



***Media Freedom in the Commonwealth.***  
**Wednesday 18 November, 9.00 am – 7.30 pm GMT**  
**Online via Zoom**

Following the success of our ‘Taking Stock of the Commonwealth’ online conference in June, the Institute of Commonwealth Studies (ICwS) will be holding another day-long virtual conference on Wednesday 18 November, specifically focused on the issue of Media Freedom. Over a third of Commonwealth states are in the bottom half of the World Press Freedom Index 2020, but every member faces challenges in this area, and the issue of media freedom is one of the key concerns of the ICwS. The conference will consist of five regionally-based panels drawing on first-hand accounts from journalists based in a series of Commonwealth countries. Issues raised will include:

- The relationship between an effective media and democratic accountability;
- Dangers posed by political developments such as the rise of populism;
- The role of the inter-governmental Commonwealth and civil society in upholding international standards that protect media freedom;
- The impact of changes in technology and economic sustainability;
- The impact of COVID-19 on media freedom;
- Examples of good practice from across the Commonwealth.

**Outline of the day**

- 9.00 am      **Welcome and introduction**  
                 **Panel 1: South East Asia and the Pacific** (17.00 Singapore, 20.00 Sydney)
- 11.00 am      **Panel 2: India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka** (Islamabad 16.00, New Delhi 16.30, Dhaka 17.00)
- 2.00 pm        **Panel 3: Africa** (Lagos 15.00, Johannesburg 16.00, Nairobi 17.00)
- 4.00 pm        **Panel 4: Europe and Canada** (Valetta 17.00, Nicosia 18.00, Toronto 11.00)
- 6.00 pm        **Panel 5: The Caribbean** (Kingston 13.00, Georgetown 14.00)
- 7.30 pm        **Concluding remark**



### **Guidance for Speakers and Chairs**

1. The sessions will last for approximately 90 minutes each and take the form of a discussion between panellists (rather than a series of set-piece papers or presentations) followed by Q&A.
2. At the beginning of each session chairs are requested to invite panellists to introduce themselves and give a little background on their approach to the issue under discussion (for around 5 minutes each). The chair will then facilitate a discussion between panellists.
3. At least a third of the available time (30 minutes) should be devoted to Q&A at the end. Attendees will be asked to submit questions and comments via the chat function on Zoom. Philip Murphy will be available to help the chair feed these into the discussion.
4. All participants will be sent the Zoom link well ahead of time. Participants should simply need to open this to enter. They will be free to enter and leave the conference at any time during the day. Philip and his colleagues will be monitoring the system at all times.
5. Sessions will be recorded, with a view to making the recordings available on the Institute's website. Panellists and chairs will be provided with permission forms to consent to the recordings being used.