



# NEWSLETTER

October 2023

## A word from the board

Dear ONO members,

There are times when news ombuds, no matter where they are in the world, find themselves dealing with the same types of questions and complaints. The same is true for standards editors as they consider what guidance to give their news organizations about which words and which images are most appropriate for a sensitive story. These are times like that. The events in Israel and Gaza make us realize we act in a truly global news ecosystem.

It is at moments like this that an international organization like ONO brings added value to its members, who often work in rather solitary positions. Sharing experiences and strategies can help. Perhaps that explains why so many of us attended October 18th's pop-up shop talk on coverage of Israel and Hamas. The idea for the talk came from one of our members, and was swiftly organized by others. This is when ONO is at its best.

If you feel there is additional need for sessions like this, please write to the board, and we will accommodate when possible. Find us with your ideas, your dilemmas and your challenges, at [newsombudsmenorg@gmail.com](mailto:newsombudsmenorg@gmail.com). We will find you with ours.

On behalf of the board,

Margo Smit (president), Jack Nagler (vice-president), Elisabeth Ribbans (treasurer)

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## Reminder

In November you will receive the invoice for next year's membership fee. The cost of membership remains as it was in 2023. You can find the overview of costs [here](#). If possible please pay before the first of January 2024. We will be changing the password for the members only part of the website, so only those who have paid have access.

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## A special Shoptalk on Israel and Gaza

On Wednesday October 18 we held a special shop talk on the situation in Israel and Gaza. Among others, David Regev recounted from Israel some of his experiences and the challenges he faces working in a country at war. A few days later, he wrote a personal note, to give all of you more of a

view into his work and thoughts. You can find his remarks [here](#). Be aware that you cannot quote from this document without the personal permission from David.

On the members only section of the website you can also find the [talking points](#) provided by Eric Wishart for this shop talk. Because of the sensitive nature of the topic, this shop talk has not been recorded.

On the website you can also find a [document](#) with guidelines and remarks shared by participants during the popup shoptalk.

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## Interesting links on the Israel-Gaza reporting

The *New York Times* changed its headline about the explosion at a Gaza Hospital on October 17. In an extended [Editor's note](#) the paper explains why.

*Vanity Fair* got a unique look inside the discussion that followed inside the newsroom of the *New York Times* on an internal Slack-channel. They wrote about it in [this](#) article.

The hospital explosion was a topic many of us had to deal with. Bart Lauwers of VRT [wrote](#) an article on how to remain impartial in reporting on news like this.

There has been a lot of debate on what words to use in describing the attack from Hamas on Israel and Israel's response. How do you for example describe the armed men who crossed into Gaza? Were they terrorists or fighters? In the *Washington Post* Paul Fahri tries to explain the difficulties in navigating through the ["war of words"](#).

CBC News editor-in-chief Brodie Fenlon also wrote an [article](#) on the choice of words. And why some were not used.

"Everyone wants us to pick a side", [writes](#) *the Hollywood Reporter* in an article on how difficult it is for journalists to do their jobs in this conflict, and the hate they receive online because of it.



In the *Today Explained* [podcast](#) from *Vox*, *BBC's* Shayan Sardarizadeh explains how he tries to navigate the misinformation that is being spread surrounding what is happening in Israel and Gaza. Look for the episode called "Hearts, minds and likes".

More on separating Fact from Fiction in the conflict on the *Bellingcat* website in [this](#) article.

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COMING UP!



## ONO shop talk on Media Criticism and the role of Ombuds

Each year, the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism (Oxford University) publishes the Digital News Report, a kind of 'state of the union' on the news ecosystem we all work in. This year, the report contained a chapter on media criticism and its role in shaping the discourse on media accountability, but also its possible impact on journalists.

ONO has invited Craig Robertson, research fellow at the institute and writer of the chapter, to talk about media criticism and the role of ombuds. Based on the data from a large and international survey, Robertson will take us through the sources of media criticism our public encounters. We think you will agree that there is lots our members learn and use from the data!

The shoptalk is on **Thursday November 9, at 12 UTC** (mind the daylight savings time change in several parts of the world) and is open to all members. You can find the Zoom link for participants [here](#). The Reuters Digital News Report is available in **English** and **Spanish**. You can find more on Craig Robertson [here](#).

If you have ideas for future shop talks please forward Bjarne and Lars an email at [Bjarne.Schilling@pol.dk](mailto:Bjarne.Schilling@pol.dk) and [labe@tv2.dk](mailto:labe@tv2.dk).

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Comments? Did you write a much talked about review? Or find useful reports or studies? Ideas for this newsletter, for shop talks or even the next conference are all welcome!

**E-mail the board:** [newsombudsmenorg@gmail.com](mailto:newsombudsmenorg@gmail.com)