

## **Statement by H.E. Sheikha Haya Rashed al Khalifa, the President of the United Nations General Assembly for World Press Freedom Day**

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*Posted: Thursday, 3 May 2007, New York*

Dear friends,

Humanity's perpetual search for freedom of expression is ultimately demonstrated by its resolve to guarantee freedom of the press. From reporting on world wars, natural disasters or social and political upheavals to nourishing the minds of society, journalists are always in the forefront of the fight to inform and enlighten.

And today, on World Press Freedom Day, we have the opportunity to reaffirm our commitment - enshrined in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights - to freedom of opinion and expression.

Our hearts go out to all journalists who have been silenced or those whose freedom has been restricted in any way. And, to those who have paid the ultimate price, giving up their lives in pursuit of freedom of expression and greater public awareness. Their memories will be forever etched in ours hearts.

On World Press Freedom Day, I would like to make a special plea for the immediate and safe release of the BBC's correspondent, Alan Johnston. But not just Alan Johnston, every reporter unlawfully imprisoned must be set free.