



**For Immediate Release**

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## **World Press Freedom Day 2011 Website Opens Registration and Event Agenda to the Public**

*Conference will explore new innovations to advance press freedom in the 21<sup>st</sup> century*

**Washington, DC (Monday, April 4, 2011)** -- The Steering Committee for World Press Freedom Day 2011 today announced the launch of [www.wpfd2011.org](http://www.wpfd2011.org), unveiling the event's agenda and opening registration to the public for this historic gathering. The program for the event, to be held May 1-3 in Washington, DC, is built around this year's World Press Freedom Day theme, "21st Century Media: New Frontiers, New Barriers." Dynamic conversations, informative presentations and commemorative events will be held at the Newseum, the National Press Club, and other venues in Washington, DC. Registered attendees will have the opportunity to take part in more than 15 plenary and interactive breakout sessions covering topics ranging from "Social Media: The New News Network?" to "New Barriers: Censorship in the Digital Age".

World Press Freedom Day is celebrated every year on May 3 worldwide. The United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) organizes World Press Freedom Day commemorations to celebrate the fundamental principles of media freedom, assess long-standing and emerging threats to these free expression rights and pay tribute to journalists and activists who have risked their own safety to advance the public's access to news and information. The U.S. Department of State is the host of World Press Freedom Day 2011, which marks the first time UNESCO's official proceedings are being held in the United States.

[The Director-General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova, said](#), "The program for World Press Freedom Day 2011 is designed to foster a global conversation around some of the most important questions of our time and to support people around the world who are on the front lines working to advance free expression. Together, we will explore both the opportunities and threats to freedom of the press brought by new technologies and social networks. World Press Freedom Day 2011 will offer a forum for media freedom advocates, journalists, and policymakers to tackle these challenges and keep them on the global agenda."

Keynote speakers at the event will include UNESCO Director General Irina Bokova, U.S. Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Judith McHale, and U.S. Under Secretary of State for Democracy and Global Affairs Maria Otero. Among the more than 80 additional speakers are the leading voices on the front lines advancing and protecting press freedom around the world, including Bob Woodward, Associate Editor, Washington Post; Wael Abbas, Blogger, Misr Digital (Egypt); Oscar Morales Guevara, Creator, Facebook group, “One Million Voices against FARC” (Colombia); and Xiao Qiang, Director, China Internet Project, UC-Berkeley; Founder and Editor, China Digital Times.

Among the highlights of the event will be the presentation of the UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize. The award ceremony, recognizing a person, organization, or institution that has made an important contribution to promote press freedom, will be held at the National Press Club in Washington, DC on May 3. [For a complete agenda of the sessions, please click here.](#)

Registration is free and open, but space is limited. For World Press Freedom Day 2011 event registration information, please visit [www.wpfd2011.org](http://www.wpfd2011.org). Many sessions will be live streamed online for those unable to attend in person. Partnerships with Washington, DC-area universities and specialized press centers will provide additional opportunities for members of the media and bloggers to engage in World Press Freedom Day activities. Members of the media who would like to cover the events may register at <http://wpfd2011.org/press-registration>.

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### **About World Press Freedom Day**

World Press Freedom Day is celebrated every year on May 3 worldwide. The United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) organizes World Press Freedom Day commemorations to celebrate the fundamental principles of press freedom; to evaluate press freedom, to defend the media from attacks on their independence and to pay tribute to journalists who have lost their lives in the line of duty. In December 1993, the UN General Assembly proclaimed May 3 as World Press Freedom Day. Since then, it has been celebrated each year on May 3, the anniversary of the Declaration of Windhoek, a statement of free press principles as put together by newspaper journalists in Africa during a UNESCO seminar on “Promoting an Independent and Pluralistic African Press” in Windhoek, Namibia in 1991. The declaration calls for free, independent, pluralistic media worldwide characterizing free press as essential to democracy and a fundamental human right.

### ***World Press Freedom Day 2011***

This year’s World Press Freedom Day conference will take place May 1-3 at the Newseum and National Press Club in Washington DC. It will feature innovative journalists, donors, and researchers who focus on digital media and the new opportunities—and threats—to freedom of expression that lie in the use of new technologies and social networks. The conference is organized jointly by [UNESCO](#), the [U.S. Department of State](#), the [Center for International Media Assistance at the National Endowment for Democracy](#), [IREX](#), and the [United Nations Foundation](#).