



**Volker Türk,**  
**UN High Commissioner for Human Rights**

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Thank you to the Freedom Cartoonists foundation for the invitation to speak at this important event, I regret not to be able to be with you in person. When I think of the values of Journalism, I think of trust truth and integrity I think of the countless fearless individuals daring to question, daring to challenge power risking their lives to document atrocities corruption and crime and to stand up against oppression.

2023 marked one more devastating year for journalism : 71 journalists and media workers were killed, it was a year characterized again by impunity. Only 13% of these murder cases have been investigated and 320 journalists and media workers were imprisoned - the highest number ever. When we lose a journalist, we lose our eyes and ears to the outside world, we lose a voice for the voiceless.

World Press Freedom day was established to celebrate the value of Truth and to protect the people who work bravely to uncover it. There's no doubt that cartoonists are among them. Their works of art are often works of Courage. Art has an extraordinary ability to highlight the impact of Rights denied, but also the promise of rights delivered. Beyond raising awareness, it can start meaningful conversations, empower individuals and nurture real change.

As we Mark World Press Freedom Day, we also have an opportunity to celebrate the invaluable role of cartoonists in safeguarding our fundamental rights to freedom of expression. I honor their work, I pay tribute to their work, their determination and their creativity.

Our world today is enduring multiple and overlapping crisis from conflict to soaring inequalities to the threat of climate change. Art with its capacity to inspire, heal and build solidarity, can certainly be one of the tools we can use to help create the space for the hope and Freedom the world so urgently needs.

Thank you for everything that you do