

BACKGROUND GUIDE

INTERNATIONAL PRESS (JOURNALISTS)

Greetings to the Journalists!

On behalf of the Secretariat and Executive Board, I'd like to welcome you as part of the International Press Committee, the Secretariat of has worked extremely hard in order to turn the dream of hosting this conference into a reality.

As a Journalist, we expect you to be aware, accurate, precise, fluent, expressive and most importantly, creative in whatever task you are asked to do. We aim at not only testing your writing skills but also bringing out your creativity and multi-tasking skills.

Best of Luck to all the members!

Regards,

Samiksha Khanna

(Head of International Press)

Sakshi Jain

(Editor-in-Chief)

INSTRUCTIONS FOR JOURNALISTS

YOU CAN TAKE THESE BEST PRACTICES INTO ACCOUNT, NOT ONLY FOR THIS MUN BUT FOR OTHER MUNS AS WELL.

- All submissions need to be made in the following format:
YourName_Committee_ArticleType_Day.

For example, if I am a journalist writing a beat for UNGA on Day 1, then I submit it as:

SamikshaKhanna_UNGA_Beat_Day1.

- Each submission has to follow these specifications:
 1. Font: Size 12
 2. Font Style: Times New Roman
 3. Word Limit: for each article will be given during the conference
 4. By-lines have to be provided.

For example, “Who is a Hindu or who is a Muslim or who is a Sikh; is everyone not an Indian? Are we not one? Should we all not be Equal before the constitution? Samiksha Khanna writes on the topic of The Situation of minority groups in India.”

- Submissions will be made via email. • Re-read each submission before submission.
- The usage of grammar and punctuation must be immaculate.
- Remember, we are looking for creativity, and it is your job to ensure that the work you put forward is your creative best.
- Language used has to be simple and understandable. While using big words may seem enticing, you need to understand that not everyone understands heavy English, and even if they do they do not have the time to decipher tough words.
- The deadlines will be notified and will affect the evaluation process.

There are three things which come as a part of International Press :

1. RESEARCH:

Comprehensive research forms the basic framework of the art of reporting. A journalist in a committee needs to be well informed, rather better equipped with their research since it is not going to be country specific. Half-baked knowledge on the agendas reflects factual inconsistency in the articles. Kindly go through the background guides of your respective committees to have a better understanding of the agenda. Knowledge of current debates pertaining to the agenda is also encouraged.

2. UNITY:

The International Press team will consist of a number of reporters, who need to be working in synchronization with each other. The spirit of competitiveness should never come in the way of team-work, and all the efforts should be to publish a prosperous newsletter.

3. CODE OF CONDUCT:

Reporters are expected to maintain diplomatic courtesy at all times towards fellow members of the team, delegates, executive board and the Secretariat. Even while critically looking at council proceedings; it is imperative that respect be extended to the delegates. Frivolous reporting, like reporting on a delegate's attire or manner of speaking, is highly discouraged.

Types of Articles

Beat article

While the agenda forms the umbrella that shall reign over the committee on these two days, deliberation shall extend to every sphere of relevance. The delegates pursue all strands of contention related to the issue at hand, and seek to delve greater on this sub-topic. Beat based article is a type of article that revolves around a subject, known as the beat. It is a specialised piece which requires an in-depth research and offers more knowledge to the reader. The beat is to be taken from the proceedings and happenings of the committee and must be a topic important enough to attract readership. It will take the mantle as the core concern of the article, and the content should obsequiously conform to the central idea.

To capture the beat, ensure that you're actively present in the Committee to be able to identify the form and shape of the discussion. You can use the first-half of the day to collect data and select the core idea of your article, and utilise the remaining time to give a factual backing to the same.

- A beat based article is a specialised, factual article, and can include direct quotes from delegates, and/or statistical data.
- It has no requirement of a personal opinion, and is only restricted to the happenings in the committee around the beat, and the facts attached to the same.
- The data used in a beat-based article should use the correct data, including the names of delegates and the facts stated.
- The inclusion of factual details and direct quotes of the delegates enhances the credibility of the article.
- Once the beat is identified in the committee, the reporter also has the liberty to shed light on a segment of the topic based on his/her research.

OPINION EDITORIAL (OPED)

Opinion Editorials are articles wherein the Journalists are expected to express their own point of view. OpEds can be based on the Agenda of the committee discussion. Here, the Journalist talks not only about the discussion at hand, she/he also offers their own point of view.

