

Forum: Special Political and Decolonization Committee (GA4)

Issue: Combating the manipulation of mass and social media to the election process

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INTRODUCTION

Mass and social media have revolutionized communication and information dissemination, creating new opportunities and challenges in various spheres of life, including politics. Concerns have emerged regarding the exploitation of these platforms to influence election results. Human rights and constitutional law prioritize freedom of expression and speeches in politics, but during elections, there are limitations on political speeches.

The internet provides unlimited access to information and data about elections, allowing people to voice their ideas, communicate with politicians, and become active participants in political activities. This allows political parties to advertise their goals and views, gaining support for their causes. However, the manipulation of mass and social media during the election process has detrimental effects, including the rapid spread of misinformation, weakening the ethics and morals of the electoral process, and influencing voter misconduct in making selections. Additionally, there have been multiple times where fake news have defined the outcome of an election process.

The majority of the Council of Europe members have laws governing paid political advertising, such as caps on expenditures, airtime, and donations. Some member nations ban paid advertising on television and radio, but these restrictions are often offset by free airtime for political parties. These nations should be taken as examples for other countries and organizations to ensure that every country has implemented as many guidelines as possible to ensure that nothing can interfere with the election process. A broad approach involving governments, regulatory agencies, social media companies, and individuals is needed to address these harmful implications.

DEFINITION OF KEY-TERMS

Manipulation

The action of influencing or controlling someone or something to your advantage, often without anyone knowing it.¹

¹ "Manipulation." *Cambridge Dictionary | English Dictionary, Translations & Thesaurus*, dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/manipulation

Micro-Targeting

Microtargeting is a form of online targeted advertising that analyzes personal data to identify the interests of a specific audience or individual in order to influence their actions. Microtargeting may be used to offer a personalized message to an individual or audience using an online service such as social media.²

Filter Bubble

A filter bubble is an algorithmic bias that skews or limits the information an individual user sees on the internet. The bias is caused by the weighted algorithms that search engines, social media sites and marketers use to personalize user experience.³

Fake news

False stories that appear to be news, spread on the internet or using other media, usually created to influence political views or as a joke.⁴

Algorithm

A set of mathematical instructions or rules that, especially if given to a computer, will help to calculate an answer to a problem.⁵

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Evolution of the impact of mass and social media throughout the years

Social media use, which was formerly believed to have a good impact on democratization, has recently been widely considered as a threat to democracy.⁶ Social media platforms, which are new combinations of contemporary technology and the internet, have evolved within the context of new technologies and have given social and political discussions new dimensions. Internet channels, whose impact on social movements was examined, are now an essential component of daily life and have had a significant impact on politics. As a result, even though new media technologies do aid in the democratization process in some situations, they may also be employed to strengthen the hold of authoritarian governments.

² "Microtargeting." *Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)*, 16 May 2022, ico.org.uk/for-the-public/be-data-aware/social-media-privacy-settings/microtargeting/.

³ "What is Filter Bubble? | Definition from TechTarget." *WhatIs.com*, 30 Jan. 2018, www.techtarget.com/whatis/definition/filter-bubble.

⁴ "Fake News." *Cambridge Dictionary | English Dictionary, Translations & Thesaurus*, dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/fake-news.

⁵ "Algorithm." *Cambridge Dictionary | English Dictionary, Translations & Thesaurus*, dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/algorithm.

⁶ Media manipulation during elections. Google Books, books.google.gr/books?id=Sa2-AAAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=de#v=onepage&q&f=false.

Over two thousand three hundred years ago, Aristotle recognized the effortless and natural relationship that exists between politics and communication. Modern political communication intellectuals continue to view politics as a means of socializing, argumentation, and convincing.

Now, the introduction of new technological contact influences the way officials and politicians interact with their audience, which alters the context and form of communication. Almost every day, especially during electoral periods, we are being bombarded with channels of the latest communication technology. The latest innovations, such as the Internet, satellites, etc. offer to boost public engagement in democracy and problem understanding in addition to having an influence on the generation, collection, and distribution of information. They are limitless that surpass old and conventional forms of media regarding the location and time.

