give a special shout out to my colleague and friend Lynette Clemmensen, who is here today. She's the director of the Knight Wallace Fellowships. Lynette, say hi. Where are you? Yeah, there she is. So, needless to say, we both believe in the power of fellowship. So does Rosental, who was also a fellow at that other program at Harvard. The Neiman fellowship. So today, you know, we believe that the power of journalism fellowships help reinvent journalism and build a cohort of diverse journalism leaders around the world, and that is so sorely needed. So today, we have the privilege to be on stage with four of the eight you're going to see today accomplished journalism fellowships, current journalists who are at the JSK fellowships at Stanford, Lynette's program at Michigan, the Nieman Fellowships at Harvard, and a research fellow here at UT Austin. I encourage you to read their impressive bios, in your program. They're a really amazing group of people. They are pioneering, courageous journalists who are here to tell you about the state of journalism in their countries. The urgent issues facing journalists around the globe are multiplying. We live in a world where journalists and independent media are facing increasing challenges from authoritarian regimes, polarization, misinformation and financial pressures to sustainability and physical dangers. The wars in Gaza and Ukraine are not helping. More than three quarters of the 99 journalists and

media workers killed worldwide died in the Israel Gaza War, according to the CPJs, the Committee to Protect Journalists and CPJ's documented 320 journalists behind bars around the world in its last census. But there are signs of hope, not including the war in Gaza. Fewer journalists were killed last year than the year before, and journalists here on this stage are working to fight back against increased hostility to journalists, battling misinformation and doing their jobs very well. They're working to improve journalism in their countries and provide access to news and information that people need to create and sustain robust democracies around the world so let's get started. Since there I was going to say there are nine of us, but there's only four on stage today, so that's good. We're going to have a little more time. We're going to have each fellow, each journalist here give a talk on the state of journalism in their countries. And then afterwards, if we have time, we'll have a few questions. Okay. We are going to start with Efrat Lachter, who is an investigative journalist. I'm sorry. We mixed it up. Let me change. My number one is going to be my own Faisal Karimi from Afghanistan. Faisal is the founder and director of the Afghanistan Institute for Research and Media Studies, in Afghanistan and he is a fellow with us here at Stanford. And I'm going to let him kick it off. Go, Faisal.

Faisal Karimi [00:05:05] Thank you, Dawn. Hello, America and hello, world. It's my privilege to be here today. My name is Faisal Karimi, an exile journalist and media entrepreneur from Afghanistan and current JSK fellow at Stanford University, one of the best journalism fellowships around the world. I'm the founder and director of Afghanistan Women News Agency and Digital Media, two both digital exiled media. We have been active in Afghanistan since 2015 as a media outlet. But since the Taliban took over. We first fled the country and relocated our headquarters from Western Afghanistan to exile. A week after the Taliban took over, I've managed for evacuate all of my staff, particularly women journalists with their spouses and children. A group of 28 people fled the country a week after the Taliban took over, and after seven months spending in Albania and in refugee camp, we saw that in Canada, in the United States, as soon as we fled the country, we start and rebuild our newsroom in exile to cover women issues and women's challenges on the ground under the Taliban regime. And these days, our colleague in exile. And we recently hired 15 young female journalists across the country, working with us anonymously on the ground under the Taliban regime to cover women's voices and women's challenges in these critical times. The Taliban did not allow women or particularly women journalists, work for exile media and for international media. They create a severe restriction on women journalists, particularly women. And our brave colleagues actually work anonymously. They are committed to cover the many issues in this situation. So in my presentations. The media blackout: the Taliban war on information. And Afghanistan's journalists under the Taliban 2.0 in Afghanistan, the Taliban retook the power on August 15th, 2021. After two decades of insurgency and war against human rights, democracy and press freedom in Afghanistan. Please close your eyes. Let's see a practice. Close your eyes for a moment. Imagine standing in the bustling streets of Kabul, surrounded by terrorist. Danger lurking in every shadow. Imagine risking your life to report the truth under the Taliban. Please open your eyes. This is the world of Afghanistan. Journalists under the Taliban on every single day. Following the US troops and its allies withdrawal from Afghanistan, the Taliban retook the power. The once free environment, media systems and media landscape collapsed overnight. Hundreds of journalists forced to flee the country due to Taliban severe restrictions on media.

