



**The 4th Meeting of the ICAPP Media Forum
(October 25, 2018)**



ICAPP/4MF/003

Moscow Statement

1. We, the journalists from the countries which are represented in the Standing Committee of the International Conference of Asian Political Parties (ICAPP), gathered in Moscow, Russia on October 25, 2018, together with representatives of Asian political parties held the 4th Meeting of the ICAPP Media Forum on the sidelines of the 10th General Assembly of the ICAPP.
2. The Meeting was conducted under the theme of the “Role of Political Parties in Reducing International Tensions and Combating Extremism” and the “Importance of International Inter-Party Cooperation in the Formation and Development of Political, Economic, Social Ties between States,” with a special focus on the role of political parties and the media in building an international community, sharing democratic values and dealing with such challenges as terrorism, poverty and environmental degradation, and how to promote communication, interaction and cooperation between political parties and the media in the region.
3. We confirmed our commitment to support the activities of the ICAPP particularly the Media Forum, in enhancing mutual trust and promoting understanding and friendship among not only Asian countries but also countries of other continents and creating an environment for peace, stability and prosperity in the world. In this regard, we underlined our continue support for activities by the Media Forum which are more focused on issues of direct relevance to the daily lives of the peoples in the world. We reaffirmed the commitments in the Seoul Statement (July 2017) to develop an institutional mechanism to encourage more journalists to participate in the Media Forum and to initiate a program fostering mutual exchange among journalists in Asia.

(Freedom of Expression and Reducing International Tensions and Combating Violent Extremism)

4. We acknowledged the importance of international cooperation, particularly networks of political parties in reducing international tensions, countering violence and incitement to violence and encouraging participation in political life based on the principles of the rule of law and respect for human rights. We stressed that the programs and initiative of the ICAPP would ensure the freedom of expression.
5. We reaffirmed the critical role of the media that the freedom of expression can play in reducing international tensions and combating intolerance, and the essential role that the media and the Internet and other digital technologies play in keeping society informed.

6. We noted that a key part of any strategy to reduce international tensions and combat terrorism and violence should be to support independent media and communications diversity. We stressed our obligation to ensure that the media are able to keep society informed, particularly in times of heightened social or political tensions, including by creating an environment in which a free, independent and diverse media can flourish. Any restrictions on freedom of expression should comply with the standards for such restrictions recognized under international human rights law.
7. We emphasized there should not be any restriction on reporting on acts or threats of violent activities if the reporting itself is not intended to incite imminent violence. We took note of the obligation of the press not to incite or promote violent activities if there is a direct and immediate connection between the reporting and the likelihood or occurrence of such violence.
8. We expressed our shock on the gruesome murder of Jamal Khashoggi in the Saudi Arabian consulate on 2 October 2018. We resolutely condemned any expressions of violence related to the journalists, preventing journalists from conducting their professional activities.
9. We reconfirmed the urgent need to encourage open debate and access to information about all topics, including where they touch upon issues such as ethnicity, religion, nationality or migration, in schools and universities, and in academic, scholarly or historical texts.

(Media Independence and Diversity in the Digital Age)

10. We recognized the essential role that an independent and diverse media, which disseminates a wide range of information and ideas, can play in supporting the functioning of democratic societies, an informed citizenry, and the rule of law, participation in public affairs and accountability of public institutions. We also stressed in particular, the special role of the media in providing quality, accurate and professionally reported news and current affairs information.
11. We noted with great concerns that we are aware of a range of current threats to media freedom, including legal, political, technological, and economic threats; and noted concerns about contemporary legal threats to freedom of expression and the media, including broadening and often ambiguous notions of national security, laws which unduly limit expression online or blocking of websites.
12. We underlined the importance of public trust in and the credibility of the media, the challenges of maintaining media professionalism in an environment where new forms of media are constantly evolving, and the positive role media self-regulatory and/or co-regulatory bodies can play in this respect.

13. We emphasized the importance of trans-national cooperation between media outlets, including quality coverage of issues of international public interest, such as widespread corruption and other practices that undermine democracy around the world.
14. We emphasized that political parties in cooperation with their governments have to promote a general enabling environment for seeking, receiving and imparting information and ideas as a freedom of expression, including through the following measures:
 - a. ensuring that legislation on the right to access information held by public authorities is in place and being implemented;
 - b. providing appropriate protection for privacy and personal data, including through enabling the anonymous use of digital technologies;
 - c. ensuring that legislation providing protection to whistleblowers is in place and being implemented.
15. We urged members to request their governments to protect journalists and others who are at risk of being attacked for exercising their right to freedom of expression, to launch effective investigations when such attacks do occur, so that those responsible may be held accountable, and to offer effective remedies to victims.
16. We emphasized to our members the importance appropriate steps to protect digital communication systems against cyber-attacks and to bolster digital safety and security for those who are at risk of such attacks for exercising their right to freedom of expression. We encouraged the interested stakeholders to consider working collaboratively to support an independent, diverse and economically viable media including as a means of responding to the presence of information bubbles/silos.

(Cooperation for Developing Media and Information with UNESCO)

17. We welcomed the establishment of cooperation agreement with UNESCO, which has been providing practical support and effective reference to achieve Media and Information Literacy (MIL) to assist in member countries to adopt national policies.
18. We confirmed that political policies need to engage in reviewing and formulating policies and programs on media and information literacy which UNESCO recommends in order to provide all citizens with critical competence to enjoy life in the 21st century.
19. We expressed the need to adopt the Rules and Working Modalities of the ICAPP Media Forum to improve its existing terms of references.

(Freedom of Expression and “Fake News”, Disinformation and Propaganda)

20. We took note of the growing prevalence of disinformation (sometimes referred to as “false news” or “fake news”) and propaganda in legacy and social media. We also expressed concern that disinformation and propaganda are often designed and implemented so as to mislead a population, as well as to interfere with the public’s right to know and the right of individuals to seek and receive, as well as to impart, information and ideas of all kinds,
21. We reiterated the need for cooperation between governments and political parties in order to foster an enabling environment for freedom of expression, which includes promoting, protecting and supporting diverse media, even under growing pressure due to the increasingly difficult economic environment for the traditional media;
22. Finally, we expressed our deepest gratitude to the United Russia Party, the governing party of the Russian Federation, for the excellent holding of our meeting and warm hospitality during our stay. We also noted, with great appreciation, the essential role and effective support of the ICAPP Secretariat in organizing the meeting.

Adopted in Moscow, Russia on October 25th, 2018