



1-7 June, 2009, over 500 academics, artists, media professionals, writers and activists will gather in Oslo to explore the theory and practice of free expression.

Through a series of plenary and working sessions, practitioners from around the world will share experiences, skills and ideas to better understand and strengthen free expression, while raising public awareness about the critical role public debate plays in political and social change. From the waterfront, to the city centre to the royal castle park, the Forum will open spaces for public engagement through outdoor exhibitions, performance and debate.

### **Why a Global Forum?**

Freedom of expression is an essential condition for human rights and democratic processes. As the mouthpiece of political dissent, journalists, writers, artists and musicians are often the first victims of abusive power. Threatened through law, violence and exile, their struggles represent the frontline in defending human rights. Simultaneously, new and ambiguous challenges are posed to free expression by technology, geopolitical alliances and a globalizing market for media and information. Free expression is thus not only widely violated across the globe today, but increasingly contested on principled grounds.

By facilitating interaction between participants from different perspectives, cultures and professions, the Global Forum hopes to move towards a better understanding of these dynamics. By opening spaces in which to share experiences, develop strategies and build crucial alliances, the Forum will strengthen efforts to defend free expression where it is needed the most. By facilitating this interaction within a week of public performance and dialogue, the Forum hopes to raise international awareness of the role that free expression plays in shaping political landscapes.

### **Plenary & Working Sessions: exploring the practices and theories of free expression**

Following 2 days of annual meetings for media and human rights organizations, including the International Freedom of Expression Exchange network (IFEX), the Forum will open plenary and working sessions to all registered participants. Themes such as religious intolerance, impunity, whistleblowing, internet censorship and anti-terror legislation will be explored through open and productive debate that gathers writers, activists, artists, researchers, publishers, musicians, legal professionals, academics and media professionals. The Forum also seeks to be an arena in which free expression practitioners can strengthen skills and strategies for defending expression in oppressive and dangerous environments.

- Key note lectures and seminars on free expression
- Meetings of organizations working with free expression, media and human rights
- Workshops and practical trainings for journalists and free expression activists
- Open sessions for strategic coordination and campaign building

### **Cultural Events: bringing free expression into the public space**

The Forum is also coordinating with local and international partners to present a series of cultural events and opportunities for public engagement, including:

- Literary readings
- Theatre programs
- Public lectures
- A Free Marketplace of Ideas & Speakers' Corner in city centre
- Internationally broadcast debate
- A film festival
- A public music festival
- Outdoor and indoor exhibitions

For more information please contact the Forum secretariat:  
[info@expressionforum.org](mailto:info@expressionforum.org) Tel:+47 23 01 46 96; Mob:+47 90 62 9020; Fax:+47 23 01 46 97  
release date: July 08