Over half of the media outlets were shut down due to Taliban severe pressure, financial crises and other severe media directives. The Taliban issued city council to power. Afghanistan General Sana'a went after leading media support organization from Afghanistan, which is in exile right now, documented almost 400 and sense of violation against journalists in Afghanistan within last two years. The Taliban intelligence department and the ministry are watching virtually but directly actually controlled media. This table you see that this the number or stats of media before the Taliban come to the power and after the Taliban capture the power. In this presentation, you can see that 82% of the women journalists were forced to quit their job or leave media professional jobs, or stay at home or flee the country. Within two years and seven months since the Taliban capture the power, they issued 17 multifaceted media directives to control journalists and media and legitimize their roles and promote their narratives in the public sphere of Afghanistan. There is no longer free and independent media in Afghanistan after the Taliban regime, and the Taliban systematically utilize public and private and commercial media to spread their propaganda and disinformation. Based on 17 media directives that the Taliban issued so far. These 17 media strategy is actually a focus on main 3 or 5 things. Particularly those media strategies target women journalists particularly. These media strategies pressure and restrict media content and censorship. Censorship and self-censorship is a part of media practices in Afghanistan under the Taliban. One of the Taliban media restrictions capture strategies to target women journalists in Afghanistan, according to Taliban's H.G. Wells blog. It shows two months after after they took over the country, women on women TV journalists must wear Islamic hijab on TV and broadcast of drama and soap opera featuring female actors is prohibited. Media content restrictions and other, this strategy, the Taliban restricts platforms like TikTok. They blocked TikTok, and recently they finalized a policy to block and restrict Facebook in Afghanistan as well. They restrict telecommunications channels and limits they monitor. And they created limited access to information to the public and to the journalists. This information and propaganda, the Taliban besides dominating the public media. They establish several media stations and digital media to promote their propaganda, and also put pressure to the commercial and private media to be aligned with them and this process. Censorship and restrictions of the press, media blackout, censorship and blocking of actually international concert websites and some of the web news websites of exile media is a part of the Taliban strategies. They control the messaging and also monitoring and surveillance is a part of the Taliban media strategy to censor come to the power. Separation of journalists through threats, intimidation, shut down media outlets. As I mentioned, 50% of the media outlets were shut down so far. Persecution of journalists through trial, punishment, and imprisoning. Forced exile. As I mentioned, almost 2000 journalists fled the country and my team and I, as a part of those journeys, were forced to flee the country and we are facing that trauma and for even underground also and exile as well. How Afghanistan is navigate, but the Taliban strategy at this critical time. Resilience is a part of brave journalists of Afghanistan, both on the ground in exile. Adaptability for this situation to save our life and self-imposed censorship as a part of our daily activity. Particularly for those journalists who are under the Taliban regime. We have secured networks, underground networks of preparing information and digital dissemination and cloud standards reporting under the Taliban regime. Exile media is a new approach for Afghanistan's. And this is the picture of our newsroom in Afghanistan before the Taliban took over, and after that, before the efforts to flee the country. So in this situation, in this critical time, exile journalism

is an alternative journalism under the Taliban occupied Afghanistan. And we need to push and support exile media and exiled journalists to provide reliable and free information from exile for Afghan people that they have access to satellite TV and online radio and as well as the digital website and also social media. So the Taliban is strategically and systematically disseminated fake news and propaganda on social media. We need support from international organizations. Call for action supporting independent media in Afghanistan, advocating for press freedom and journalists safety in this critical situation supports exiled journalists and media established worldwide. Almost 20 exiled media have been established within last two years in exile in different countries, particularly in the European countries and also in the United States, and needs to put pressure and hold entitlement accountable. What are your actions in these situations? Journalism in Afghanistan is facing with uncertainty in these and it still, we have hope for positive change in these situations and our resilience and survival for independent journalism in the future. Thank you so much.

Dawn Garcia [00:15:42] Thank you so much, Faisal, for your brave work and we hope we can have time for questions or later. Next up, Ángel Nakamura who is a multimedia journalist and research fellow here at UT Austin, he's from Mexico. Ángel?

