

MCGS MUN 2018

International Press Corps Background Guide

Dear Delegates,

I am both humbled and honoured to welcome you to the MCGS MUN 2018 International Press Corps!

We welcome you to a committee that can singlehandedly change perspectives on any situation in any country in the world. It is easier to voice opinions on international affairs, but to report such events with extreme caution and sophistication is one of the most cogent yet delicate duties of the International Press.

This year, the International Press strives to continue the legacy of professional reporting at MCGS MUN. Delegates will have the onus to journalistically critique committees by examining any controversial or otherwise noteworthy events and creating informative articles for the benefit of public opinion. As the only body capable of monitoring all activities, IPC delegates should be able to note the developments and setbacks faced while seeking to establish solutions to the world's most pressing issues. This permits them the freedom to either support or critique actions pertaining to any agenda that is being discussed.

This briefing includes details to prepare you to transform into some of the leading news agencies in the world, including the background and current functioning of your organisations. Please note that this guide only provides the introduction to your role as a reporter. It is your duty to educate yourself however with the history of the news agency and its opinions and relative bias on major international affairs in the past and present. This should be a blueprint for the manner in which you, as a representative of the agency, will approach the topics covered in your designated committees.

I encourage you to familiarise yourself with your committee agendas first and then study your news outlet with regard to it. Please remember that both members of a delegation need to be well versed and ready to cover all stories, and this could include events outside the committees as well.

We hope that delegates are expecting a high-paced, interactive conference as they attempt to steer through speeches and concepts from a variety of discussions and eventually create their unique arguments on international affairs. If you have any questions at all, I would be happy to help. The Executive Board of the International Press Corps along with the MCGS MUN Secretariat look forward to seeing you at the conference!

Regards,

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Chairperson, International Press Corps

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Overview

Role at MCGSMUN

Reporting

Elements Of style

Submission

Discipline and conduct

Overview

The International Press Corps for MCGS MUN 2018 includes 15 news agencies leading the scenario of political journalism, including –

1. Al-Jazeera



Although often criticised for its supposedly biased coverage of Egypt-related incidents and extremely pro-Qatar articles, nothing overshadows the fact that Al-Jazeera's network is one of the most exclusive in the world of journalism and often rebroadcast in major western broadcast outlets including *BBC* and *CNN*. Overall, Al-Jazeera's prevalence can be ascribed to its dependable and holistic reportage of issues thought to be imperative to the worldwide Arab populace which other news outlets pay minimal attention to.

Official website: <https://www.aljazeera.com/>

2. The Independent



The Independent is a leading British newspaper which turned largely digital by 2016. Until 2011, the paper declared itself "free from party political bias, free from proprietarily influence". Rather than focussing on traditional written content, the Independent catches the eye by unorthodoxly relying on graphics and lists. As far as political views are concerned, it deems itself to be a "proudly liberal newspaper"

Official website: <https://www.independent.co.uk/>

3. BBC - The British Broadcasting Corporation



Broadcast in English in more than 200 countries around the world, BBC is the world's oldest national broadcasting organisation. During the Second World War, it took on the onus to report and establish public opinion in The United Kingdom through its radio services. It has however, been criticised for its controversial coverage of religious and ethical sentiments and the Iraq War.

Official website: <http://www.bbc.com/>

4. Agence France-Presse



After the *Associated Press (AP)* and *Reuters*, the third largest news agency in the world is the Paris based Agence France-Presse (AFP). It was established by journalists of the French Resistance following the liberation of Paris. With almost 2300 collaborators on its side, this agency is able to represent over 80 nationalities in five geographical zones. Despite being a well known name in the reporting sphere, it was criticised for a copyright violation in 2013.

Official website: <https://www.afp.com/en>

5. The Hindu



It is one of the two Indian newspapers of record and the second most circulated English-language newspaper in India, after *The Times of India* with average qualifying sales of 1.21 million copies as of Jan–Jun 2017. It is recognised for its role as one of the many newspapers to report the discriminatory policies of the British rule in India and while it began as an initially liberal agency, it seems to be considered left leaning in the modern day Indian political scenario and therefore accused of left-wing and pro-Sinhalese bias in its articles

Official website: <http://www.thehindu.com/>

6. The Indian Express



Published in ten Indian locations, The Indian Express is a daily newspaper reporting in the English language. Its articles are known to be challenging and thought provoking and often asking questions that Indian leaders shy away from. This has given the agency a largely unbiased review. Its perspective on Indian foreign policy seems critically objective and similar to that of the Ministry of External Affairs but it lacks proper nationwide coverage of news.

