

424 (V). Freedom of information: interference with radio signals

The General Assembly,

Whereas freedom to listen to radio broadcasts regardless of source is embodied in article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,⁸ which reads: "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression" and whereas this right "includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers",

Whereas article 44 of the International Telecommunication Convention, Atlantic City, 1947,⁹ provides that "All stations, whatever their purpose, must be established and operated in such a manner as not to result in harmful interference to the radio service or communications of other members or associate members . . . [and that] Each member or associate member undertakes to require the private operating agencies which it recognizes and the other operating agencies duly authorized for this purpose, to observe the provisions of the preceding paragraph",

Considering that the duly authorized radio operating agencies in some countries are deliberately interfering with the reception by the people of those countries of certain radio signals originating beyond their territories, and bearing in mind the discussion¹⁰ which took place in the Economic and Social Council and in the Sub-Commission on Freedom of Information and of the Press on this subject,

Considering that peace among nations rests on the goodwill of all peoples and governments and that tolerance and understanding are prerequisites for establishing goodwill in the international field,

1. *Adopts* the declaration of the Economic and Social Council contained in its resolution 306 B (XI) of 9 August 1950 to the effect that this type of interference constitutes a violation of the accepted principles of freedom of information;

2. *Condemns* measures of this nature as a denial of the right of all persons to be fully informed concerning news, opinions and ideas regardless of frontiers;

3. *Invites* the governments of all Member States to refrain from such interference with the right of their peoples to freedom of information;

4. *Invites* all governments to refrain from radio broadcasts that would mean unfair attacks or slanders against other peoples anywhere and in so doing to conform strictly to an ethical conduct in the interest of world peace by reporting facts truly and objectively;

5. *Invites* also Member States to give every possible facility so that their peoples may know objectively the activities of the United Nations in promoting peace and, in particular, to facilitate the reception and transmission of the United Nations official broadcasts.

*325th plenary meeting,
14 December 1950.*

⁸ See resolution 217 A (III).

⁹ See *Final Act of the International Telecommunication and Radio Conferences, Atlantic City, 1947*, International Telecommunication Union, Geneva.

¹⁰ See documents E/AC.7/SR.135 to 139, E/SR.405 and E/CN.4/Sub.1/SR.68 to 86.

425 (V). Question of the freedom of information and of the Press in times of emergency

The General Assembly,

Considering that freedom of information and of the Press is one of the fundamental freedoms and should be advanced and safeguarded,

Considering that limitations might be placed on this freedom in emergencies or on the pretext of emergencies,

Recommends to all Member States that, when they are compelled to declare a state of emergency, measures to limit freedom of information and of the Press shall be taken only in the most exceptional circumstances and then only to the extent strictly required by the situation.

*325th plenary meeting,
14 December 1950.*

426 (V). Draft Convention on Freedom of Information

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 313 (IV) of 20 October 1949, the recommendation¹¹ of the sixth session of the Commission on Human Rights regarding freedom of information and the discussion¹² concerning that recommendation at the eleventh session of the Economic and Social Council,

Considering that freedom of information and the Purposes of the United Nations are indivisible,

1. *Appoints* a Committee consisting of the representatives of the following fifteen countries: Cuba, Ecuador, Egypt, France, India, Lebanon, Mexico, the Netherlands, Pakistan, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Yugoslavia, which shall meet at the Headquarters of the United Nations as soon as possible, but not later than 1 March 1951, to prepare a draft Convention on Freedom of Information, taking into consideration the draft¹³ approved by the United Nations Conference on Freedom of Information held at Geneva from 23 March to 21 April 1948; the text¹⁴ voted during the second part of the third session of the General Assembly; article 14 of the provisional text¹⁵ of the draft First International Covenant on Human Rights; and the observations¹⁶ contained in the summary records of the meetings of the Third Committee dealing with the question;

2. *Requests* the Committee to report to the Economic and Social Council at its thirteenth session on the results of its work and to submit recommendations, in particular, with regard to the advisability of con-

¹¹ See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Fifth Year, Eleventh Session, Supplement No. 5, annex IV.*

¹² See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Eleventh Session, 404th meeting, and document E/AC.7/SR.139.*

¹³ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fourth Session, Third Committee, Annex, documents A/961 and A/C.3/518, and A/C.3/518/Corr.1.*

¹⁴ See resolution 277 A (III).

¹⁵ See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Fifth Year, Eleventh Session, Supplement No. 5, annex I.*

¹⁶ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifth Session, Third Committee, 320th-324th meetings.*