Ángel Nakamura [00:16:04] Thank you. Good morning. I'm so glad to be here. Can everybody hear me? Thank you. Oh, I don't need both mics, my bad. I'm going to be presenting the dangers of doing journalism in Tamaulipas is a research project that I did here with the Mellon Foundation and the University of Texas at Austin. I have some technical problem. Oh, okay. Thank you very much. Okay, so this is my research project. I address the hazards of doing journalism in Tamaulipas. The approaches that I employ are those of the violence against reporters, cover crime, corruption and local stories. Also, the challenges that journalists face to adapt to new ways of doing their work. And the evidence is a percentage of cases collected during the winter of 2024 through ethnographic methods. Some Tamaulipas facts. Tamaulipas has a position to play a key role in drug trafficking and human smuggling. The state has more border crossings in the United States than any other Mexican state. We're talking about 18 border crossings, and it also has three of the ten busiest border crossings in the United States. We're talking about Laredo, which is border with Laredo, Tamaulipas, Hidalgo with Reynosa, and Brownsville with Matamoros, Tamaulipas. This is what it looks like. Matamoros, Reynosa and Nuevo Laredo. And that's the whole border that Mexico and the United States share. The problem with the drug cartels, the cartel El Golfo, which was funded in, Matamoros, controls criminal economy since the 1930s. When I say criminal economies, I'm talking about drug trafficking, kidnappings. Also smuggling of anything that you can, like, think of, that's related to criminal activity. Also, the capture and killing of, leaders in Tamaulipas. And that fits with the said task, which is another organized crime in Tamaulipas. Change the dynamics. Instability has become cyclical, which has led to more violence in Tamaulipas. That's a map of all the drug cartels that are in position in Tamaulipas. And as you can see, not only is a cartel going for the Gulf Cartel, but also they set this and the cartel organization, which according to the DEA, it was the most dangerous, cartel group in the whole world. So they're also in Tamaulipas. And here are some pictures of the way that the violence has projected in Tamaulipas over time. We also have a big problem with people that are disappear, that are missing, and the massive

clandestine grapes. You can see families in there and local groups and the government looking for bones for bodies. So how does this impact the journalism? 162 journalists have been killed in Mexico from 2000 to 2023. Just to put that into perspective. And luckily, zero journalists have been killed here in the United States in that time span. 2022 was the deadliest year for journalists in Mexico with 13 killings. And Tamaulipas is the second Mexican state with the most journalists killed, with 16. What are some of the causes of the violence against journalists in Tamaulipas? Well, in the 1970s, these threats came from political and union power and local bosses. By the 80s, organized crime during the harassment of media and journalists, and by the 90s and 2000, Tamaulipas was cataloged as the main zone of silence in Mexico. Why was it kind of like the main zone of silence in Mexico? Because journalists needed to stop publishing about the violence that was going on in that state. That's Norma Moreno. That's the first female journalist that got killed in Mexico in the summer of 1986. She got into that building, which used to be a local newspaper in Matamoros, and she was shot 20 times along her former boss, Enriqueta, who was also killed in the summer of 1986. And, the balance started to go, even worse than that, of course, in 2010. Started using more violent tactics to get their point or their message across. This came about in express kidnappings, beating, stabbings, assault and death threats against journalists. This man attacks the newspapers, radio stations and TV stations and articles started using grenades, firearms and car bombs. Just like the Medellin of the 1980s with Pablo Escobar. We had the same problem in Tamaulipas. That was the first car bomb that exploded outside a local media in Tamaulipas in August of 2010. 2010. That's how media reported. You can see there's another car bomb that exploded outside of a kindergarten in south Victoria, the capital of Tamaulipas. These exploded around 6 a.m.. If you would have exploded, an hour later, it would have most likely killed 50 little children that attended that kindergarten. And this is another car bomb that exploded outside a newspaper in March 2012. That was the newspaper where I used to work at Insead, Victoria, Tamaulipas. The articles got mad because we published something about not even related to local crime. They got mad, they put a car bomb, and they started calling the newspaper, and they were saying, basically, yeah, I need to get out of the newsroom. Otherwise we're gonna go and kill ya. That's the video of the explosion. What's the official response? Well, local and federal authorities are often slow to respond. They fail to apply best practices to evidence gathering, and they appear to prioritize presenting suspects as soon as possible rather than conducting a thorough investigation. And what's most discouraging for journalists? Well, citizens do not know the risks they assume to cover drug trafficking stories. Society doesn't trust them. They consider media to be another political institution. And journalists are also branded as sellouts or Bandidos because they don't publicize what's going on in Tamaulipas. Because, of course, there's death threats against them. So what does this mean? The violence against journalism violates the freedom of expression and the citizens' rights to information. This consolidated tons of silence. So my research project was about hired journalists in Tamaulipas and their work right now. What are some of the challenges they face? I use data from in-depth qualitative interviews with 15 individuals: ten journalists, two college professors, two government officials and one activist. Six men and women, ages 45 to 65, middle class from Tamaulipas. This is how some of the finest journalists apply self-censorship, just like Faisal said in Afghanistan. Self-care and resilience. A lot of resilience. Journalists prefer to rely often on press releases and press conferences, so they only get their official information. They cannot investigate anymore. They also work in units in

