



ONO newsletter January 2025

A word from the board

Dear colleagues,

In the northern hemisphere many colleagues are plodding through the dark days of January while looking enviously towards those fellow ombuds wearing shorts in the southern half of the world. Both halves are having to come to terms with the effects of the new President of the US. In our links to international journalism and ethics we look at how news organisations and their bosses are coming to terms with the shock of his whirlwind approach. Elsewhere we bring you the latest news on how to register for this year's ONO conference in Madrid. And please don't forget your subscriptions – the invoices are going out now.

Margo Smit, president
Elisabeth Ribbans, treasurer
Chris Elliott, executive director

Shoptalk: New dawn in the Middle East?

Every member knows how difficult the last 15 months have been for journalists covering the Middle East conflict. The latest figures from the Committee to Protect journalists record that 167 Palestinian journalists and media workers alone have been killed. As well as the physical dangers of a war fought on three fronts, there has been a relentless battle fought over the language and general coverage of the war by all sides in the conflict.

This has brought a huge number of complaints to news organisations from a public on a hair trigger to find perceived bias in a journalist, publication or broadcaster.

Our next Shoptalk, on Thursday, February 13 at 1300 UTC, will examine these issues with the help of two speakers currently covering the war. **Antonio Pita** and **Abby Sewell** will share their experience of trying to achieve balance, fairness and transparency during one of the bloodiest conflicts in the region in recent history.



Antonio (left) has been Middle East Correspondent for El País since 2022. Based in Jerusalem, he has been reporting from the Middle East for more than 10 years.

Abby (right) is News director, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and Turkey for the Associated Press. She is a Beirut-based journalist who has focused on refugee and development issues, politics and culture stories.



Madrid 2025: Registration is open!

Madrid 2025 is only three months away. The programme is finally taking shape and here are some of the highlights:

One session looks at how to protect sources in a world where populism turns journalists into enemies. **Javier Lafuente**, deputy director of EL PAÍS América will give practical advice on how to avoid putting sources at risk. **Javier** is preparing a very practical session on basic tools of digital security. Others include an examination of the growing influence of influencers and whether they are a threat to journalism and how to be an ombudsman in a conflict zone.

One of the most important weapons in combating mis and disinformation is encouraging media and information literacy and this will be the basis of a conference session supported by UNESCO. The organisation is focused this year on building media partnerships in terms of promoting media literacy and believes that ombuds can play a key part. UNESCO will run and support the session as well as bring 4 or 5 editors and journalists to take part.

There will also be short slots for new members to introduce themselves and the problems they face as well as Shoptalks aimed at sharing not just the problems but possible solutions too.

Members are now able to register for the conference!

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

We are holding prices at last year's rates: \$500 for full members and \$250 for smaller publications by arrangement.

Technology update

Members are now able to set their own passwords for the upgraded ONO website and many have done so already. **Jeff Brown** and his team at Honeytree technologies are walking ONO officers – led by **Pierre Champoux** – through the new digital pathways that lead to the greater functionality of the new website.

For instance, we are experimenting with sending the monthly newsletter out by *MailPoet*, a *WordPress* plug-in that makes the whole thing easier and a wider set of options. In the meantime, we will continue to send the newsletter separately as a PDF.

Please explore the website and let us know what you think, whether you think it is an improvement on the old or not. If you have a problem let us know – we can't fix things of which we are unaware.

Here are other links to articles that members may find interesting...

A new film, which premiered at the Sundance Film Festival, questioning the authorship of the Associated Press's historic photograph of a young girl who suffered serious burns during an American air attack in the Vietnamese war has caused a major controversy. Here is a report in the Guardian about the controversy and AP's own report.

Guardian: [‘Uncomfortable truths’: controversial film challenges authorship of famous photo](#)

AP: [He is credited with one of history's most indelible photos. A new documentary questions who took it](#)

Thanks to **Pierre Champoux** and **Yavuz Baydar** for their contributions.

If you spot something that you think may be interesting to members please [email ONO](#) with the link.

PPoynter

- [The media's overall responsible plane crash coverage includes calling out Trump - Poynter](#)
- [Under the new Trump administration, El Tímpano launches new guidelines to try to protect sources](#)

Guardian

- [Trump, Musk and Zuckerberg have declared war on facts and truth. The pushback must start now](#)

Global Investigative Journalism network

- [Misinformation on TikTok: How Documented Examined Hundreds of Videos in Different Languages](#)

The New York Times

- [Trump Administration to Remove 4 Major News Outlets From Pentagon Office Space](#)

NiemanLab

- [How young Kenyans turned to news influencers when protesters stormed the country's parliament](#)

Columbia Journalism Review

- [NPR and PBS Face a Moment of Truth](#)
- [The Time to Look](#)

The Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism

- [How to protect democracies from falsehoods? By empowering the young with open-source investigation skills](#)

LatAm Journalism review, Knight Center

- [‘Exile is one of the most violent experiences someone can live’: Haitian journalists tell their stories after leaving home.](#)

International Journalists’ Network

- [Advice to avoid falling victim to fake and misleading journalism job postings](#)

The Fix

- [Trump’s freeze on US foreign aid deals a painful blow to CEE media](#)
- [Meta’s fact-checking shutdown sparks fears of disinfo crisis in Balkans](#)

Help us make your newsletter even better!

If you want to share your own experiences or have reports all ONO members should know about, find us at newsombudsmenorg@gmail.com and we will include it in ONO’s next newsletter.

Did you know...

...that this ONO Newsletter and past editions are [available on the ONO website?](#)

Also, you should have received your ONO newsletter directly in your inbox, in a more mobile friendly format. If not, please check your spam folder! If so, let us know what you think!