

# Limiting media freedom in democratic states

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# **PROPOSITIONS ACCOMPANYING THE THESIS**

## **Limiting Media Freedom in Democratic States**

### ***How Governments Use Instruments to Curtail***

### ***News Media Freedom***

**By Erich de la Fuente**

1. Effective legislation protecting press freedom and access to information is necessary, but it must be accompanied by rigorous enforcement and political commitment (Chapter 5).
2. Placing state advertising in news media outlets without clear legal allocation rules creates a conflict of interest for journalists and news media that could compromise editorial coverage, causing it to inordinately favor the government (Chapter 4).
3. Free democracies can use subtle instruments to limit media freedom, mainly via economic pressure tools and nonphysical harassment of journalists (Chapter 6).
4. Watchdog organizations should constantly monitor, identify, and counteract early signs of government limitations on news media freedom because, if left unchecked, press freedom can continue to erode and weaken democracy itself (Chapter 8).
5. State-owned media outlets in democratic states need to have explicit and legally institutionalized editorial independence from their governments.
6. Donors and the international development community should increase financial and technical support to independent news media outlets that are not part of large conglomerates, including those that work in democratic societies.

7. In order to analyze government policy tools that are intentionally kept subtle and difficult to detect, a mixed methods approach collecting and reviewing evidence can offer valuable techniques needed to obtain sound answers.
8. With the increasing speed of communication of all sorts, the risks that disinformation will outpace and overwhelm verified facts are growing rapidly, making verification more important than ever.
9. Reluctance to express individual views due to societal pressures, whether from peers, superiors, subjects, or interested parties, can lead to self-censorship and stifle public debate on important issues.
10. At a time when liberal democracy is increasingly under pressure around the world by authoritarianism or elected leaders with autocratic tendencies, it is of utmost importance to defend core democratic values by maintaining a free media environment, independent of political differences.
11. “It is only... a free press that can temper the appetite of any government to amass power at the expense of the citizen. It is only... a free press that can be the vigilant watchdog of the public interest against the temptation on the part of those who wield it to abuse the power.” (Nelson Mandela 1918-2013).