

# Foreign Desk Ltd.

## Integrity Initiative

*Independent journalism in hostile places or How to report Repressive Regimes and survive*

We're happy for this event to be co-branded between Foreign Desk and the Integrity Initiative and our directors to play a full role in the **design and delivery** of the event. After discussing the possible themes, we feel we should pick six session topics but then allow their format and content to be influenced by preliminary discussions with the agreed speakers.

Our initial suggestions for speakers are set out below.

The broad topics should be: Disinformation, corruption, harassment and intimidation - and the journalistic principles and skills essential to surviving them: ethics, fairness and accuracy, digital hygiene and cyber safety, knowledge of domestic law.

The speaker suggestions below cover all these bases.

### Speakers selection/possibilities so far:

- **Ukraine/Russia/CIS:** Natalia Antelava, founder of Tbilisi-based Codastory. She has reported the Russian invasion of Georgia, East Ukraine war, and carried out undercover investigations in Burma, Yemen and Uzbekistan. Codastory has focussed on uncovering fake news and human rights abuses in Russia and the CIS countries.  
**Ukraine:** StopFake or Detektor journalist
- **Turkey:** Turkish journalist Tunca Örgreten who was arrested in December 2016 on terrorism charges for revealing how its energy minister was involved in corrupt oil trade with ISIS. <http://www.mediafiledc.com/journalist-tunca-orgreten-one-year-turkish-prison-now-awaits-trial/>  
**Turkey:** Murat Subancu, son of jailed Cumhuriyet editor
- **Pakistan:** Taha Siddiqui fled Pakistan earlier this year after he escaped a kidnap attempt by deep state security personnel as he took a taxi to the airport. It followed several years of harassment over his critical reporting of Army abuses and the disappearances of journalists and opposition figures in Balochistan
- **Sri Lanka;** Frederica Jansz, - a Sunday Leader journalist whose editor was shot dead over his critical reporting of the Rajapaksa regime during the civil war, she succeeded him only to suffer the same harassment which led to his murder. She was taken out of the country with US diplomatic protection after intelligence that she was about to be shot. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frederica\\_Jansz](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frederica_Jansz)
- **Burma:** Vicky Bowman, former UK ambassador, on continuing oppression or a journalist through Mark Farmaner of Burma Campaign UK or Shelley Thakral, ex BBC Delhi bureau chief, now World Food Programme in Burma
- **Hungary:** Andras Muranyi, editor of left wing paper Nepszabadsag, which was suspended before being sold off to an ally of Viktor Orban
- **Bangladesh:** David Bergman, journalist on the New Age forced to leave Bangladesh over his independent reporting of the country's flawed war crime trials and executions. Or Mahfuz Anam, editor of the Daily Star, who has been under intense government pressure over critical reporting on the prime minister.

Comment [VM1]: Does this include organisation?

- **Malta:** Charlie's contact
- **Former CGHQ cyber specialist**
- **Human rights lawyer from Bangladesh or Pakistan**

We will contact all of the above in collaboration with you and confirm their suitability/availability etc and explore what they would want to contribute to ensure the widest possible coverage of the issues.

It is equally important that the overseas participants are drawn from similar countries where honest and independent journalism is under threat and that their experiences are heard and shared in an active and practice-focused discussion: We need their experiences and challenge to be addressed by the speakers in a workshop-style atmosphere aimed at sending them home with more understanding of their options than when they arrived.

#### Cluster countries/Journalists:

- Ukraine/Russia/CIS
- Turkey
- Burma
- Pakistan
- Malta
- Sri Lanka
- Bangladesh
- Hungary

#### Young UK journalists

There should, if possible, be some young journalists or current students from the city of London University's journalism post-graduate course who have chosen international journalism as a specialism along with other trainees or young career journalists who have shown an interest in international issues and misinformation. We would be able to contact Sue Ryan, Paul Dunn, Jason Lewis and Mary Braid – all top journalists and journalism professors, for recommendations. These young journalists should benefit from hearing directly the challenges faced by their counterparts in more restrictive and repressive countries and they might later report them as foreign correspondents.

**Foreign Desk** directors Dean Nelson, Damien McElroy and Alex Spillius will all be available to **introduce and moderate sessions** along with other journalists on your lists. They will also be able to produce an **introductory brochure setting** out the challenges different journalists face and some of the strategies they have used which could be discussed in the sessions. We will also suggest names for a relevant **speaker for the first night dinner**.

#### Rapporteur service

Foreign Desk will provide a reporter to produce a verbatim transcript of the sessions which will be used to produce a report on the event's discussions and the most important matters which arise from it – the challenges journalists face in hostile countries, the strategies they've used which have helped them and what help they feel could be useful in helping them do their jobs better and more safely.

**Comment [VM2]:** Most of these aren't even Cluster countries – can I justify spending ££ on strengthening media there? Don't get me wrong: any help we can provide these and other colleagues is a win in my books but I'm trying to anticipate how the Sponsor may see the relevance of speakers from some of these countries.

**Comment [VM3]:** Excellent idea

**Comment [VM4]:** Two rapporteurs? In such dynamic settings, key insights can easily be lost – seen it happen many times, when final reports don't really capture the essence of some of the sessions. Recording sessions to help with transcription, and then destroy recordings?

## Logistics

The Institute for Statecraft will arrange accommodation, event venue and the personal support necessary for attendees and participants

**Comment [VM5]:** This really doesn't work – through our own networks we can find speakers, students, etc. A very unbalanced burden-sharing approach that FD are suggesting....

## Legacy

### Foreign Desk will

- Report on event and issues: What help journalists in repressive regimes need most and how can we help provide it?
- Explore the possibility of establishing a pilot for an Independent journalism support centre and networks
- Produce a handbook: How to report a repressive regime and survive with the best suggestions and experiences to emerge from the event to be sent to each overseas participant. It could serve as a resource for distribution online for all journalists in difficult places.

**Comment [VM6]:** This is an FD business development aim, it seems – are we sure we want to be funding their business growth? If so, how would it help us meet II KPIs?

**Comment [VM7]:** I've seen something like this before... perhaps not in a more formal setting but definitely some guidance floating around for journalists working in hostile environments. Would FD be reinventing the wheel?

Looking forward to discussing further.

Best wishes

Dean Nelson