

1. Journalism is one of the most dangerous professions on the planet. Discuss, using at least TWO examples to make your case.

Journalism is an essential component of democratic societies, functioning as a vital channel for information dissemination, fostering accountability, and facilitating public discourse (João Canavilhas, Eva Campos Domínguez & Berta García Orosa 2023). However, this esteemed profession is riddled with inherent hazards that not only endanger the safety of journalists but also pose a threat to the core tenets of press freedom and democracy. Whether on the frontlines of conflict zones or within the corridors of power, journalists navigate a perilous terrain where the pursuit of truth often comes with significant personal risk (Dusterhoft 2013). They are subjected to physical dangers, such as violence, intimidation, and harassment, particularly when covering sensitive topics like corruption, human rights violations, and political dissent. Journalists operating in conflict zones or areas of civil unrest face an elevated risk of harm, including injury, abduction, or even loss of life, while documenting unfolding events (Tumber 2006). Furthermore, journalists confront legal obstacles and censorship imposed by governments, influential individuals, and corporate entities aiming to manipulate information dissemination and suppress dissenting voices (João Canavilhas, Eva Campos Domínguez & Berta García Orosa 2023). They may encounter legal repercussions such as lawsuits, arbitrary detentions, and censorship measures designed to stifle critical reporting and undermine press freedom. Additionally, journalists grapple with psychological stressors resulting from exposure to traumatic events, disturbing content, and the relentless pressure to meet stringent deadlines in high-stress environments (Feinstein, Owen & Blair 2002). Despite these formidable challenges, journalists remain resolute in their dedication to uncovering truths, amplifying marginalised perspectives, and safeguarding the principles of an unfettered and impartial press.

Journalism plays a crucial role in society by serving as a watchdog, ensuring accountability, and facilitating the dissemination of vital information necessary for an informed populace. It serves as a cornerstone of democratic governance, providing a platform for a variety of perspectives, fostering public dialogue, and advocating for transparency and responsibility in governance (João Canavilhas, Eva Campos Domínguez & Berta García Orosa 2023). Journalists delve into truths, bring corruption to light, and amplify the voices of marginalised groups, thus contributing to the advancement of social equity and democratic ideals.

Nevertheless, journalists encounter significant hazards and perils in their profession. They face physical dangers, including violence, threats, and harassment, especially when reporting on sensitive subjects such as corruption, human rights violations, and political opposition. As mentioned above, those reporting from conflict zones or areas of civil unrest are at a heightened risk of harm, including injury, abduction, or even death while documenting events firsthand (Tumber 2006). Additionally, journalists struggle with legal hurdles and censorship from governmental authorities, influential individuals, and corporate entities seeking to manipulate the flow of information and stifle dissenting viewpoints. They may confront legal actions, arbitrary detentions, and censorship tactics aimed at obstructing critical reporting and undermining press freedom (Frost 2015). Furthermore, journalists contend with psychological stressors arising from exposure to traumatic events, distressing content, and the relentless pressure to meet deadlines in demanding environments. Despite these hazards, journalists persist in their dedication to uncovering truths and safeguarding the principles of a liberated and impartial press.

One example would be Jamal Khashoggi, a notable Saudi Arabian journalist born in Medina in 1958, gained prominence for his critical stance on the Saudi government and advocacy for political reforms (Rugman 2019). Beginning his journalistic career in the 1980s, he worked for various Saudi newspapers and later became an editor at several leading publications within the Kingdom. Despite previously advising senior Saudi officials, including Prince Turki Al Faisal, Khashoggi transitioned to full-time journalism, utilising his platform to champion greater political freedoms and human rights in Saudi Arabia. His writings, published in esteemed international outlets such as The Washington Post, amplified his global influence. Tragically, Khashoggi's murder on October 2, 2018, within the Saudi consulate in Istanbul, Turkey, exposed the extreme risks faced by journalists who confront authoritarian regimes. Despite entering the consulate to obtain marriage documents, Khashoggi never emerged alive. Turkish authorities later unveiled the gruesome details of his assassination by a team of Saudi operatives dispatched from Riyadh. The brutality of his murder, including reports of dismemberment, incited widespread international condemnation. This horrific event shed light on the perilous conditions confronting journalists who challenge authoritative powers (Milanovic 2020). Accusations pointed toward Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman orchestrating the assassination, leading to strained diplomatic relations between Saudi Arabia and various Western nations. Khashoggi's murder served as a stark reminder of the inadequate protections afforded to

journalists operating beyond their native borders, particularly in regions with restricted press freedoms (Milanovic 2020). Overall, Khashoggi's tragic demise underscored the urgent need for enhanced international attention and measures to safeguard journalists, uphold press freedom, and ensure accountability in an increasingly hostile media landscape.