Tamaulipas to protect themselves. What does that mean? If somebody has, like, an exclusive story, he would rather call somebody else from the competition and be like, hey, do you know, do you want to work with me on this story? Because I don't feel safe enough to do these story. Newspapers have stopped publishing stories about violence. Websites often stay away from beats that could be dangerous, and editors talk to the competition before they publish a story. Some journalists have opted out of their profession because it's too risky. They have gone to become teachers, government officials, they have joined political parties or the private sector and some have decided to open YouTube channels or work for national or international media. They distrust government officials and institutions, and they avoid asking for help. Some have concerns about what they share with colleagues, too, and they explore moving out of the state or the country. What is the government response at creating workshops and conference for journalists? They also created the protection mechanism for Human Rights Defenders and Journalists, and they have their open door policy, to try to get back their trust. So what's next for journalists? Some media journalism? I have said that media will need to adapt to new generations or they will become obsolete. Only a few newspapers will survive, told me a newspaper editor in Tamaulipas. Newsrooms will become irrelevant in Tamaulipas. He has a pretty pessimistic point of view about what's next. Investigative journalism will only be possible in collaboration with international outlets. Local TV station will become irrelevant and radio station will stick mostly to music programming. "We don't want to leave our state and our city, the Narcos should not win and take control of the state," told me. A website editor said "it is going to take a lot of creativity, sacrifice, and a commitment to keep doing our job." "I'm not a hero and I put my family first, even though I love journalism," told me and other newspaper columnists. And this, of course, according to Dr Bustamante who is also here at the youth U.T. Austin, changing course required enormous effort in tandem with the will of all sectors of society. And finally, the core values of journalism. Addressing problems is important, but equally crucial is showcasing existing solutions. We need to provide information and tools for young readers who may feel the world is still. And I believe that the primary goal of solution journalism is not to make people feel good, although it's great impact when that happens, its goal is to inform people better. These are the victims in Tamaulipas, that were my main source of inspiration. And this, were two of my colleagues, Hector Gonzalez and Antonio de la Cruz Martinez, that were killed in 2011 and 2022. Antonio de la Cruz Martinez was killed when he was about to drop his daughter to school. Rest in peace. And if you have any questions, thank you.

Dawn Garcia [00:25:42] Thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you. Okay. Next we have Efrat Lachter, who is. My apologies. An investigative journalist for channel 12 News in Israel and a Knight Wallace Michigan fellow. Welcome.

Efrat Lachter [00:26:06] Well, thank you so much. First, I want to apologize. I seem to have developed an allergy to Austin, which really has no reason, but I'm sorry for my voice. Thank you so much for inviting me. Thank you so much for your presentations, fellows. I'm always interested to see the fellows in other programs. So I'm in the University of Michigan at the Knight Wallace Fellowship, and we always interested to see other fellows and their important work. So thank you for that. And thank you, ISOJ, for this opportunity to speak today and for this really fascinating conference. So I've been an international war correspondent for the last decade for

