



May 3, 2021

## **World Press Freedom Day Message from CWA Canada President Martin O’Hanlon**

We mark another World Press Freedom Day amid a continuing pandemic, but with the hope that the worst is over and things will soon improve.

We mourn the media workers who have lost their lives due to COVID-19 and pay tribute to the thousands of others who continue to provide vital news and information, often risking their own health to do so.

The pandemic has shown the importance of journalism and how critical it is that people get reliable news about what’s really happening and what we should be doing.

Disturbingly, the crisis has exacerbated an already troubling situation, with freedom of expression under serious threat from governments around the globe. It is vital that journalists and trusted news sources are protected and supported.

CWA Canada has been speaking out and fighting back daily in defence of press freedom, on social media, and by pressuring governments directly and through our work with the International Federation of Journalists and other groups.

On a positive note, at the Global Conference for Media Freedom last fall, government ministers called for new measures to protect media workers, and urged “targeted sanctions” against those who repress journalists and restrict media freedom.

CWA Canada was one of the first organizations to urge such sanctions and we’re glad to see the development, but calling for a sanctions regime does not mean member states will actually follow through. We must step up the pressure on individual countries to introduce sanctions legislation, and Canada should set an example by being among the first to do so.

We will continue the fight for press freedom in 2021. It’s a fight we can’t afford to lose.

As journalism goes, so goes democracy.