



# MEDIA

## REPRESENTATIVES GUIDE



*2024 AMWHO International Conference*

*Rectifying Historical and Contemporary Prejudices and  
Oppressions Undermining Global Health*

In a world of rapid global communication, information is available in a few seconds. At the center of this increasingly globalized world, the media holds the ability to raise awareness around pertinent health issues and ultimately alter national and international policies. If used appropriately, media can be utilized to spread vital information and catalyze change at the highest levels. In the context of global health policy, the media can often spur change through exposing inequalities and challenging existing systems of power. In this respect, media reporters and institutions are fundamental among global health actors in advocating for and shaping health reforms. Your role as media representatives will include advocating for global health policy reforms while reporting with journalistic integrity, honor, and impartiality.

The media constantly has to balance upholding journalistic integrity while promoting the highest level of fairness and accuracy. To **mimic accuracy** it is vital that you, as media representatives, adhere to a similar code of ethics. Throughout the conference, feel free to ask delegates about their underlying motivations and the effectiveness of their proposed responses. It is within your responsibilities and duties to hold institutions accountable for the actions they take and the information they are distributing. If actors have insufficient literature, your reports could include this information to express credibility concerns. When writing your article(s), make sure to use all resources available to accurately portray the positive and negative aspects of public health innovations. While these are only some examples of possible media responsibilities, feel free to creatively expand upon this list and implement other ideas within your report(s), while maintaining the code of journalistic integrity and fairness.

Lastly, with the increasing presence of information driving media reports, your article(s) should aspire to provide transparency. Conscious examples of this could include utilizing context specific language and terminology to avoid ambiguity. This is of the utmost importance as possible misinformation and bias of health information could ultimately threaten public health measures. Susceptible to political skews and overarching influence, media report(s) by representatives should avoid using politicized terminology and seek to include impartiality whenever possible. As a media delegate, you could describe scientific studies with appropriate language, being cautious to avoid misphrasing and complex terminology. Additionally, you may consider the role of local media bias, and defer to using narrative forms within difficult areas, like active warzones, at the cost of impartiality. Regardless, your writing should be based on some form of evidence.

Ultimately, your role as media representatives is integral to shaping global health policy and determining behavior at the international and national levels.

## MEDIA ROLES

As Media Delegate you will be acting as a representative for this year's media organizations (CNN, BBC, and AlJazeera). You will be interacting with delegations to prepare newspaper articles that inform and influence on the public health topics covered during the conference. Throughout this particular conference, you will have the opportunity to participate in two press conferences with delegations. Within these conferences, media representatives will have the ability to engage with representatives of countries to discuss their proposed public health initiatives, question motives, and gain insight into challenges and supporters of specific initiatives. The information from these two press conferences can be used to shape your article(s).

While investigative reporting is theoretically centered around impartiality, media outlets hold unique values and inherent biases. As you consider choosing organizations to engage with and stories to report on, it may be beneficial to reflect on your own positions and where you best fit within global health.

*Why are you here?*

*How do you want to create an impact through your role as a media representative?*

*How has the media shaped you, and is there anything that you wish were different?*

Keeping these questions in mind, approach debates with an open yet self aware mindset. In real life, the media has the ability to impact behavior and opinions, and you should consider this when maximizing the power of your role. Your curiosity and creativity will drive your part as an effective media representative.

## DELIVERABLES

To gauge your engagement throughout the conference, you will be expected to complete and submit some deliverables by the end of the conference. These include 2 developed newspaper articles (within 500 to 750 words), 2 shorter articles (no longer than 500 words), and the maintenance of a Twitter account for reporting. These articles will be published on an AMWHO WordPress blog for all delegates to access.

For submission purposes, each representative will be given access to a Twitter account for their respective institution. Be sure to submit your articles to [abellapu@ad.unc.edu](mailto:abellapu@ad.unc.edu). Media representatives will also use GroupMe to communicate throughout the conference, so make sure to have the application open and notifications on throughout the duration of the conference.



### **CABLE NEWS NETWORK (CNN)**

CNN (Cable News Network) is based out of Atlanta, GA and is one of the biggest media companies in the world. Their international 24-hour running news channel, social media platforms, and website reach approximately 80 million households, which gives them the capability to reach and influence many people.

