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Session

**The false fight against fake news –
Anti-disinformation laws and press freedom**

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SPEAKERS



Dr Janjira Sombatpoonsiri

Janjira Sombatpoonsiri is Assistant Professor at the Institute of Asian Studies, Chulalongkorn University (Thailand), and an Associate at the German Institute for Global and Area Studies.

She is originally from Thailand and has done extensive research on civil society activism, civic space and digital repression in autocracies. Her academic articles appear in several academic journals. She has also published the book „Humor and Nonviolent Struggle in Serbia“ (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2015) about pro-democracy movements in Serbia. Ms Sombatpoonsiri is also a member of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace’s Civic Research Network and Digital Democracy Network.



Barbara Trionfi

Barbara Trionfi is Executive Director of the International Press Institute (IPI) in Vienna. She joined the organisation in 2000, as a press freedom adviser for the Asia-Pacific region, where she had previously studied and worked for over four years, carrying out research in the field of human rights and freedom of expression. Later, as press freedom manager, she oversaw IPI’s global press freedom monitoring and coordinated IPI’s global advocacy.

With an academic background in international relations and human rights, Barbara has taught courses at Webster University, Vienna, in Media Ethics, Media Literacy and Cultural Diversity and the Media.



Frank Hofmann

Frank Hofmann is a Berlin-based, roving Senior Correspondent for Deutsche Welle and an author focused on Transatlantic Relations, European Integration, Eastern Europe, and the Balkans. He moved to Berlin following the fall of the Berlin Wall, and has spent most of his subsequent career investigating post-Cold War issues. As DW’s correspondent and bureau chief in the Ukrainian capital Kyiv, Hofman established the first permanent representation of a German TV organization there. He was one of DW’s European correspondents in Brussels for five years. After that, he was posted to Ukraine to cover the post-Maidan period and the war in Eastern Ukraine’s Donbas region.

BACKGROUND

During the Covid-19 pandemic, many governments have used crisis response as a pretext for restricting civil rights and freedom of expression. The sharp increase in “fake news” has prompted governments to enact strict anti-disinformation laws. However, these can also be abused to crack down on free press.

India, Thailand and Singapore are examples where journalists have been accused of spreading “fake news” when diverging from the government position. This criminalizes independent journalism and leads to „shifting baselines“ of what level of authoritarianism is acceptable. How can journalists deal with this, and how can they be supported?

PANELISTS

Dr Janjira Sombatpoonsiri

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PUBLICATIONS



GLOBAL TRENDS. ANALYSIS 03|2021

Aligning AI Governance Globally:
Lessons from current practice
Amandeep Singh Gill
December 2021, 28 pages

Considering data and artificial intelligence (AI) as global commons could be crucial in ensuring that these key technologies of the 21st century benefit all of humanity. However, efforts of AI development and governance across the world have so far been highly fragmented. This results not only in risks but also in missed opportunities. In GLOBAL TRENDS. ANALYSIS 3|2021, Amandeep Singh Gill describes how a holistic commons approach, shared vocabulary and values and digital public infrastructures could be powerful ways to better align the governance of AI globally and unleash its potential.



GLOBAL TRENDS. ANALYSIS 02|2021

Let's speak law!
A call for a legally embedded multilateralism
Heike Krieger
December 2021, 25 pages

For some time now, multilateralism, which is embedded in international law, has come under pressure. However, protracted turbulences and ambivalences which sometimes point in diametrically opposed directions create space for political actors. In GLOBAL TRENDS. ANALYSIS 2|2021, Heike Krieger calls on EU member states to promote favourable trends for stabilising the international order. To this end, they should prefer a legally embedded type of multilateralism over informal network structures of the like-minded. This will require these states to act consistently, credibly and compliantly and to continuously negotiate for shared understandings of international law, in particular with the Global South.



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