

TOOTH FOR TRUTH

by:
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World Press Freedom Day is celebrated on May 3 to honor journalists who have lost their lives in the line of duty and to honor the fundamental principles of press freedom. However, as many human rights activists, journalists, and people of conscience frequently lament, every day ought to be World Press Freedom Day. This is because, as I write this, nearly 250 journalists are imprisoned around the world. Many more are targeted for harassment, intimidation, or even murder. The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) claims that since 1992, nearly 600 journalists have been killed without being caught. To top it all off, the Philippines was named the second deadliest nation for journalists by the online international news platform Business World. Freedom of speech does not appear to be as free as it ought to be in a democracy.

So I am expressing my utter dismay and concern to what seems to be a twisted principle about everyone's right to live and express – everyone including the journalist as they are also citizens of this nation. Whatever unlawful acts that they have done must undergo legal processes and must be bestowed with lawful punishments, simply because that is how it should be. What if our students who pursuing the career in journalism read this kind of news, having the fear to write again, terrified that this may happen to them in the future if they continue with their passion in writing. And what if they pursue the said profession and unfortunately have the same fate? It will be devastating to hear from the news that one of our students are dead or held captive because of this issue.

Although all of the media was written and distributed throughout our nation, it is our responsibility to ensure that we are in the right position to reach a conclusion. While we may appear to disagree with what we read or saw, it is the same as disagreeing with

our mother or father, loud neighbors, or hardheaded children, and it does not imply that only one of us must be right and one must be punished or die.

Like everything else, media has both positive and negative aspects. However, despite the fact that journalism is tainted by shady money and intentions, this same profession and its practitioners play a significant role in our society and history. We should not disregard or forget this, however. The same group of professionals has succeeded in bringing local issues into the national consciousness and continues to keep us informed by uncovering national issues and risking their lives to deal with corrupt politicians. For me, it would be almost unthinkable if this occupation became so dangerous that journalists would rarely report on issues other than climate updates and road accidents.

The proper, extensive, and efficient instillation of media literacy in our students is what we lack. The ability to access, evaluate, and create media is media literacy. Youth and adults who are media literate are better able to comprehend the intricate messages we receive from various forms of media, including television, radio, the Internet, newspapers, magazines, books, billboards, video games, music, and others. This is a world that deceives only the weak citizens who are ill-equipped to deal with the floods of sensationalized and unfiltered information. Also, we need to make sure that the journalism industry keeps working toward professionalism, which can come from professional organizations and academia.

Let us not belittle the worth of life just because we found it displeasing.

References:

Website: Author, S. Lewis (2016) Duterte Says Journalists in the Philippines Are 'Not Exempted From Assassination'

Article: Unknown, (2019) Committee to Protect Journalist – Philippines remains 7th deadliest country for journalists in global index