Mass and media politics have gone hand in hand since the founding of the U.S.A. Early Patriots disseminated pamphlets throughout the Revolution, newspapers were fiercely and politically motivated, and books were written that offered political philosophies. As public speaking became more popular, political meetings began to include flags, bands, slogans, and fireworks.

However, after the Civil War the public oratory began to alter. A trend started to blossom, where shorter and more simplistic speeches were popular. Curiously, the amount of magazines and printed newspaper's news increased, while their length decreased. The center of attention was drifted to the sharing and use of the message. On the other hand, radio changed the dynamics of governance and campaigns. In general, radio messages crossed boundaries, ethnic and geographic ones.

Propaganda⁷

The activities of the media have such a great variety, by classifying and noting them into their type is most useful. First and foremost, on a daily basis, the media shares campaign propaganda to massive numbers of citizens. For instance, in the news, reporters either report directly or paraphrase the campaigner's statement. Hence, these people lend a helping hand to the politician to communicate with more people, faster and cheaply, than they could in other ways. Moreover, propaganda has its ways of promoting it selectively. When media executives trim the propagandist's prolific production to fit within the time and space, they devote themselves to reporting current affairs, this is most obvious. They also utilize opinion when they sell both space and time to political groups. However, they have rejected advertisements from minor party groups as well as those from large party groups. More than any other factor, the power of reporters and editors to decide on what media material they prefer, qualifies them as independent political actors. Third, the media disseminates

⁷ *Duke Law Scholarship Repository | Duke Law Research*,
scholarship.law.duke.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2926&context=lcp.

propaganda using certain conventional formats. Newspapers carry political statements via news columns, features, ads, and even entire transcripts. Fourth the media promote campaign propaganda, where they themselves create. Their views on who should win the elections, personal opinion on public matters, sometimes reports on current affairs which influence the government, even their own observation on who seems to be winning and why. These opinions can be expressed implicitly or explicitly.

Influence of media on voters⁸

The word faith incorporates our personal opinion of the elections, of the importance of the vote, of acceptable and improper ways of political action. However, the mass media agencies are responsible for propagating the voter's faith. For example, they most efficiently propagate it through paying so much attention to election activities, emphasizing on how much of a great deal they are., making them entertaining and dramatizing them. Likewise, they keep repeating and underlining the different themes that promote the significance of all this. That voters have a choice, that the final result will have a dramatic effect on the society, that politicians actually care about the citizens, etc. Plus, The media aims to give the citizens an unrealistic impression that their vote is of the utmost importance, which helps them gain more of their focus than they otherwise would. Hence, without doubt, the media's power is so massive that it can actually determine which political party will win and who will lose. We have reached a place where media influence on the voter's attitudes in voting has inspired more interest and more research than the impact of the media on attitudes toward the electoral process.

Privacy

Privacy aims to protect freedom of speech and facilitates political debate by providing citizens a space to form opinions and develop identities free from surveillance. However, on social media, where every conversation, opinion or comment is recorded and can be examined for its profit- oriented or political aim, could have a negative impact on the right of free expression and sharing of opinion, specifically nowadays, where concerns regarding privacy among citizens rise. Unfortunately, political parties or specialized agencies can create these huge databases, such as public records or surveys, where your personal information is taken and analyzed in order to find out about the public's preferences. However, the rightness and admissibility of these databases is vague.

Misinformation

⁸ *Duke Law Scholarship Repository | Duke Law Research*,
scholarship.law.duke.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2926&context=lcp.

Through misinformation, people obtain false beliefs. This is because when the public reads and entertains information that is strictly speaking true, but misleading, this can lead to adopting misleading beliefs. Such views do not undermine us directly; however, they do result in the potential of acquiring false beliefs. Consequently, it leaves us with not reasonable, logical and responsible knowledge. Even if we don't believe that having false beliefs is detrimentally and directly bad, it's definitely implicitly bad. If we judge and criticize upon the wrong or misleading information, we will have to face the outcoming consequences. Taking healthy democracy into consideration, depends on a well-informed citizenry. When misinformation infiltrates, it starts to be regarded as something normal, consequently creating a culture in which respect for truth simply does not exist and facts have little to no importance.

