



CITY UNIVERSITY
LONDON



Center for Global Studies



PennState
Institute for Information Policy

Freedom of Information in Crisis Zones

**A by-invitation experts' workshop to be held at
City University London
May 26-27, 2016**

While freedom of information is a critical issue in nations around the globe, nowhere is it more contested than in zones facing social, ethnic and political stress, or experiencing armed conflict, or in emergency situations emanating from natural or human-induced disasters. That is the theme of this Workshop.

In countries and sub-national regions in conflict, control of information becomes a tool in the broader conflict. Competing parties regularly seek to manage information to control conflicts internally through limiting flows to various parties and controlling access to leaders, and externally by influencing international perceptions of legitimacy. Even in regions and countries deemed stable and democratic, journalists and purveyors of information through “new media” often find themselves under pressure, both during calm and emergencies, to provide certain information and refrain from providing other. At the same time, media advocates seek to use media and information technologies to deliver information and assistance to people in distress and danger, and to seek reconciliation between social groups in conflict.

The challenges to freedom of information in conflict zones and during times of national and local emergency are unique and call for both empirical inquiry and theoretical insight by the scholarly community. While much attention has been given in the literature to the justifications for and methods of achieving freedom of information in functioning democracies, it seems that the rapid changes in the global landscape for both natural and political reasons call for an understanding of the unique information needs created by extreme circumstances and the policies required to sustain the free flow of information.

The Institute for Information Policy and the Center for Global Studies at Penn State University, the Centre for Law, Justice & Journalism at City University London, and the Journal of Information Policy are pleased to announce this call for paper proposals on “Freedom of Information in Crisis Zones.” Scholars and practitioners are invited to showcase their latest research and programs aimed to facilitate information flows in conflict and danger zones. This includes, but is not limited to, the rights and protection of all journalists and media to freely upload information and images from conflict zones, as well as under threat from political adversity and pressures. Bringing together academics, advocacy groups, and practitioners, the

workshop will seek to highlight best practices to promote the free flow of information, new technologies for enhancing internet freedoms and the protection of journalists.

Authors of selected papers will be invited to present them during a two day (May 26-27, 2016) by-invitation workshop designed to bring together up to a dozen international experts, to be held at City University London. Presenters at the workshop will be subsequently invited to submit their completed papers for review by the Journal of Information Policy (www.jip-online.org). A respondent will be assigned to each paper chosen for the workshop and a 1-hour time slot including presentation, response and discussion will be awarded to each paper.

This workshop is part of a series of semi-annual workshops, organized by the IIP since 2011. For programs of previous workshops see: <http://comm.psu.edu/research/centers/iip/conferences-and-workshops>.

Topics of papers may include, but are not limited to issues such as:

- Peace theory and role of media and information in social reconciliation
- Media and peace communications and conflict resolution
- Role of social media in political and ethnic conflict
- Rights of journalists and media persons in conflict zones
- Cross-national analyses of press freedom and freedom of information
- Professionalism, journalistic values and ethics of conflict and crisis coverage
- Documentation and analysis of incidences of violence against media persons
- Technological enhancements of privacy and security, through encryption and data protection
- International trade in encryption technologies
- Government surveillance and the rights of citizens
- International treaties on rights of media organizations to uplink/downlink information
- Practice and ethics of “embedded” reporting
- International news reporting and diplomatic efforts in aid of peace
- Internet landing rights for international data carriers
- Free flows of information on the Internet; reconciliation of rights to information and national security

Abstracts of up to 500 words and a short bio of the author(s) should be submitted to pennstateiip@psu.edu by March 25, 2016. Accepted presenters will be notified by April 8 on the acceptance of their paper and will need to commit to provide an advanced draft of their study by May 15, 2016, to allow selected respondents to read and prepare thoughtful comments in order to elicit a meaningful conversation. Please write IIP_CITYLONDON: YOUR NAME in the subject line.