

UPFI: Beyond the Noise: Media, Human Dignity, and the Architecture of Peace

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A Universal Peace Federation Statement on MEDCOM 2026

As scholars, journalists, and communication professionals gather in Bali, Indonesia on March 23 - 24, 2026 for the [11th World Conference](#) on Media and Mass Communication (MEDCOM 2026) under the theme "Rethinking Media Futures: Sustainability, Resistance, and Communication Justice," the Universal Peace Federation ([UPF](#)) welcomes this timely global conversation.

Why MEDCOM 2026 Matters Now

The conference comes at a pivotal moment. The world is confronting war, displacement, environmental stress, and the rapid expansion of artificial intelligence and algorithm-driven media systems. In this environment, the future of media is not simply a technological question. It is a public and moral one.

Media do more than report events. They shape how societies understand truth, interpret conflict, recognize dignity, and imagine a shared future. For this reason, communication justice cannot be defined only in terms of access, speed, or technological innovation. At its core lies an ethical responsibility: the duty of media to protect human dignity.

This responsibility does not restrict freedom of expression. It safeguards it. A society cannot remain free if truth becomes negotiable or if public discourse is driven primarily by spectacle, outrage, and manipulation.

These concerns resonate strongly with several MEDCOM 2026 themes, including Faith-Based Communication and AI, Technology, and the Future of Media. As new technologies transform communication systems, questions of moral agency, public trust, and human dignity become inseparable

from technological innovation itself.

The Universal Peace Federation approaches these issues from long-standing engagement with media and public responsibility. During the Cold War, UPF's founders co-founded the [World Media Association](#), which convened international conferences and exchanges between journalists from the United States and the Soviet Union. Even during a period of intense ideological rivalry, those initiatives recognized a crucial principle: a free press must also be a moral press.

This commitment was renewed with the creation of the International Media Association for Peace ([IMAP](#)) at World Summit 2020. IMAP brings together journalists, editors, publishers, and communication professionals who seek to strengthen ethical standards, restore public trust in journalism, and use media influence to promote peace and shared universal values.

Drawing on our global experience, the Universal Peace Federation offers several reflections for those exploring communication justice.



In recent years, IMAP programs in [Asia](#), [North America](#), and [Europe](#) have explored media ethics, media integrity, and the responsibilities of journalism in a rapidly changing technological environment. These discussions consistently highlight a central reality: media can either intensify fragmentation or help societies resist it.

The broader work of UPF further illustrates the power of narrative in shaping social cohesion. In 2025, UPF coordinated a Global [100-Day Campaign](#) Toward the International Day of Peace,

connecting local community initiatives with global observances and demonstrating how value-driven storytelling can strengthen civic engagement and public dialogue.

The timing of MEDCOM 2026 is also significant as the international community prepares for the [International Year of Volunteers](#) for Sustainable Development ([IVY 2026](#)). Volunteer action and community partnerships will play a crucial role in advancing the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) in the second half of the 2030 Agenda. Media narratives that highlight civic responsibility and cooperation can help strengthen this momentum.

First, journalism must renew confidence in its ethical vocation. Accuracy, fairness, careful attribution, and respect for the dignity of persons are not outdated ideals. They remain the minimum conditions for a functioning public sphere. When shared facts erode and discourse becomes dominated by tribal loyalty or anger, social trust begins to collapse.

Second, the rise of algorithmic media requires a clearer sense of moral agency. Artificial intelligence and digital platforms now shape visibility, memory, and belief at an unprecedented scale. They can expand access to knowledge and participation, but they can also amplify bias, reward emotional extremity, and accelerate the spread of misinformation. Technology alone cannot resolve these tensions. Ethical leadership and public accountability must guide technological development.

Third, [media literacy](#) must become a central dimension of peace education. Citizens need more than access to information; they need the ability to distinguish reporting from manipulation, evidence from performance, and dialogue from engineered outrage. Without these skills, societies become vulnerable not

only to misinformation but to dehumanization. (Photo Humphrey Hawksley - IMAP - UK talk on 'How to Stop the Next War')

Fourth, inclusive narratives are essential for sustainable peace. Media have the power to either reinforce stereotypes or broaden understanding. When religious communities, cultural minorities, or marginalized voices are consistently caricatured or excluded, social division deepens. At their best, media can expose injustice without inflaming hatred and tell stories that expand the moral imagination. (Photo: Media Bias and Democratic Freedoms: Protecting Religious Minorities' - IMAP Conference)

For these reasons, cooperation across sectors is essential. Media professionals, scholars, educators, policymakers, faith leaders, and civil society actors all have roles to play in shaping the future of communication. The evolution of media systems cannot be left solely to commercial incentives or technological determinism. It requires a shared ethical commitment rooted in human dignity, responsibility, and service to the common good.

This approach aligns closely with the global agenda for sustainable development, particularly in the areas of quality education and media literacy (SDG 4), reduced inequalities (SDG 10), public access to information and protection of fundamental freedoms (SDG 16), and partnerships with civil society (SDG 17).

For the [Universal Peace Federation](#), the highest purpose of communication is not domination but relationship-building. Guided by the vision of humanity as [one family under God](#), we believe that media should help strengthen mutual respect and shared responsibility across cultures and faiths.

This conviction reflects the vision of our founders, [Dr. Hak Ja Han](#) and the late [Dr. Sun Myung Moon](#), who long emphasized that media should protect human dignity and contribute to the growth of a peaceful global family.

When guided by such values, journalism becomes more than a profession, it becomes a form of public service. Media at their best help societies resist division, protect the vulnerable, and create space for truth, conscience, and responsibility.

At this decisive moment in the evolution of global media, the task before us is not only to improve information systems. It is to elevate the moral purpose of communication itself.

As an NGO in [General Consultative Status](#) with the United Nations Economic and Social Council, the Universal Peace Federation welcomes collaboration with scholars, journalists, educators, and civil society leaders. Through UPF and IMAP, we look forward to partnerships that advance media literacy, ethical journalism, and responsible use of artificial intelligence.

We extend our respect to all participants at MEDCOM 2026 and invite continued collaboration toward a shared goal: ensuring that media help societies live together with greater truth, dignity, and mutual responsibility.

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