Aspects that influence the electoral results

One of the main components of the process is the broadcasting regulation. These advertising restrictions or obligations help ensure a basis for political recognition. However, this tool used to be more effective in previous elections, since nowadays political campaigns have moved online. Targeting of key messages, which raises certain obstacles, is another huge factor. On the one hand, an individual's autonomy may be restricted by a lack of unbiased content and knowledge, which means that through misinformation a win of one party is more feasible. On the other hand, entire groups or parties can be excluded from the electoral process, which makes it easier for bigger parties to win. Furthermore, the lack of transparency is another factor. Usually, campaigns are required to be transparent about the amount of funding and the printer of their leaflets. However, all these requirements are difficult to impose online. This is why it is essential that policy and civil society respond if there is a case of undermining of democratic legitimacy from any party. Existing regulation is based on traditional media and should be complied and obeyed, even now with digital media. Finally, misleading statements are another vital part of influencing the electoral results. Political campaign misinformation undermines established, and traditional filters based on journalistic ideals of truth, fact-checking, and separating opinion from reality. As a result of this, the conventional laws controlling false and misleading assertions are no longer as effective.

2008- Obama's campaign⁹

Due to the combination of several interesting events that took place during the election for the White House, the 2008 presidential campaign was one of the most unusual and thrilling in this nation's history. This campaign had an abundance of voters coming from

⁹ Media manipulation during elections. Google Books, books.google.gr/books?id=Sa2-AAAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=de#v=onepage&q&f=false.

a variety of diverse demographics taking part in this campaign, amongst them were the technologically advanced Millennial generation between eighteen to twenty- four years old. The 2008 campaign was also notable because it was the first time that new media and the Internet completely eclipsed conventional media outlets like television, radio, and newspapers on a national scale. Obama concentrated more than a thousand and fifty events and raised over 600\$ million from three million donors. Moreover, the campaign used text messaging to communicate with youth voters and send emails to counter attacks. In short, they utilized every type of new media technology to reach voters of all ages and ethnic and social class backgrounds.

2018 Elections- Brazil¹⁰

One of the reasons why in the year 2018 Jair Bolsonaro won the elections is because of the specific communication strategy his campaign used. Their methods lied in WhatsApp chat groups, micro- targeting and the dissemination of falsehoods. Instead of WhatsApp functioning as a rapid and effective messaging application, it was weaponized as social media during the elections. The whole content utilized topics that reinforced beliefs, perspectives and feelings that shaped the ideological base of Jair Bolsonaro's campaign.

In total, 11.957 texts were shared in over 296 WhatsApp group chats during the election's period. 42% of the rightwing items incorporated content which was found incorrect by fact checkers. Only 3% of the texts from the left party had extremely verified false statements.

One of the main falsehoods that his campaign promoted was a stabbing attack against Bolsonaro in the year 2018, at the beginning of the month September. They claimed that the stabbing had forced Jair Bolsonaro to stay at the hospital for the last weeks of the elections. Additionally, the 14% of their other falsehoods blamed the opponents, the right party, with homophobic and anti- feminist insults.

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED

Belgium

Today Belgian media, as in almost all other areas in Belgian society, reveal the phenomenon of the divide between north and south¹¹. No mass media whatsoever— newspapers, television stations, or radio stations—aim at both the French- and Dutch-speaking communities. Each community has its own public broadcasting organization

¹⁰ "WhatsApp Fake News During Brazil Election 'favoured Bolsonaro'." *The Guardian*, 30 Oct. 2019, www.theguardian.com/world/2019/oct/30/whatsapp-fake-news-brazil-election-favoured-jair-bolsonaro-analysis-suggests.

¹¹ "Mass media in Belgium." *Institutional Repository for Marquette Law School*, scholarship.law.marquette.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=4929&context=mulr&httpsredir=1&referer=.

regulated by its language community, not by the national government. Moreover, Belgium has several organizations that promote equal democracy, such the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions (ENNHRI)¹². It is a state-mandated body, independent of government, with a broad constitutional or legal mandate to promote and protect human rights at the national level. Following the Declaration's adoption, their 2018 Annual Conference addressed how NHRIs in Europe can better support democratic space and human rights defenders. In addition, they also developed a Regional Action Plan for the Declaration. This outlines actions for European NHRIs – acting nationally and collectively – under the areas of prevention. Thus ensuring and enabling democratic space, and reaction, in case of rapid responses when democracy, human rights and rule of law come under threat.

