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Journalist groups call on US to protect press freedom

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27 other press freedom and journalist groups are voicing support for a free press, and call on the United States to protect reporters and media workers employed by the U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM)

A letter, organized by CPJ, said that eliminating the agency's outlets, which have reached audiences living under authoritarian rule for more than 80 years, was a "significant blow to press freedom." It noted that Voice of America, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, and other affiliates are frequent targets in authoritarian countries and noted that many of their staff face significant personal risk in reporting on and from highly repressive regimes.

Groups urge US to protect press freedom and keep journalists safe after order to gut USAGM

We, the undersigned, reaffirm our support for press freedom and a free media that is able to operate without coercion by, or interference from, government – and call on the United States to protect all reporters and media workers employed by the U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM), many of whom face significant personal risk in reporting on and from highly repressive regimes. For more than 80 years, USAGM entities, which include Voice of America (VOA) and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), have played a vital role in reaching audiences living under authoritarian governments, empowering free expression in some of the world's most dangerous reporting environments. Eliminating these organizations is a significant blow to press freedom - and a gift to autocrats worldwide. Journalists for VOA, RFE/RL, and other affiliates are frequently targeted by authorities in highly censored or dangerous countries. A March 14 executive order issued by President Donald J. Trump called for USAGM to be

“eliminated to the maximum extent consistent with applicable law” as part of ongoing efforts to reduce “the elements of the Federal bureaucracy that the President has determined are unnecessary.” USAGM is a U.S. federal agency whose mandate is drawn from several laws. It oversees broadcast entities including VOA, RFE/RL, the Office of Cuba Broadcasting, Radio Free Asia, and the Middle East Broadcasting Networks. Under U.S. law, the editorial operations of USAGM entities are separate from the government to protect editorial independence. It is vital that Congress protect USAGM, ensure the safety of its affiliate journalists, and reaffirm the U.S. government’s commitment to a free and independent media at home and abroad.

Signed by–

• Committee to Protect Journalists • Association for International Broadcasting • Reporters Without Borders (RSF) • Public Media Alliance • The Press Freedom Center at the National Press Club • Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism • The Bureau of Investigative Journalism • International Press Institute • Forbidden Stories • Radio Television Digital News Association • PEN America • The European Federation of Journalists • Nieman Foundation for Journalism • Pulitzer Center • World Association of News Publishers (WAN-IFRA) • National Press Photographers Association • Society of Professional Journalists • Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press • Freedom of the Press Foundation • Association of Foreign Press Correspondents • Center for Democracy & Technology • Index on Censorship • Free Press • Global Investigative Journalism Network • Global Reporting Centre • International Women’s Media Foundation • European Centre for Press and Media Freedom (ECPMF) • The Asian American Journalists Association