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DEENS MODEL UNITED NATIONS 2024

BACKGROUND GUIDE

INTERNATIONAL PRESS CORPS AND INTERNATIONAL DESIGN AND MEDIA SYMPOSIUM

AGENDA:

*“Reviewing Challenges Faced by Whistleblowers and
the Needs for Protective Measures”*

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Letter from the Executive Board

Greetings, Esteemed Delegates,

We welcome you to the International Press Corps (IPC) and the International Design and Media Symposium (IDMS) at DMUN 24. We, as your executive board, look forward to informative and qualitative reports and illustrations that show us your capabilities as you step into the shoes of a journalist or illustrator representing your news agency.

We expect your reports to be sharp and to the point. At the end of the day, it's not your verbosity or your linguistic expertise that matters in a report, it's how easy it is for the consumer to read and understand.

For the delegates of the IDMS, we expect your illustrations to be well made, and the message behind the drawing to be clear.

The agenda of this committee is how whistleblowers face challenges to their safety, and the importance of protective measures in support of them. It is imperative that you, as journalists, deliberate on this issue, present your opinions, and come to a resolution to this trying problem.

This background guide aims to assist you with your preparation and is a basic overview of the matters being discussed serving as a foundation for your research.

If you have any queries about the committee, whether it is related to formal session or the agenda itself, please feel free to reach out to us.

We look forward to committee and wish you the very best for this conference!

Warm Regards,
The Executive Board

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Introduction to IPC and IDMS

This year at DMUN, the IPC and the IDMS come together as a wonderful blend of creativity and wit to keep the delegates of the conference on their feet at all times. The first committee session will be a general session wherein both the IPC and the IDMS will discuss and deliberate on the given agenda. After which, both will be sub-allocated to their respective committees to perform the following tasks.

IPC

General Guidelines

1. Language

English will serve as the official and operative language during the course of the conference; All reports, and questions asked in a press conference must be in English.

2. Electronic Devices and Internet usage

For The International Press Corps delegates, the rules regarding the usage of devices, and the internet may be different from the rest of the conference.

3. Courtesy:

Noting and respecting the rules set out by the chairpersons of your assigned committees is absolutely necessary and important, moreover, flow of committee shall not be interrupted by the proceedings of the IP Members.

The background guide will provide you with an introduction to the different types of reports and articles we will be accepting at DMUN'2024. Don't feel overwhelmed - You will not be asked to write all of these reports in the span of a single day. Instead you will be working on them over the course of the 2 day conference, fitting them in as it aligns with the flow of debate in your specific committees.

- **Committee Report**

Word Count: 350 - 450 words

No. of Reports due: 1

Deadline: 4 pm (Day 1)

- Opinionated Editorial (Op-Ed)

Word Count: 800 - 900 words

No. of Reports due: 1

Deadline: 12 pm (Day 2)

- Beat-Based Article (BBA)

Word Count: 200 - 300 words

No. of Reports due: 1

Deadline: 7 pm (Day 1)

- Newspaper Clipping

Word Count: 300 - 400 words

No. of Reports due: 1

Deadline: 2 pm (Day 2)

- Feature (Optional)

Word Count: NA

No. of Reports due: NA

Deadline: 3pm (Day 2)

IDMS

IDMS Procedure

- Pocket Cartoons

No. of Illustrations due: 2

Deadline: 1 pm (Day 1) and 3 pm (Day 2)

- Comic Strip

No. of Illustrations due: 1

Deadline: 2 pm (Day 2)

- Executive Board Caricature

No. of Illustrations due: 1

Deadline: 11 am (Day 2)

- Newspaper Clipping

No. of Illustration due: 2

Deadline: 4 pm (Day 1 for both)

Introduction to the Agenda

Information. In a world where most people are oblivious to the reality of ongoing events, as well as the hidden cruelty and corner-cutting nature of corporations and companies, a well-informed public is crucial in order to hold these organizations accountable for their actions.

That role, the role of the informer, a person who keeps the public aware and alert, is fulfilled by a whistleblower.

A whistleblower is a person who informs the public about the wrongdoings or misdeeds conducted by organizations or people in positions of power. They're often employees or subordinates of the organization they're exposing.

Whistleblowers are important to bring to light the misdeeds of corporations that are hidden from the eyes of the public. We, as the public, have a right to know what is going on behind the scenes in a company, especially if the company is engaged in any activity that can be considered immoral or illegal.

As journalists, it is your duty to keep the public up to date. The role of the whistleblower and the role of the journalist is not so different. So, it is imperative for a congregation of reporters to

discuss how whistleblowers provide value to public knowledge, the challenges and suppression whistleblowers face, and the possible solutions to these problems.

Challenges Faced by Whistleblowers

Whistleblowers, being members of society that expose powerful people, face many challenges to their safety. They face threats to their life, their bodily safety, their family, and everything that they could value, from people like politicians, companies, and influential people. In fact, these threats are the reason why whistleblowers have unhappy families, with 53% of whistleblowers having issues with family relations (Rothshield and Miethel 1999).

However, threats to their safety aren't the only challenge whistleblowers face. They often get into legal trouble after exposing corporations- being sued for breach of confidentiality or defamation. Since companies often have a stronger legal team as well as more funds, they usually lose the case, having to pay large sums of money, putting them in financial trouble and stress. In fact, 69% of whistleblowers face financial decline (Rothshield and Miethel 1999). They also face mental health issues, often not having any support in their attempts to publish information for the betterment of the public. They often garner little to no public attention, and their efforts go unnoticed. In fact, 84% of whistleblowers are reported to have severe anxiety and/or depression, and 84% of whistleblowers are unable to trust other people (Rothshield and Miethel 1999).