Official website: <http://indianexpress.com/>

7. The Guardian

theguardian

Created by Scott Trust to “safeguard the journalistic freedom and liberal values of (the Guardian) free from commercial or political interference”, The Guardian is a mainstream leftist newspaper of British origin. While it was criticised for its alleged bias against Palestinian and even possible traces of anti-Semitism – all such claims have been denied by the news agency itself and it continues to be one of the leading reporting agencies in the world.

Official website: <https://theguardian.com/>

8. Tass



The Russian competition to the largest worldwide agencies like *Reuters* and *AFP* is TASS. The TASS name comes from the former Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union or the ‘Tyelyegrafnoye agyentstvo Sovyetskovo Soyuzu’ hence the abbreviation. While it is debatable if Tass is just a strategic Russian attempt for international propaganda during the Ukraine crisis – one thing is certain, that being one of the central news collection and distribution agencies in Russia, can lead to a very influential role in forming public opinion.

Official website: <http://tass.com/>

9. Xinhua News Agency



Being the official press agency for the People’s Republic of China, it seems only obvious that Xinhua News Agency is the largest in numbers as well as influence in China. As the President of this agency is a member of the Central Committee of China’s Communist Party, the agency is routinely under fire for a biased portrayal of China’s state policies and alleged lack of political correctness.

Official website: <http://www.news.cn/english/>

10. Reuters



Widely considered as one of the largest and by most casual readers, the most credible source of news - Reuters is an international news agency based in London. Its immense popularity has also served as a downside due to the various controversies and criticisms raised against it time and again including its “value-neutral approach” of reporting ,

which is believed to be a sugar coated version of real life gory events therefore not serving true journalistic justice.

Official website: <https://uk.reuters.com/>

11. The Washington Post

The Washington Post

A newspaper that lays special emphasis on national politics, The Washington Post is an American daily newspaper with the ambitious slogan of ‘Democracy dies in Darkness’. While whispers of neo-conservatism and a few left-wing supporting articles do float around, the agency remains a reporting legend with nearly 50 Pulitzer prizes on its side.

Official website: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/>

12. The Spectator

THE SPECTATOR

The Spectator is a weekly British magazine that has always had a role in the Conservative Party in the United Kingdom as many of its past editors have enjoyed high offices in the party. It is no surprise therefore; that a magazine incredibly indulged in politics and culture has an editorial outlook that is largely supportive of the Conservative Party.

Official website: <http://spectator.co.uk/>

13. Dawn

DAWN

Pakistan’s most popular English-language newspaper, Dawn is also it’s oldest. Founded by the founder of Pakistan, Mohammad Ali Jinnah – this news agency was an imperative gateway for the Muslim League. It faced a news leak controversy once, resulting in a change in political scenario by causing the Information minister to resign yet it is

noteworthy that Dawn was the first newspaper to oppose the restarting of death penalty in Pakistan

Official website: <http://www.dawn.com/>

14. CNN – Cable News Network



With its launch CNN became the first 24-hour coverage as well as the first all news channel of the United States. Despite being one of the most renowned news agencies in the world, CNN was accused of being politically biased by casting negative views on the Republican Party and also to have passed questions for a political debate to Hilary Clinton prior to the debate. Such issues of ethics in journalism leave the reputation of CNN untarnished however and it continues to be an icon in the circle of reporting.

Official website: <https://edition.cnn.com/>

15. Australian Broadcasting Corporation



Though the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) is funded by the Australian Federal Government – it claims to exercise its journalistic power independent of the Government and the Commonwealth's influence. Its model is derived from United Kingdom's *BBC*. Since a number of journalists and presenters progressed from their positions at ABC to political offices – politics seems to play a large role in this agencies functioning.

Official website: <http://abc.net.au/>

PLEASE NOTE:

a) I remind you once again that these are simply very basic introductions to your agencies – you must investigate each bias, editorial policy, writing style for your particular agency.

b) I mentioned the country in which each organisation was founded or situated as well to ensure that you make yourself aware that no piece of your writing clashes with any aspect of foreign policy of the nation.