Israel channel 12. I've been covering conflict in many war zones, including the withdrawal from Afghanistan and Iraq and Syria and Ukraine. I also been to Russia, DRC, Sudan, Ethiopia, just to name a few. And as I said, currently I'm in Ann Arbor, Michigan, which is very different from the places I'm used to be around. So when I left Israel to come to the fellowship, it was this summer. It was after nine months of covering protests in Israel over the judicial overhaul. And I'm going to talk a little bit about it, because I think maybe people, as I learned, don't know so much about what was the environment before October 7th in Israel. Actually, when I left, I felt my concern was that what's going to happen is a civil war in Israel. It was that bad. And for us journalists, it was very hard to cover those protests. We were attacked from both sides of the political spectrum, and we were also attacked by our government, calling us the enemy of the people, targeting specific journalists, who are brave enough to report what's happening. This protest was against a judicial overhaul. Which part of it was also, regulations against us journalists and against press freedom and against democracy. So this was what was happening then. And then, while I was on the fellowship, October 7th happened. On October 7th, I was in Ann Arbor. And I have to say that the Israeli media, I think, proved to be crucial to the public on that day. I think it's a precedent to see what we were able, my friends, my colleagues were able to do on that day when nothing functioned right. The army, the police, everything was dysfunctioning. And the only thing I got was giving people information about what was going on was actually in the media. Everyone were just glued to their TV, getting updates and getting images from people filming, in real time, from the Nova Festival or from the kibbutzim in the south of the settlements. My friends and I, even though, again, I was not in Israel at the time, we kept getting text messages and phone calls from people in the South asking us to help them in real time, whispering, we're in this house, this is our location. Please send someone to help us. While we were hearing the shooting of Hamas terrorists outside of those houses. Many of us couldn't help them. We felt that guilt is something that we feel until this day. We try to help somewhere. Actually, we were able to help. And some were massacred. Today, six months later, I think the Israeli media and I've been to as well since October 7th, I did some reporting and I think the Israeli media, just like the Israeli society, is still on October 7th, there is no it feels like it's just been October 7th for six months. The trauma of the people is so great. And also the journalist because again, I'm a war correspondent. So I've seen conflicts and I seen really hard scenes. Although I have to say, what I saw in October when I came back to as well, was very brutal, even for what I saw. But they were not used to it. And the trauma was great. And I think that is part of why the coverage in Israel right now is what I'm going to share with you, is this is the coverage. So we are in a democracy and the press is very is very strong. And it showed to be very strong during the protest before October 7th, but right now, if you watch Israeli media channel, what you're going to hear about is about the hostages, 136 hostages that are still held in Gaza. You're going to hear about the government failure on October 7th. You're going to hear criticism about the government a lot and great investigative work about the failure of the government. But you not going to hear a lot about is what's happening in Gaza. People in Israel are not so much informed. And I'm here, so I'm seeing, you know, international media coverage. And I also have people I speak with in Gaza. So I get a different picture. But when I speak with my friends in Israel, they really don't know that much about what's going on there. Some of it has to do with military censorship that we have in Israel. Some of it has to do with, a lot of it, with self-censorship. As I try to explain, people are still so traumatized they feel that they can't. I

don't know, they it's hard for them to talk about what's happening across our border for some reason. And another problem is that you can't go into Gaza without embedding with the IDF. And that's a real problem for journalists. As a war journalist, I think that's very wrong. And we need to have journalists on the ground, covering this story. But the fact that there isn't, makes people in Israel doubt all information that is coming from Gaza, because it's coming by, there's a lot of propaganda included. So this is the situation right now. I think something have changed after the strike against the World Central Kitchen workers, people in Israel start asking questions. How did this happen, how serious the humanitarian crisis is. I start seeing stories about it. Recently this week, I saw a story with, interviewing people from within Gaza, explaining their situation there. So I hope this trend is changing, this happening while we still have protests in Israel. So there are 100,000 people taking the streets against the government, again, against the Netanyahu government, right wing government. Now during a war, again, I don't know if that's something that ever happened in other countries, that during a war, people say we have to change our leadership right now. But this is what's happening today. And the journalists are covering that, very bravely. So right now, again, as I said, the focus is still mainly about the hostages and the protest of the family and the Israeli movement to, remove and replace Netanyahu. The aftermath of October 7th and also the escalation in the North. I didn't see much reports about that, but there is a war in the north of Israel. There are thousands of people that were evacuated from their house. There has been shooting back and forth almost every day. And also right now, which is very current, is the threat, the real threat, from Iran that is being on the top headlines. And as well, thank you so much for your time. I really appreciate it.

Dawn Garcia [00:34:17] Thank you so much, Efrat. Okay. And last on the panel today, and then we might have time for a question or two, or maybe not, is Manasseh Azure Awuni who's the founding chief and editor of the Fourth Estate Ghana and he is a Nieman Fellow at Harvard. Welcome.