In order to truly understand what it means to be a whistleblower, it is important to review and discuss the problems they face. Find out other issues that whistleblowers face, and how these problems can be solved. This makes it easier for there to be possible solutions for whistleblower protection.

Historical Background

Whistleblowing has been a part of society since the times of the ancient Greeks, with the Greek 'sykophantes'. The word means 'slanderer'. In ancient Greece, farmers would have to pay taxes on the figs they brought to the market. Sometimes, they would try to avoid paying the tax. However, a sycophant would squeal on them to authorities, and they would have to pay.

When looking at whistleblowing in the middle ages, the most prominent example that comes to mind is the practice of qui tam in England, where a private individual could enforce the King's law, when a public police force was lacking. This practice would later on lead to further development in whistleblowing laws.

Later on, when we enter the modern age (the 20th century), we see more appreciation for whistleblowers, as well as such important cases as the Watergate scandal, where a man named Mark Felt served as the key informant in uncovering the crimes of President Nixon and his associates, eventually leading to Nixon's resignation. This scandal shot whistleblowers into a topic discussed widely around the world, suddenly shining the spotlight on the importance of whistleblowers and the moral conundrum surrounding them.

One of the first instances of a concern for whistleblower protection we see is the Whistleblower Protection Act of 1989. Passed in the United States of America, the law provides government protection to federal workers/agents that report any possible misconduct of the government. This act was a huge step in the direction of whistleblower protection.

However, as we observe everyday, whistleblowers are still not given enough protection, and still face severe threats to their safety.

As we develop as a society more and more, the importance of whistleblowers is becoming clearer, with discussions and debates for the protection and safeguarding of whistleblowers becoming more prevalent and commonplace.

What we aim for as a committee is another big step towards whistleblower safety, with viable solutions to the problems they face. Come up with effective plans to help protect whistleblowers.

Case Studies

In order to complete your understanding of the agenda, some case studies have been given below:

Julian Assange

Julian Assange is one of, if not the most well-known whistleblower in the world. He is an Australian publisher and activist, widely known as the founder of Wikileaks, an organization dedicated to leaking classified documents relating to human and civil rights violations.

The organization boasts more than ten million documents, an unbelievable number. The most notable piece of information they published is called 'Collateral Murder', which is leaked footage of the 2007 airstrike in Baghdad, Iraq, where American helicopter crew killed many civilians as well as Reuters journalists. They've published many field logs from Afghanistan and Iraq, and other crimes of both the American military and the CIA.

Before Wikileaks, Assange was a hacker by the name Mendex, and formed a hacking group called the International Subversives with two other hackers, called Trax and Prime Suspect. The group targeted MILNET, a part of the ARPANET network of the USA, dedicated to traffic from the USA's Department of Defence. Assange states that the group had access to a backdoor to the network for 2 years.

With the nature of his statements, the AFP set their eyes on the International Subversives, launching an investigation called Operation Weather.

It was discovered that Assange had been hacking the Melbourne master terminal of the telecom corporation Nortel. With a member of the International Subversives turning himself and the other two in, Assange had his home wiretapped and raided.

After he founded Wikileaks, Assange found himself in a whole new world of trouble. After the Manning publications, the U.S.A wished to charge Assange under the Espionage Act of 1917. With an investigation into Wikileaks, and the NSA adding his name into its Manhunting Timeline, it was obvious that the U.S.A wanted to silence Assange and his organization for their publishing of classified information that exposed the military and the CIA's misdeeds and immoral actions.

He was eventually arrested and had 18 federal charges stacked against him, all of them being related to espionage, after which he was imprisoned in the UK. After a long period of imprisonment, he agreed to plead guilty to one charge of espionage, and was released from HM Prison Belmarsh in order to go to Australia, where he was sentenced to 62 months in prison.

David McBride

David McBride is a widely known whistleblower, as well as a former major and Australian Army lawyer. He is known for leaking classified military documents to the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

Having a history with the Australian military, McBride was obviously aware and in possession of classified documents, most importantly those about the operations and crimes of the Australian Defence Force in Afghanistan. Having such information, and becoming increasingly concerned about the measures taken by the ADF, he shared classified military information and documents to the ABC, in hopes of enlightening the Australian public about the misdeeds of the military. The ABC then released *The Afghan Files*, which was a report including the documents that McBride

provided them, detailing the crimes of the ADF and the Special Air Service (SAS) Regiment, whose soldiers partook in war crimes, including unlawful killings of unarmed civilians.

After the documents were leaked, the Australian Federal Police raided the main offices of the ABC, in search of all documents or information relating to the leak.

McBride was eventually arrested in 2018, being charged with theft of Commonwealth Property (in this case, the military documents). In 2019, he had an additional 4 charges levied against him. He pleaded not guilty to the charges, and so his case went to trial.

McBride tried to fight the charges using Australia's whistleblower laws, with his legal team claiming that he leaked the documents as he was concerned about the excessive use of soldiers in Afghanistan by the ADF.

Unfortunately, McBride pleaded guilty to his charges on 17th November 2023, and was sentenced to 68 months in prison.

Reference Links

https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Expression/Factsheet_4.pdf

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-68282613>

<https://www.ilo.org/about-ilo/how-ilo-works/accountability-and-transparency/ethics-office/areas-work/whistleblower-protection>

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/226106124_Argumentation_Theory_A_Very_Short_Introduction