

## Chapter 2

# CRITICAL DISCUSSION AND CURRENT SITUATION OF FREEDOM OF PRESS

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### INTRODUCTION

In order to make proper and comprehensive understanding of the statement freedom of press must be protected under all circumstances; the freedom of the press should be defined in this work. To begin with early definitions, the freedom of press is mostly defined as the relative absence of governmental or non-governmental restraints and allowing the diverse ideas and opinions to reach large audiences. However, it is not an adequate definition that would not properly fit in the new technologies and mass media concept. On the other hand, Becker, Vlad and Nusser (2007) distinguished the difference between negative press freedom and positive press freedom. While negative press freedom refers to the absence of legal controls like censorship, positive press freedom mostly based on the ability of individuals to use the media (Becker, Vlad & Nusser: 2007; 6). Figure 1 below historical trends in press freedom.

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not subject to onerous legal or economic pressures.

- Forty-five percent of the population lives in countries where the media environment is Not Free. The world's 10 worst-rated countries and territories were Azerbaijan, Crimea, Cuba, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Iran, North Korea, Syria, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.
- Politicians in democracies such as Poland and Hungary shaped news coverage by undermining traditional media outlets, exerting their influence over public broadcasters, and raising the profile of friendly private outlets.
- United States President Donald Trump disparaged the press, rejecting the news media's role in holding governments to account for their words and actions.
- Officials in more authoritarian settings such as Turkey, Ethiopia, and Venezuela used political or social unrest as a pretext for new crackdowns on independent or opposition-oriented outlets.
- Authorities in several countries in sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, and Asia extended restrictive laws to online speech, or simply shut down telecommunications services at crucial moments, such as before elections or during protests.
- Among the countries that suffered the largest declines were Poland, Turkey, Burundi, Hungary, Bolivia, Serbia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

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