Manasseh Azure Awuni [00:34:41] Good morning and thanks to ISOJ for this invitation. In June 2016, Ghana's Minister for Communications called me late in the night. He wanted to send armed police to my house. I'd broken a story that implicated the President of the Republic, and the opposition in Parliament was initiating an impeachment proceedings against the president. The state's anti-corruption agency was also investigating the precedents, and the governing party was afraid of losing the next election, which was less than four months away. The minister's fear was that I could be attacked. He said the story was significant and if anything happened to me, all accusing fingers would be pointed at the government and there was no way they could extricate themselves from any blame. I rejected the offer for police protection. I knew my job was dangerous, but the Ghana I had lived and worked in wasn't yet so dangerous for me to accept police protection. Fast forward, the president lost that election and part of the reason was the stories I did. A new government and president came into office in January 2017. In 2017, I reported the first death threats against my life to the police. In 2019, I was compelled to leave Ghana for South Africa with my family because of death threats. In 2020, I was forced to leave Ghana for Germany because of death threats. Between 2019 and 2021, I drove to work with armed police in my vehicle. This time, I couldn't say no to the government's protection because the risk was real. In 2021, I started to see a clinical psychologist for therapy. Because



years of danger were actually getting to me and I remember my wife crying one morning and saying, "I'm too young to be a widow." Part of the recommendation from the psychologist was that I take a break from work. That break resulted in my move to the United States of America as a Nieman Journalism Fellow at Harvard. Another evidence of Ghana's press freedom woes is the country's ranking. On Reporters Without Borders World Press Freedom Index Ghana fell from the position of 30 in the world in 2021 to 60 in 2022, to 62 in 2023, our worst in the history of the country. So why have things changed? Ghana's constitution guarantees and protects media freedom and freedom of expression within a period of the Western conditions. No new laws against press freedom have been passed. In fact, Ghana passed the Rights Information Law within the period after almost 20 years of civil society advocacy. The conditions for media freedom worsened because, as it happens in most parts of Africa, democracy exists only in name and not in practice. And strong men and women hold sway over weak institutions. The institutions that are supposed to protect journalists sometimes act against journalists with impunity. The police in my country are often used to harass journalists using the law on publishing false news, but do not deal with those who assault or threaten journalists. All the times I've been threatened and I reported to the police, nothing ever came out. As a result, the media in Ghana remains very vibrant, but not many media organizations and journalists are prepared to do critical journalism, what I call true journalism. The young journalists I train and sometimes I'm invited to universities to teach, have a strong appetite for the kind of journalism I do. They love the impact and the goodwill that comes with it. In the past ten years, four persons have gone to jail for stories I investigated and dozens of government officials have lost their jobs. The government passed the law in 2015 after my investigation and in 2018 abolished one law. Some corrupt companies have collapsed and Ghana's head of public procurement was dismissed by the president after my investigation proved that he was engaged in the very corruption the state appointed him to fight. He is currently being prosecuted on corruption charges. In 2017, the president canceled a \$74 million contract because of my investigation. And as I speak now, Ghana's president has suspended a \$500 million contract for a story I published in December and asked KPMG to conduct an audit. The powerful in society hate these wakes, but the people appreciate them. And then journalists want to be respected for this kind of work. So why would journalists in Ghana shy away from the kind of journalism they admire? It's too dangerous. They often see and they are right. In 2018, a member of the governing party, who is also a member of Parliament, put the photograph of an undercover agent on national television. And told his viewers his name and then where he lived. He asked them to attack this journalist wherever they found him, and that he would be held responsible for the attack. That reporter Ahmed Swali was shot and killed a few months later, and nobody, I mean, no single person, has been held accountable. The result of these attacks is that journalists and media owners now stay away from true journalism, and that further threatens the survival of our democracy. The state's accountability institutions have been co-opted and corrupted by the ruling class, and without the journalism that holds the powerful to account, we are likely to deteriorate further. Unfortunately, the noose around the neck of press freedom is getting tighter and tighter every passing day. This is the state of journalism in Ghana, which is considered the beacon of democracy in Africa. We are considered the gold standard in that troubled region. And if gold is rusting, then we must be worried about what happens to aluminum. Thank you very much.

Dawn Garcia [00:43:03] Okay. Wait. Excuse me. We have heard some amazing, excellent presentations from some very courageous journalists. I'd like you to give a round of applause to our panel Ángel, Faisal, Manasseh and Efrat, thank you so much.