



May 3, 2017

Fethullah Gulen's Statement on World Press Freedom Day

World Press Freedom Day is an occasion that shines a light on the importance of free speech and a free press. One truly cannot be considered a human being without freedom. Protection of essential freedoms, including the freedom of thought and expression are as important as the protection of life, freedom of religion, bodily and mental health, family and property. Free speech and an independent media are critical components of a peaceful and free society.

As we celebrate this meaningful day, we remember that in too many countries, these rights are suppressed by the state or through political and societal pressures. The subjugation of independent voices of intellectuals, journalists or media outlets leaves people in the dark about the status of their fellow citizens and the direction of their country, as my homeland of Turkey is now experiencing. It is no surprise that the countries that facilitate freedom of thought and expression thrive while those who stifle them suffer deep polarization and potentially violent conflicts. Only through hearing genuine voices of others can we as a society develop empathy, which is so critical to civilization.

I hope that on this day people around the world, including those whose words carry weight with an audience, will rededicate themselves to these principles so we may foster freedom of expression where it is not yet achieved and protect it where it has been achieved, however imperfect it might be.

About Fethullah Gülen

Fethullah Gülen is an Islamic scholar, preacher and social advocate, whose decades-long commitment to education, interfaith dialogue and altruism has inspired millions in Turkey and around the world. Gülen is the honorary chairman of the Rumi Forum, Washington, DC and the Intercultural Dialogue Platform, Brussels, Belgium.

About Alliance for Shared Values

The Alliance for Shared Values (AFSV) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that serves as a voice for cultural organizations affiliated with Hizmet, a civil society movement inspired by prominent preacher and peace advocate Fethullah Gülen. The Alliance strives to promote peace and social harmony by helping reduce misinformation and false stereotypes about any or all ethnic, cultural and religious communities. To learn more about the Alliance, please visit www.afsv.org.

Media contact

media@afsv.org

212-682-4278