Role at MCGS MUN 2018

❖ **Formal Reportage :**

- As a representative of a news agency, your foremost function is to report noteworthy events and discussions in your designated committees. Your writings will be compiled in the form of one single newsletter as a combined effort of the International Press Corps and therefore a large portion of your writing must be news articles containing critical detail on committee activities, resolutions, debates and observation.
- You may choose to also submit Editorials and Op-Eds on the given agenda which notes your own unique stance or opinion on the topic being discussed. This piece of writing need not necessarily have a direct link to the ongoing proceedings within the committee itself but must have some kind of opinion.
- In short, a news article or report must be unbiased and give an account of events and discussions. It must include facts, reports, statistics, quotations etc whereas an editorial or op-ed is meant to be opinionated. The line between fact and opinion is the distinguishing base between the two.

❖ **Press Conference:**

- Given the permission of the Chairperson/Director of your assigned committee – you will be granted a short period of time to officially ask questions to delegates within the committee. This time must be used carefully and the questions must be well researched. You will be trained and accompanied by members of the IPC Executive for all such conferences.

❖ **Interviews:**

- Interviews may take place with the consent of the individual in question. Since this will be a form of personal interaction – it is important to ask permission before printing anything discussed in the interview. While professional interviews extend to all participants and members of Executive Board, we urge you to also hold informal interviews which may include satire if need be.

- Interviews must not disrupt any ongoing committee proceedings and must be done during break time or during an arranged time slot other than the ones allotted for committee sessions.

❖ **Informal reports:**

- While this is not a compulsory task or the defined duty of a member of the International Press Corps, it will be appreciated if you may share interesting or humorous anecdotes about the conference itself. Such pieces of writing will not be agenda or debate related but recorded in the spirit of keeping all participants informed about the proceedings outside committees as well.

Reporting

❖ A few key instructions to keep in mind for formal reportage –

- The distinction between a report and Op-ed must be maintained at all costs. Please do not offer any opinion on committee discussions in your formal news article or report.
- Attention must be paid to ensure that the foreign policy or image of the country in which your particular news agency is situated or originates from is not betrayed by any portion of your text. As mentioned earlier, please go over your respective editorial policies and research on the alleged biases that may influence your reporting style
- If quoting or paraphrasing a certain delegate or group, due credit and consent is required.
- The Executive Board will not proof read or double check articles prior to submission. Any error, including spelling and grammatical fallacies will not be accepted.

❖ Recommendations and Tips for Reporting

- If quoting delegates, please do so word-for-word, and to ensure that you spell the name of their country or organisation correctly.
- For factual briefings, it is suggested that you utilise brief, direct sentences and paragraphs, in order to maintain the attention of the reader. Some paragraphs can even be one or two sentences if critical detail demands them to be.

- All factual briefings should be written in third person, while editorial pieces can use the first person.
- The introductory paragraph should grab the reader’s attention, and answer as much of the “who, what, where, when, why” as possible.

While I will be going over the essentials of a News report as well as characteristics of an op-ed during the introductory session of the International Press Corps as well, I am attaching a few documents and links to at least give you a rough idea to mentally prepare you for the challenges you may face in this committee and what you must keep in mind to overcome them

❖ **News Reports :**

Basics of Report Writing

- <http://schools.peelschools.org/sec/lornepark/SiteCollectionDocuments/EQAO/OS/SLT%20StED-Writing%20A%20News%20Report.pdf>
- <https://www.thebalance.com/news-writing-2316089>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2008/sep/25/writing.journalism.news>

Examples of News articles and reports

- <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/politics/china-russia-us-military-challenge-western-allies-nato-strategy-war-military-balance-a8209771.html>
- <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2018/03/22/trump-proposes-tariffs-unnamed-chinese-ense-cjhitarfiorders-tariffs-offpoints-finger-china-over-tr/448446002/>

❖ **Editorials and Op-eds :**

What is an Op-Ed?

