

Press Freedom Committee

Sept. 17, 2025, via Zoom

Committee members in attendance: Chair Kate Howard, Ana Ley, Alejandra Cancino, George Schwarz, John D'Anna, Shawn McIntosh, Julieta Martinelli, Laura Strawmyer, Alison MacAdam, Mike Mason

IRE Staff in attendance: Adam Rhodes

Summary: After introductions and a brief overview of the new committee's charge and mission, Howard explained the origin of the committee and some of the actions the board has already taken to elevate press freedom issues as a priority, including an emphasis on journalist safety and digital security, a new "Defending the Facts" training series, and signing on to coalition statements in support of [journalists who have been arrested during protests](#). We also discussed a decision rubric the board is using to assess whether to get involved in statements, and an effort to sharpen and clarify that rubric.

The group also collectively discussed our ideas and priorities. Among ideas discussed:

- Developing processes that will support this committee, and the IRE board, in acting urgently as pressing First Amendment matters arise
- Urging the board to view press freedom as an issue that, depending on current events, might require a fast-tracking process for actions
- Develop a more specific framework for issues that are always a yes, always a no, etc. Are there red lines for involvement or issues we aren't open to involvement in?
- Pursuing options to support legal costs of journalists who are facing harm
- An educational component to better explain to the public what journalistic freedom is, what it represents and why it's worth fighting for; Social media strategy; and overall public awareness
- Expanding crucial know your rights training to non-members