

Beat: News

NUJ condemns UK government's latest attack on press freedom

NUJ press release

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USPA NEWS - Looming legislation aimed at tackling crime overseas will create fresh dangers for journalists and compromise press freedom, warned the NUJ.

Despite the union's repeated warnings of the dangers contained within the government's Crime (Overseas Production Orders) Bill, the government has persisted with the bill, which reaches its report stage in parliament tomorrow, Wednesday 30 January.

The Crime (Overseas Production Orders) Bill will allow the UK government to make agreements with foreign governments so they can apply to access information stored in the UK. These new powers will not be accompanied by safeguards for journalists working in the UK or journalists living in exile.

Since September the NUJ has met with a range of parliamentarians highlighting how the draft legislation fails to adhere to the basic safeguards contained within the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) 1984 and the authorities already have extensive powers of surveillance set out in the Investigatory Powers Act (IPA) 2016. This new bill enables the authorities to access the content of journalists' electronic communications, and represents a further erosion of basic rights to privacy and freedom of expression.

Michelle Stanistreet, NUJ general secretary, said: "This Conservative government has repeatedly demonstrated its contempt for journalism and disregard for press freedom, relentlessly introducing new laws and powers that undermine and compromise the ability of journalists to carry out their work with integrity and in safety. This government has sought to restrict existing freedom of information law, introduced draconian surveillance legislation, tried to make it easier to prosecute journalists by reforming the Official Secrets Act and now it's pushing legislation that disregards the few legal protections there are for journalistic material and sources. This legislation paves the way for the Home Office to surrender up the content of our electronic communications to foreign governments. So let us be in no doubt – this government is orchestrating a deliberately hostile legal environment for all journalists."

Article online:

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-14904/nuj-condemns-uk-governments-latest-attack-on-press-freedom.html>

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