Norway

On any ranking of freedom of expression, transparency, and journalistic autonomy, Norway and the other Nordic countries rank high. Innumerable characteristics are rooted in the countries' constitution, which underlines that it is the state's responsibility to create channels for communication within society and public access to data or knowledge. Norway has also signed the universal declaration of human rights, which incorporates the "declaration on fundamental principles concerning the contribution of the mass media to strengthening peace and international understanding, to the promotion of human rights and to countering racialism, apartheid and incitement to war", under article 1 and 2.¹³ In order to guarantee these rights, many treaties have been ratified and organizations built. For instance, the Norwegian Helsinki Committee (NHC) is a human rights organization that aims to expand and advocate democracy, rule of law, and human rights not only in its country, but also worldwide. One of their duties is to keep track of elections, promote democratic reforms and assist civil society organizations that value democracy. Plus, the NHC has been commissioned by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to be a contact point for the Active Citizens Fund.

International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA)¹⁴

The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) is an intergovernmental organization, which aims to support and promote democratic organizations and procedures worldwide, in order to establish valid, enduring, and lasting democracies. Its regional offices are located in Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific, Africa and West Asia. Furthermore, their main office is in Stockholm, Sweden.

¹² "About ENNHRI." *ENNHRI*, 9 May 2023, ennhri.org/about-us/.

¹³ <https://plus.google.com/+UNESCO>. "Declaration on Fundamental Principles Concerning the Contribution of the Mass Media to Strengthening Peace and International Understanding, to the Promotion of Human Rights and to Countering Racialism, Apartheid and Incitement to War." *UNESCO*, en.unesco.org/about-us/legal-affairs/declaration-fundamental-principles-concerning-contribution-mass-media.

¹⁴ INTERNATIONAL IDEA. "SUPPORTING DEMOCRACY WORLDWIDE." *International IDEA*, www.idea.int/. Accessed 2022.

International IDEA is known for its generous contributions to the Summit for Democracy Process¹⁵ through their valuable content and knowledge, data analysis and partnership collaboration. Specifically, International IDEA's goal is to create and facilitate a civil society and engagement in the Summit for Democracy with democratical organizations across the globe. Finally, International IDEA is also a co-coordinator of the Global Democracy Coalition, which was formed in October 2021. The main focus is to summon organizations committed to the development of democracy, in order to participate effectively and profitably with the first Summit for Democracy, hosted by the United States government, in December 2021.

The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) ¹⁶

The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) is an international, non-profit organization founded in 1987. Based in Arlington, Virginia, United States, the organization assists and supports elections and electoral stakeholders in new and emerging democracies. They endorse democratic rights and good governance via offering election officials technical support, working with civil society and implementing field-based research to strengthen the electoral cycle and create credible electoral bodies. Additionally, IFES is being overseen by a board of directors, including the Democratic and Republican lawmakers.

Since its founding, IFES has operated in 145 nations and has projects in over 50 nations in the Americas, Asia-Pacific, Africa, Eurasia, and the Middle East. According to their annual report from 2011¹⁷ IFES' assessment team focused on the challenges Tunisia faced. With the help of IFES, Tunisia held its first democratic election on October 23, 2011. The public was excited to vote for their National Constituent Assembly (NCA) and to draft a new constitution.

Concerning its causes and events, in the year 1995, IFES established the Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening (CEPPS), in collaboration with the International Republican Institute and the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs. Moreover, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is overseeing this cooperation.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

¹⁵ "Supporting the Summit for Democracy 2023." *International IDEA*, www.idea.int/news-media/multimedia-reports/supporting-summit-democracy-2023

¹⁶ "About Us | IFES - The International Foundation for Electoral Systems." *The International Foundation for Electoral Systems: IFES*, www.ifes.org/about-us.