We expect the Journalists to be well-read with agendas of their specific committees, so that the article put forward show their research as well as their knowledge. Having an opinion is of utmost importance in an OpEd, and this has to show through the style of writing chosen. Some of the functions that op-eds perform include, but are not restricted to:

1. Debating a proposition and/or providing rebuttals
2. Providing background and/or historical perspective on a contemporary issue
3. Highlighting aspects/dimensions that are hitherto not covered by 'news pieces'
4. Provide suggestions and/or map out a plan of action
5. Explain an idea, concept in immense detail
6. Share expertise

As mentioned above, one of the key features to an Opinion Editorial is research. One cannot form an opinion if they aren't well researched, and under-researched articles lack quality. Further, your articulation needs to be such that your point is put forward clearly. Remember, we're not looking for an essay, which is somewhat holistic and neutral in its approach- we're looking at an article that puts down your thoughts clearly, taking sides, for your opinion cannot be neutral. Constructive Criticism is of key here, i.e. putting out criticism in a manner that puts forward your thought clearly without hurting the sentiments of a Member Nation, and helps them work on the said points.

Things to keep in mind while writing an OpEd:

1. It should be based on verifiable facts, but should not necessarily contain them
2. It is bound by word limit, and hence you need to be concise and to the point.
3. It has to express opinions- however; opinions do not mean baseless arguments.
4. The number of aspects covered in an OpEd's argument is upto the author, but it is necessary to keep in mind that the argument(s) showcased are not too fuzzy.
5. Arguments should be comprehended in a manner that they lead to a final concluding paragraph and not just an abrupt ending.

Interview

Interviews are another feature of any MUN conference. These can be conducted in person or via chits, because we understand that catching hold of any delegate while the committee is going on is not possible. A "source"- anyone a journalist interviews - can provide the following elements that are vital to any news story

- basic factual information
- perspective and context on the topic being discussed
- direct quotes
- ideas on how to approach the story
- names and contact information of other people to interview

Points to remember for conducting an Interview:

- Research is necessary
- Do not necessarily stick to your prepared questions if you see the delegate giving you better, more meaningful information. • Stick to not more than 3-4 questions.
- Keep the transcribing concise and to-the-point
- Include all important information the Interviewee speaks about.
- Be natural and open about speaking on issues

Report

In an MUN conference, a report is a summary of events that have taken place in the committee. Here, however, one needs to remember that we do not expect you to write about the discussion on Rules of Procedures (RoPs)- by summary, we mean quality content that has been spoken about in the committee. Reports are formal, neutral and concise. They explain the happenings of a committee without personal bias, and Journalists have to ensure that they cover the event to its entirety. They need to ensure that someone who is not a part of the committee can still read a report to understand what is going on. Incidents may be reported, but they cannot have an opinion- this is the job of an Op-Ed article.

Feature

Features are articles where the Journalist gets to show their creativity to the maximum. Not essentially as important or relevant as an OpEd or a Report/Beat, features allow the journalist to unleash their creativity in the form of poetry, prose, diary entries, open letters and a lot more. These, however, need to be committee-centric; otherwise they do not really serve the purpose of being a part of a MUN newsletter.

Points to remember while writing a feature:

- Make them as creative as possible • Make sure they are committee-centric.
For Example, in a committee debating about the Syrian crisis, the journalist could write a feature from the point of view of the Syrian refugees, children, and etc.-the possibilities are endless.
- Features, while not heavy on research, need to reflect some knowledge of the agenda at hand.
For example, if AIPPM is discussing the Triple Talaq, a feature based on the plight of Indian women does not make sense, unless it talks specifically about Muslim women facing atrocities because of the forms of Triple Talaq.
- While we understand that limiting creativity to a word limit is not right, you have to keep in mind that this is, eventually, a newsletter, and we need to stick to a word limit.

Press Releases and Announcements

Any official communication by the Secretariat or a Press Release will have to be formally submitted to the Head of International Press. The announcement can include any important information for intimation to the delegates.

What is a press conference?

An interview given to journalists by a prominent person in order to make an announcement or answer questions. Holding a press conference is a simple, effective way to communicate your message with the media. Holding a successful press conference can generate news about your cause and awareness about your project. This section looks at the elements of planning a successful press conference, when to hold a press conference, and how best to communicate with the media and the public at a press conference. Imagine a flock of media reporters coming to an event that you have organized. This can be exciting stuff, and an important opportunity for your organization. If you've never done it before, holding a press conference can be intimidating, even frightening. But the material in this section will guide you through the process, and you'll see that it's not all that hard.

How to hold a press conference?