Anna Politkovskaya, a prominent Russian journalist renowned for her fearless investigative reporting and steadfast dedication to uncovering truths in the turbulent political landscape of post-Soviet Russia, offers another compelling example. Born in New York City in 1958 to a Soviet diplomat, Politkovskaya pursued journalism studies at Moscow State University, embarking on a career that would solidify her as a leading figure in Russian journalism. She garnered global acclaim for her bold coverage of human rights violations, government corruption, and the brutality of the Chechen conflict (Finkelstein 2008). Serving as a correspondent for the Russian newspaper *Novaya Gazeta*, she meticulously documented the atrocities committed by Russian forces and Chechen rebels during the two Chechen wars.

Politkovskaya's groundbreaking investigative journalism was characterised by her willingness to venture into dangerous and remote regions of conflict, where she conducted interviews with victims, documented human rights abuses, and held powerful figures accountable. Her reporting brought attention to extrajudicial killings, forced disappearances, and the plight of civilians caught in the crossfire of war, cementing her reputation as a courageous and principled journalist. However, her steadfast commitment to truth-telling ultimately proved fatal. On October 7, 2006, she was tragically discovered shot dead in the elevator of her Moscow apartment building, just one day before her 48th birthday. Her assassination reverberated globally, shining a spotlight on the grave risks faced by journalists who challenge authoritarian regimes and expose corruption and human rights abuses (Thompson 2017). The ramifications of Politkovskaya's murder extended far beyond Russia's borders, highlighting the erosion of press freedom and the rule of law under President Vladimir Putin's regime. Her death underscored the perilous environment for journalists who dare to confront power and speak truth to authority, while also exposing the impunity enjoyed by those who seek to silence dissent through violence and intimidation. Politkovskaya's legacy serves as a stark reminder of the essential role of a free press in upholding democratic values and holding governments accountable, even in the face of grave personal risk (Arkhangelsky 2016).

The dangers faced by journalists have far-reaching implications for press freedom, democracy, and the public's right to access reliable information. When journalists are threatened, intimidated, or silenced, it undermines the core principles of a free press and weakens democratic institutions (Tumber 2006). Firstly, the erosion of press freedom restricts the ability of journalists to investigate and report on critical issues without fear of reprisal. This restriction hampers the public's access to diverse perspectives and reliable information, essential for making informed decisions in a democratic society (Musgrave 2021). Without a free press, the public may be deprived of crucial information needed to hold those in power accountable and participate meaningfully in the democratic process. Furthermore, the suppression of press freedom empowers authoritarian regimes to control the flow of information and suppress dissent. By silencing journalists and censoring media outlets, authoritarian governments can manipulate public discourse, shape narratives, and consolidate power (Musgrave 2021). This manipulation of information undermines the democratic principles of transparency, accountability, and the free exchange of ideas, leading to the erosion of public trust in government institutions. Additionally, the dangers faced by journalists contribute to a deterring effect, where journalists self-censor or avoid covering sensitive topics to protect themselves from harm (Tumber 2006). This self-censorship diminishes the diversity of viewpoints in media coverage and stifles public debate on critical issues. As a result, citizens may be deprived of comprehensive and accurate information, hindering their ability to engage in informed civic discourse and make informed choices in a democracy.

In conclusion, the essay highlights the perilous landscape journalists navigate in their pursuit of truth and accountability, underscoring the inherent risks they face in challenging power dynamics and exposing injustices. The examples of Jamal Khashoggi and Arman Soldin illustrate the grave consequences journalists may encounter when confronting authoritarian regimes and advocating for political reforms. The dangers faced by journalists not only jeopardise their personal safety but also undermine the core principles of press freedom and democratic governance. When journalists are threatened, intimidated, or silenced, it restricts the public's access to diverse perspectives and reliable information essential for informed decision-making in a democratic society. The erosion of press freedom empowers authoritarian regimes to manipulate public discourse, suppress dissent, and control the flow of information, ultimately weakening democratic institutions and eroding public trust in government.

Furthermore, the deterring effect of journalist intimidation and self-censorship diminishes the diversity of viewpoints in media coverage, stifling public debate on critical issues and hindering citizens' ability to engage in informed civic discourse. As a result, the importance of protecting press freedom and supporting journalists in their vital role as watchdogs and advocates for transparency cannot be overstated. Safeguarding press freedom is essential for upholding democratic values, fostering accountability, and ensuring the public's right to access reliable information. The tragic examples of Jamal Khashoggi and Arman Soldin serve as sobering reminders of the dangers journalists face and the critical need to protect their safety and uphold the principles of a free and independent press in safeguarding democracy and human rights.

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