¹⁷ Annual IFES report. file:///Users/emma/Downloads/ifes 2011 annual report.pdf.

DATE	DESCRIPTION OF EVENT
10 December 1948	Adoption of the “Universal Declaration of Human Rights” by the UN
16th of December 1966	The international covenant on civil and political rights was adopted by the UNHCR, which highlights the freedom of speech, to obtain and share information and personal views of any type.
28 November 1978	Declaration on fundamental principles concerning the contribution of the mass media was proclaimed by the general conference of unesco.
1987	Foundation of The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES)
28 February 1995	Foundation of the IDEA (International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance), which endorses democratic rights and good governance
1995	IFES established the Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening, dedicated to advancing and supporting democratic practices and institutions around the globe
1996	IFES received its first international appointment from Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, which is concerned with early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management, and post-conflict rehabilitation

21 May 1999	Norwegian Parliament passed the Human Rights Act, gives you legal protection of your human rights
2008	Obama's campaign, utilizing the social media in order to attract people from all sorts of social, ethical and geographical background
7 October 2018	Brazilian elections - Jair Bolsonaro won the elections through WhatsApp

RELEVANT UN RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS¹⁸

Under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the freedom of opinion guaranteed "without interference". Article 19 highlights the freedom of speech, which includes the freedom to request, obtain and share information and personal views of any type. Furthermore, Article 25 emphasizes the right to free and unlimited access to knowledge, including the press's right to obtain information and news coverage. State parties must ensure transparency and accessibility in government transactions. Article 25 safeguards the right to participate in public events, ensuring accountability, citizen engagement, and democratic norms. The international covenant on civil and political rights was adopted on the 16th of December in 1966, by the UNHCR. It is incorporated in the General Assembly resolution 2200A (XXI).

This covenant shows not only the importance of the media's rights to freely obtain information and cover certain key events but also the fact that transparency is needed. Furthermore, it shows that although the media have rights they also have obligations, meaning that they should cover every aspect of the elections but also respect the before-mentioned procedure and not interfere with it. Additionally, it is the citizens obligation to examine the information they receive, its credibility and whether they should trust it.

¹⁸ "International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights." *OHCHR*, www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-civil-and-political-rights.

DECLARATION ON FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES¹⁹

With its full name being the Declaration on Fundamental Principles concerning the Contribution of the Mass Media to Strengthening Peace and International Understanding, to the Promotion of Human Rights and to Countering Racism, Apartheid and Incitement to War this declaration clearly highlights the tremendous impact that the Media have on our daily lives and the importance of legally establishing their rights and obligations. It was proclaimed by the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) at its Twentieth Session in Paris, 28 November 1978. These articles (Article 1,2) include the right to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers. People and journalists have the right to express their views, critical thinking, and opinion regarding a political group without any outside pressure. Moreover, it stresses the fact that when sharing information and views, there should be an abundance of different or contradicting opinions and sources, in order for the public to form their opinion after having heard a variety of aspects.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

THE NETWORK ENFORCEMENT ACT

The Network Enforcement Act (Netzwerkdurchsetzungsgesetz or NetzDG)²⁰ is a German law that was introduced in 2017 to combat illegal content, hate speech, and misinformation on social media platforms. The Net DG's primary objective is to prevent the dissemination of harmful and unlawful knowledge, such as hate speech and fake news, on significant social media platforms active in Germany. In addition, the regulation aims to hold social media companies accountable for filtering content and to enable a more open and efficient handling of user complaints. The Network Enforcement Act began to take action in January 2018. However, many human rights organizations have criticized the law for encouraging social media platforms to preemptively censor legal expression, which also questions the freedom of speech in Germany. For instance, in June of 2017 the United Nations Special Rapporteur for the Protection of Freedom of Opinion and Expression, David Kaye, mentioned that these norms do not comply with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

¹⁹ ---. "Declaration on Fundamental Principles Concerning the Contribution of the Mass Media to Strengthening Peace and International Understanding, to the Promotion of Human Rights and to Countering Racism, Apartheid and Incitement to War." *UNESCO*, en.unesco.org/about-us/legal-affairs/declaration-fundamental-principles-concerning-contribution-mass-media.