### **AL JAZEERA**

Al Jazeera is an Arabic language international news network of Qatar. Their company emphasized the importance of highlighting the “human side” of world events, and while they are based in the middle east to reach Arabic speaking viewers, they have influence and platforms that are relevant all over the world.

### **BRITISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION (BBC)**

BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) is based out of London, England and is the oldest and biggest broadcaster in the world. Their priority on public service and impartial news gives them the ability to educate people in the UK and around the world.

## Case Studies

Detailed below are some specific cases of how the media has successfully interacted with global health. The examples are intended to improve your understanding of the various ways in which different media can frame and address both current and historical prejudices and oppressions concerning global health, shift the global attention to a specific issue, influence health related policy, and hold nation actors accountable.

### CASE STUDY I: RACISM AMID THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The COVID-19 pandemic was one of the first global pandemics that the world experienced in an era defined by unprecedented digital connectivity. This placed a large responsibility on media outlets to disseminate accurate information about the virus in a timely manner, and contain its spread. The media also played a large role in revealing the blatant racism against marginalized communities during the pandemic. For instance, the derogatory language against Asians and people of Asian descent used by politicians and social media platforms has thoroughly been addressed in media from the moment the pandemic was said to originate from Wuhan, China. This provided even more reason for the UN committee that monitors the 182 countries that have ratified to comply with the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, to enforce a “national action plan against racial discrimination.”<sup>1</sup> Similarly, media also highlighted how African Americans were also facing the brunt of racism during the pandemic. According to a study that observed media framing of COVID-19 racial disparities, the news’ and local health officials’ framing that COVID-19 was disproportionately impacting Black communities was noteworthy in increasing awareness and disseminating misinformation.<sup>2</sup> This suggests that media outlets play a crucial role in shaping public attitudes toward the pandemic’s various impacts, and that they should be mindful of the information they present, and manner in which they present. The pandemic also highlighted the perils of misinformation on social media, emphasizing the importance of media outlets in setting the record straight.<sup>3</sup> COVID-19 has illustrated the critical role that media outlets play in raising awareness, containing viral spread, and minimizing panic and confusion among the public. It has also underscored the need for media outlets to remain impartial, avoid political biases, and prioritize accuracy in their coverage of pandemics.

### CASE STUDY II: 2015 EUROPEAN REFUGEE CRISIS

In this increasingly connected world, global media coverage can help portray national and local issues to a larger and often more influential global audience. This process can best be characterized by media’s portrayal of displaced persons, especially during the 2014-2015 European crisis. According to the NIH, the growing number of Syrians, Iraqis, Libyans, Afghans, and Eritreans fleeing war, ethnic conflicts, and economic hardships, escalated from 153,000 in 2008 to greater than 1 million in 2015.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, the EU working with its members to sign treaties with countries outside its borders and control immigration, increase its militarized frontier, and create an internal system for regulating the movement of asylum seekers that aims to force them to stay in the first EU country they enter, also played a role in these vast numbers.<sup>4</sup> Yet, the media’s awareness played a large role in how this crisis was portrayed. Throughout 2015, journalists noted the biggest movements of people across boundaries, and, through individual stories, acknowledged the many reasons people were fleeing their home; these stories soon surfaced on a day-to-day basis in Europe’s media.

The media not only brought central recognition and awareness to the new arrivals, but framed these events as Europe’s “migration crisis” or “refugee crisis” to call for action from European governments, politicians, and communities—call to actions that were deeply influential.<sup>4</sup> This framing of the crisis itself became a “defining phenomenon of the second decade of the 21st century.”<sup>5</sup> The highlighting of individual stories even caused a stir in popular social media platforms such as Twitter and large news organization in providing well-meaning sympathetic portrayal of the displaced. All in all, this crisis highlights the role of global media in successfully highlighting the migrant experience and hardships during the European refugee, crisis ultimately forcing politicians and international agencies to address this.

#### **OTHER RESOURCES:**

- Role and Influence of Media in Health Policy
- Understanding Implicit Bias
- Issues of Narrative Medicine in Perpetuating Health Disinformation
- Journalism Ethics

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