- <https://www.thebalance.com/oped-what-is-it-and-how-to-write-it-1360714>

Examples of a good Op-ed:

- <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/oct/30/indonesia-fires-disaster-21st-century-world-media>
- <http://www.publictransportation.org/community/media/coverage/print/Pages/SampleLocalOpEd.aspx>

❖ **Beat Reporting**

Since I have emphasised several times in this briefing that articles must be brief and contain only those details which are essential to the committee or agenda – I advise all reports to utilise the tool of beat reporting or specialised reporting. Such reporting is the journalistic genre of in-depth research on one particular field or area. For further suggestions on how to keep a reader’s attention on the “beat” or the core concern of your article, please read the following articles-

- <https://www.poynter.org/news/beat-reporting-what-does-it-take-be-best>
- https://www.lssc.edu/faculty/heather_j_elmatti/Shared%20Documents/MMC%202100/BEAT%20REPORTING.pdf
- <https://www.thoughtco.com/effective-beat-coverage-2073858>
- <https://d4n12i.wordpress.com/2008/09/23/good-examples-of-beat-reporting/>

Elements of Style

Abbreviations: Only approved and conventional abbreviations are permitted in all reports. Use of any unconventional acronym or abbreviation will be allowed only with prior approval of the Chairperson. Do not use abbreviations for official titles (for example the Secretary General is never to be referred as the SG and the Executive Board as the EB). Limit the use of abbreviations to official organisations or events like – MCGS MUN, DISEC, ECOSOC, WHO, IPC etc.

Accusations: As a rule, we do not reprint rumours or untrue statements or statements we believe to be untrue.

Actor: While using a term for individuals acting on behalf of the state, you may use the term “state actor” whereas for acts of an individual without any link to state power may be termed as that by a “non-state actor”. This term of referral is gender-neutral.

Currency: The Indian Rupee shall never be regarded as Rs. but instead as INR. The Dollar must be denoted by its symbol. The same courtesy must be extended to other forms of currency as well including the pound sterling, the euro, the Japanese Yen etc.

Boldface text: Other than the headline or title, refrain from using boldface text in your articles.

Names: Please ensure the spelling of a name of an individual or organisation prior to submission. Capitalization of proper names is mandatory.

Country referencing: While naming a country in your article, kindly use the official name in accordance with the United Nations Charter. For example, the official name of the Republic of Guyana is “Co-operative Republic of Guyana.”

Quotations: If the words omitted are at the end of a sentence and are followed by another sentence in quotation marks, then the next word is capitalised to show the start of a new sentence. “We will win ... We will never surrender.” You may exclude words in such a manner only if this action does not alter the sense and meaning of the quote. To explain a quote, use separate paragraph or attempt bracketing a phrase into the quoted remarks, e.g. The Delegate of Nepal said: “They (the Communist Party of India) are bound to fail.”

Titles: While abbreviating a title please use periods like – Dr., Brig., Mr., Ms., etc.

Numerals: numbers of values less than ten must be spelled out in English. Numbers above the value of 10 must be written as figures at all times with the exception of the beginning of a sentence, in which case please spell out the number (for example, Thirty people were killed in 8 days) Kindly use numerals to denote age and years (for example, a 26-year-old will take the post in 2018) but for a large span of time utilise the English spelling (for millions of years...)

For further reading on Elements of Style refer to:-

[http://handbook.reuters.com/index.php?title=The Reuters Style Guide](http://handbook.reuters.com/index.php?title=The_Reuters_Style_Guide)

Submission

- The word limit for the articles is 250-450 words. Please ensure that your writings contain only the most imperative details of the committee proceedings or agenda
- The article must have a well defined structure with a recognizable introduction, body and conclusion.
- **FORMAT:** The text shall be in font Times New Roman (size 12), single-spaced. A title is compulsory for every submission.
- Photographs, charts, illustrations, designs or any other form of visual representation may be utilised to aid your article.
- While submitting the article please save and send it as “your designated committee_news agency name”.

Eg: “CSW_Aljazeera”, “PPC_TheWashingtonPost”,

- Articles must be submitted by the decided deadline via E-mail. No late submissions will be tolerated and no editing is permitted after submission.

Discipline and code of conduct

The overall MCGS MUN Code of Conduct is applicable during committee sessions as well. I request you to follow the dress code and attend all sessions in either Indian or Western formalwear. Casual clothing will result in disqualification from the ongoing session. Any form of disrespect to any other delegate, member of staff or Executive Board will not be tolerated. Any kind of derogatory remarks directed at anyone – regardless of their role in the conference – will lead to disqualification.

CLOSING REMARKS

Press Corps is an eccentric committee at MCGS MUN which functions in a unique manner that is not resembled by any other committee you may come across during the conference. Being a reporter will provide you a bird’s-eye-view of the conference that few get to experience.

I hope that this background guide will serve you with ideas and help you prepare for the conference. For any queries or concerns, please do reach out to me via E-mail, I’ll be more than happy to help! I wish you all the very best!