²⁰ "The Network Enforcement Act." *Chicago Journal of International Law*, cjil.uchicago.edu/print-archive/enforcement-through-network-network-enforcement-act-and-article-10-european.

THE AVIA LAW²¹

The key provisions of a bill on online hate speech were set by the Conseil constitutionnel, France's constitutional court, on June 18, 2020. This bill, also known as the "Loi Avia" (the "Avia Law") in honor of its primary sponsor, Laetitia Avia, a member of the National Assembly, was first presented on March 20, 2019. This French legislation aimed at combating online hate speech, disinformation and to address the spread of hate speech, illegal content, and harmful online behavior on social media platforms operating in France. Moreover, it demanded that cruel and anti-democratic information be eliminated within 24 hours on apps and websites, such as Facebook or Google. This is one of the key ways through which France and its governing bodies attempt to protect both democracy and its people from all the above-mentioned types of material that can be upload on social and mass media.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Supporting independent journalists

Free, independent media allow the public to make informed decisions, hold leaders accountable and hear a diversity of opinions — all free of government influence. The information and knowledge shared by these independent journalists contains an abundance of views and opinions, not just the ones that politicians want to promote. Independent journalism gives the public the opportunity to gain access to unpolished facts, which is useful for the citizens to make up their minds. This is why the independent press is an integral part of democracy. However, recently the economic viability of professional journalism has come under threat since readers have drawn their attention from traditional news to online resources and conventional news organizations have lost advertising revenues. The European Commission²², the "NEWS- Journalism partnerships (CREA-CROSS-2022-JOURPART)²³" is collaborating with these independent journalists, encouraging interdisciplinary initiatives that address the structural and technical changes that the world is experiencing in order to solve the problems and possibilities of a transnational nature. We have to make sure that public broadcasters are independent and well- funded.

²¹ "Loi Avia." *The Library of Congress*, www.loc.gov/item/global-legal-monitor/2020-06-29/france-constitutional-court-strikes-down-key-provisions-of-bill-on-hate-speech/.

²² "Funding & Tenders." *Language Selection | European Commission*, ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/topic-details/crea-cross-2022-jourpart.

²³ "Funding & Tenders." *Language Selection | European Commission*, ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/topic-details/crea-cross-2023-jourpart-collaborations;callCode=null;freeTextSearchKeyword=;matchWholeText=true;typeCodes=1,0;statusCodes=31094501,31094502,31094503;programm=.

Promoting media literacy

Several significant efforts have been implemented over the past several years by UNESCO²⁴ and partners to increase momentum and support for media and information literacy. With the declaration of Global Media and Information Literacy Week (24–31 October) in 40 C/Resolution 56, UNESCO's 193 Member States emphasized the significance of media and information literacy. In over 100 countries, UNESCO, has been promoting training which specializes in this area. Media literacy enables the populace to understand and contribute to public discourse, and, eventually, make sound decisions when electing their leaders. Plus, in order to teach people critical thinking, source verification, and fact-checking techniques, funding media literacy initiatives is the right path. This offers the public the ability to evaluate information independently and separate distorted information from trustworthy sources.

Enhancing transparency and accountability

Enhancing transparency is a vital key to a democratic society, as the government can gain the public's trust, and the public has power and knowledge over current affairs or plans happening in their country. One of the ways we could implement or promote transparency and accountability is through town hall meetings every month, where people can discuss their complaints and inform the local governor or even the president if the issue is crucial. There people need to ensure that the public meeting documents are easily accessible for everyone and that all the people have a say in this. Moreover, another solution would be to urge them to comply with ethical standards within the industry and to encourage media organizations to adopt transparent editorial policies. One of them would be the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC)²⁵, which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2003. This treaty focuses on stopping corruption on a global scale. Moreover, it contains solutions and regulations, which are ensuring transparency and accountability in the public management and of public finances.

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²⁴ "Promoting Media and Information Literacy for All." *This Week in Palestine*, 7 Oct. 2021, thisweekinpalestine.com/promoting-media-and-information-literacy-for-all/.

²⁵ *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*, www.unodc.org/documents/brussels/UN_Convention_Against_Corruption.pdf.

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