Before the Press Conference :

DEFINE THE MESSAGE -

Define the key message(s) that you and your group are trying to get out to the community. Your goal may be to introduce or shed more light on your issue, to announce a new program or event, to react to a news story or to a criticism of or attack on your effort, or to draw attention to an honor or award your effort has earned. Whatever the message, it should be summarized in clear 3-5 key points to the press.

SCHEDULE A PROPER TIMING –

Ask the committees' Executive Board about the timing when you can get in for the press conference. Each journalist will be provided with 10 minutes for getting press conference done.

SELECT AND FORM THE QUESTIONS –

You have to firm the question select the delegates whom you'll ask your questions. You can take follow-ups for particular question to trap the delegate. You have to inform about the questions you'll be asking, to the Executive Board.

Points to remember :

- Be clear and concise
- Always be true
- Appearance counts
- Don't fiddle with or clutch anything

Elements of Style

- **Abbreviations-** No periods should be used separating letters of an abbreviated organization or agency. Only standard acronyms and approved abbreviations should be used. Some example abbreviations include: ECOSOC, GA, HSC, ICJ, IPD, NATO, UK, UN, US, USSR.
- **Apostrophes-** This punctuation mark will only be used to indicate possessive secondary quotations. Apostrophes are never used to indicate pluralisation.

Currency- Dollar values are displayed with the appropriate currency symbol. Values on orders at or greater than one million are summarized, for example \$54,000, \$135,000 or \$214 million. Indian Rupees shall be written as INR and not Rs.

- **Capitalization-** Nowhere shall anything but Abbreviations be capitalized.

Books and print sources- Names of all books and print sources should be capitalized and italicized, such as the newsletter, *New York Times* and *The Economist*.

- **Developing nations-** Within the international community, the use of the term "third world" is actively discouraged. No nation will be referred to as "Third World."

Diplomatic courtesy- While Reporters are encouraged to faithfully report on the statements of representatives within each Excalibur MUN simulation, no quotation should violate the dictates of diplomatic courtesy. If a Reporter feels that a quotation by a representative is discourteous, the representative should be encouraged to rephrase the statement in a more courteous fashion or risk having it omitted from the Reporter's article.

- **Hyphenation-** Hyphens should only be applied according to American English grammar. If questions arise, consult the Editors. Examples of typically hyphenated prefixes include non-, sub- and ex-. Some compound words are hyphenated as well, such as socio-political.
Member States- In print, references to United Nations "Member States" should be initially capitalized.
- **Names-** Reporters should never guess the spelling of a person's name or portfolio to be reported. Verbal verification is mandatory on all named sources. Naturally, all proper names are capitalized.
- **National references-** When referring to any UN Member State or Observer, standard UN country names should be used. These names match those with which each nation signed the UN Charter. For example, the People's Republic of China should always be referred to as "China." Additionally, some national names are longer than those commonly used. For example, Libya is recognized at the UN as "Libyan Arab Jamahiriya."

Numerals- Any numeral ten or less should be spelled out in English. Numerals over ten are reported using standard Arabic numerals, such as 2001. Numerals with five or more digits should include commas, such as 1,345,000. Fractions and decimal numbers should be reported as decimal numerals or percentages, such as 0.5 or 50%. Roman numerals are used only when referring to a source which was originally designated using Roman numerals, such as Chapter VII of the UN Charter (articles of the UN Charter are written as "Article 7"). Ordinal numerals are spelled out within the text of an article, such as the First Committee of the General Assembly.

- **Percentages-** Percent symbols will be used to report percentages, for example 35.8%.
- **Quotation marks-** As per Standard English grammar, punctuation at the conclusion of quotation must always be included inside the closing quotation mark.

Quotations- All quoted statements within articles should be incorporated grammatically into the sentence being written. Additional capitalizations should be avoided. If only part of a sentence is being used in a quotation, an ellipsis (i.e. ...) should be used to indicate the omitted portions of the statement. If the ellipsis comes at the end of a sentence, it should have a period at the end as well within the quotation marks (...") to indicate the conclusion of a sentence. If, within a quotation, the speaker uses an abbreviation or reference which would be unclear to the reader, the Reporter may interject a clarification within brackets (i.e. [...]). This indicates that the bracketed information is not a direct quotation; rather it is a clarification on the part of the author.

- **Spacing-** One space is used to separate words, as well as following commas, semicolons, colons and periods.
- **Spelling-** Reporters should be sure to spell check all articles before the editorial deadline. This will greatly assist the Editor.

Marking criteria for Reporters

1) Quality of Content; 2) Punctuality 3) Coherence and grammar; 4) Research 5) Fluency