Report

Visit to London

Period: 9 to 13 July 2019

Summary:
A free and independent media plays a vital role in protecting human rights and holding the powerful to account. Media freedom is the lifeblood of democracy and can be the foundation for economic prosperity and social development. It means that society can be free, fair and open. Journalistic scrutiny is an essential part of a vibrant and healthy democracy.

The UK and Canada are committed to promoting media freedom across the globe. It is an essential component of economic prosperity, social development and resilient democracies. It is a right to which all governments have committed, as enshrined in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: "freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers."

The Global Conference for Media Freedom held during 10-11 July 2019, is part of an international campaign that launched, intended to respond to the UN Secretary General's call "to protect journalists and media workers, and to create the conditions they need to do their essential work, and to investigate and prosecute the perpetrators of attacks on them".

The campaign aims to:
- shine a spotlight on media freedom everywhere, increasing the costs to those violating it;
- improve the safety of journalists and media workers and their ability to work without interference, reducing attacks on journalists and easing state restrictions on freedom of media and expression.

The Global Conference for Media Freedom in London, co-hosted with Canada, brought together 65 ministers including British Foreign Minister Jeremy Hunt, Canada's Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland and Bangladesh State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shahriar Alam and around 1,500 journalists, activists and academics from 100 different countries. Bangladesh High Commissioner to UK Saida Muna Tasneem, Press Minister and other officials of the High Commission attended the conference.

The participants made pledges to act together for protecting press freedom and cooperation between states on responding to specific cases. The conference also proposed to kick-start a global fund to provide legal advice and safety training to journalists and further help to independent media.

Participating countries signed a "Global Pledge on Media Freedom" in which they committed to stand together to intervene at the highest level with the governments of countries where media freedom is at risk and to show solidarity with countries that work to build media freedom. "Attacks on media freedom are attacks on human rights", the pledge mentioned. Press Minister of Bangladesh High Commission to UK signed the document on behalf of Bangladesh.

MRDI's Executive Director Hasibur Rahman, General Secretary of National Press Club Farida Yasmin, Special Correspondent of Ekattor TV Farzana Rupa and other delegates from Bangladesh attended the conference.

Hasibur Rahman attended the plenary sessions and took part in the discussions of the parallel workshops. He availed the opportunity of sharing ideas with the participating journalists from different countries. He also interacted with the Bangladeshi journalists located in London.

Travel dates:
Left Dhaka- Tuesday, 9 July via Qatar airways
Returned to Dhaka- Saturday, 13 July via Qatar airways

Enclosed:
- Program schedule

Programme Schedule

Day 1 – Wednesday 10 July 2019

	Plenary Hall	Editorial Room (Parallel session)	Publishing Room (Parallel session)	Features Room (Parallel Session)	Boardroom (Invitation Only Partner Events)
From 07:00	Arrival & refreshments				
09.00-10.20	Transforming Media Development	Launch of the Joint Declaration on Freedom of Expression	Trust in the Media: the UK in Focus	Media Freedom in the Americas: Challenges and Opportunities	Media Freedom in the Western Balkans and New Ways of Working
10.20-11.00	Break				
11.00-12.20	Media Ownership IS Media Independence: A Debate	Regional Mechanisms on the Safety of Journalists	Under Pressure: Why Public Media Matters	Safety of Female Journalists	Media Donor Event
12.20-13.20	Lunch				
13.20- 14.40	Safety and Protection of Journalists 1: Understanding the Contemporary Threats	Innovation to End Journalist Murders	Supporting Media Freedom in Challenging Environments	Protecting Journalists in Conflict Zones in the Middle East and North Africa	International Partnership for Information and Democracy (Open Event)
14:40-15:15	Break				
15:15- 16:45	Day 1 Plenary & Press Conference Media Freedom: Journalists Under Threat	Plenary in Session	Day 1 Plenary & Press Conference Media Freedom: Journalists Under Threat (Overflow)	Plenary in Session	Plenary in Session

Day 2 – Thursday 11 July 2019

	Plenary Hall	Editorial Room (Parallel session)	Publishing Room (Parallel session)	Features Room (Parallel Session)	Boardroom (Invitation Only Partner Events)
From 07:00	Arrival & refreshments				
09.45-10.45	Day 2 Plenary What is Media Freedom: Why is it Important?	Plenary in Session	Day 2 Plenary What is Media Freedom: Why is it important? (Overflow)	Plenary in Session	Plenary in Session
10.45-11.25	Break				
11.25-12.45	National & Regional Statements	What Can Governments do to Increase Media Sustainability?	Taking a Stand: How We Defend Media Freedom	Asia Region Case Study Laws, Lies and Liberty – the Landscape of Media Freedom in South-East Asia	Media Freedom Campaign: Towards 2020 – Sustaining the Impact
12.45-13.45		Lunch			
13.45- 15.05		Navigating Disinformation	Religion and the Media: Telling the Untold Story	Strengthening Media Freedom across the Commonwealth	Legal Panel
15:05-15:35		Break			
15:35- 16:55		Safety and Protection of Journalists II: Towards a Shared Solution	Eastern Europe and Central Asia: Building an Integrated Support System for Journalists Facing Hostile Environments	Press Freedom, Development and Democracy in Africa	Council of Europe Parliamentarian Session (Open Event)
17.10-17.30	Closing Remarks				