Press Freedom - Bachelet - Sommaruga

01-09-2020 | Edited News

Shotlist

1. **Wide shot:** UN Geneva flag alley, flags fluttering, a beautiful day, Palais des Nations, Geneva.
2. **Wide shot:** UN Geneva Room XX (formerly known as the Human Rights and Alliance of Civilisations Chamber) hosting the UN General Assembly side-event for the freedom of the press and freedom of expression.
3. **SOUNDBITE (English)**—Michelle Bachelet, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights: “Journalism enriches our understanding of every kind of political, economic and social issue; delivers crucial – and, in the context of this pandemic - life-saving information; and helps keep governance at every level, transparent and accountable.”
4. **Close-up:** Michelle Bachelet in TV camera viewfinder and in rear of shot, blurred.
5. **SOUNDBITE (English)**—Michelle Bachelet, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights: “When journalists are targeted in the context of protests and criticism, these attacks are intended to silence all of civil society and this is of deep concern.”

Medium shot, from below: TV cameraman filming speakers (out of shot), with the colourful backdrop of the Room XX ceiling, created by Spanish artist Miquel Barcelo.

1. **SOUNDBITE (English)**—Michelle Bachelet, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights: “In several countries, increasing politicisation of the pandemic and efforts to blame its effects on political opponents, have led to threats, arrests and smear campaigns against journalists who maintain fact-based information about the spread of COVID-19 and the adequacy of measures..."
to prevent it.”

2. **Medium shot:** Press photographer taking photograph with zoom lens.

3. **SOUNDBITE (English)— Michelle Bachelet, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights**
   : “Media reports are an essential tool for officials to quickly learn where measures are being inadequately applied and what concerns are uppermost in the public’s experiences.”

4. **Medium shot:** participants seated in Room XX.

5. **Close-up:** TV camera viewfinder with podium speaker in rear of shot (blurred).

6. **Medium shot:** participants wearing masks, seated, Room XX.

7. **Wide shot:** Room XVII, venue for Press conference with Simonetta Sommaruga, Swiss President, shows podium speakers and large TV screen above them.

8. **SOUNDBITE (French)— Simonetta Sommaruga, Swiss President:** « La liberté de la presse, c’est pas quelque chose qu’on a, c’est quelque chose qu’il faut défendre, qu’il faut continuer à défendre. »

9. **Medium shot:** Press photographer and video journalists, one kneeling to take photograph.

10. **SOUNDBITE (French)— Simonetta Sommaruga, Swiss President:** « Dans notre pays, la situation économique de la presse est très, très difficile, alors on a cherché des moyens comment est-ce qu’on peut mieux soutenir parce qu’on a dit la presse, les médias, c’est une infrastructure de la démocratie et si on veut que cette infrastructure existe, il faut aussi un soutien, en même temps, tout en gardant l’indépendance des médias. »

11. Medium shot: cartoonist Patrick Chappatte, wearing mask, seated.

12. **SOUNDBITE (French)— Simonetta Sommaruga, Swiss President:** « On veut augmenter le soutien pour la distribution pour la presse écrite, pour les journaux. Et puis un deuxième pilier, c’est augmenter le soutien pour les radios et la télévision privée. Et aussi un soutien pour des médias en ligne qui commencent quelque chose pour avoir par exemple un soutien, une infrastructure. Et puis le troisième pilier, ça c’est nouveau, c’est je pense c’est assez innovateur, c’est un soutien aussi pour les médias en ligne. Et là aussi pour ne pas donner un soutien direct aux rédactions, on fait un peu la même chose, on soutient aussi la distribution, même si en ligne c’est un peu une autre discussion que les journaux. »

13. **Wide shot:** Room XVII, venue for Press conference with Simonetta Sommaruga, Swiss President, shows podium speakers and large TV screen above them.

14. **Medium shot:** participants wearing masks, seated.

15. **Medium shot:** participant wearing mask, seated.
UN rights chief Michelle Bachelet has urged all countries to do more to protect journalists, especially during the COVID-19 crisis, as their work helps save lives.

Speaking at an event in support of Press freedom in Geneva, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights noted that around 1,000 journalists have been killed in the last decade – and that nine in 10 cases “are unresolved”.

Her comments, on the eve of the trial of alleged accomplices of extremists who killed 12 people at the French satirical weekly Charlie Hebdo in 2015, were echoed by political cartoonist Patrick Chappatte.

“We live in an open world with closed minds,” he told participants at the UN General Assembly side-event for the freedom of the press and freedom of expression.

“We have seen five years ago a line being crossed in blood and that’s the line where you can get killed in Paris, Europe, anywhere, you can get killed for your opinion. And that was a new threshold.”

Amid the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, the work of the media is paramount, High Commissioner Bachelet insisted, as their reporting is “an essential tool for officials to quickly learn where measures are being inadequately applied”, and what concerns are most important to people.

Without naming them, she said that several countries had seen “increasing politicisation of the pandemic and efforts to blame its effects on political opponents, have led to threats, arrests and smear campaigns against journalists who maintain fact-based information about the spread of COVID-19 and the adequacy of measures to prevent it”.

She added: “When journalists are targeted in the context of protests and criticism, these attacks are intended to silence all of civil society and this is of deep concern…Journalism enriches our understanding of every kind of political, economic and social issue; delivers crucial – and, in the context of this pandemic - life-saving information; and helps keep governance at every level, transparent and accountable.”

At a press conference after the event, Swiss President Simonetta Sommaruga echoed the High Commissioner’s concerns over threats to freedom of expression.

Even in Switzerland, where people have the opportunity to vote multiple times a year, the concept should not be taken for granted, Ms. Sommaruga explained, in response to a journalist’s question and earlier comments about the shrinking space and threats to the Press being “not always from dictators (but) also from business models”.

“The freedom of the Press is not something that you just have, it’s something that you have to defend and continue to defend,” the Swiss President maintained.

At a time when Swiss newspapers face increasing pressure from the online news sector and a declining readership, Ms. Sommaruga explained that a three-pronged approach was being implemented to help all media in the country, leaving editorial policy aside.

“In our country, the economic situation for the Press is very, very difficult, so we (the Federal Government) are looking at ways how we can better support it, because we think that the Press, the media, provides the infrastructure for democracy,” she said. “If we want this infrastructure to exist, we also need to support it, while also ensuring its independence.”

She added: “We (the Federal authorities) want to increase support for distribution of the printed Press, for
newspapers. And the second pillar involves increasing support for radio and private TV stations. Also, support for online media that are starting something to give it, for example, some support (and) infrastructure. The third pillar, it’s new and I think quite innovative, it’s support for online media. There too, it’s not to support what’s written, we can do the same thing, supporting its distribution, even if online it’s a slightly different matter than for newspapers.”

Earlier, Mr. Chappatte described how “moralistic mobs” now used social media to bully others into getting what they want.

“They gather like a storm. They take on an issue, they denounce expression, they denounce cultures, they go after the cartoonists.”

It was no longer repression “by the State or the religious powers, but society ourselves”, he insisted.