



Jan 2024 Branch

2024 looks to be a pivotal year around the globe. Will Trump be back in the White House? Will there be new curtains at Downing Street? Will there be an end to the devastation in the Middle East and Ukraine? Will the robots take over?

Happy New Year from all at the NUJ. As the UK, India and USA gear up for general elections, wars in the Middle East and Ukraine grind desperately on and cuts to the press and BBC look set to continue, the new year has kicked off in sombre tone.

However, there is lots of work in train for 2024 across the NUJ, to ensure that the voices of journalists and journalism is heard loud and clear. We will be focusing on making the union's structures more accessible and meaningful, championing the work of our excellent reps and fighting for the causes members passionately believe in.

As the UK gets on to an election footing, we will be arguing for political parties to promise to uphold press freedom and journalists' and trade union rights, and launching a new report taking forward the excellent work that sprang from our News Recovery Plan, published in 2020 at the outset of the pandemic.

We're excited to have launched free training available throughout the union focused on leadership skills for mid-career journalists and a workshop on spotting fake news and misinformation. Find out how you can apply for the courses on page seven.

We will continue to monitor the onward march of generative AI and resist attempts by companies to use it to undermine journalistic integrity and creatives' rights. The Reuters Institute's crystal ball is predicting this year to be when newsrooms embrace AI (see page four). Already, the local newspaper publisher Newsquest has taken on seven

reporters who use AI to "create" stories – in reality taking in press releases and regurgitating them in house style.

Any union is only as good as its membership, that's why we are encouraging branches to use next month's #HeartUnionsWeek to boost recruitment and promote the vital role unions play in the workplace for staff and freelancers. We want to hear about your events and all your campaigning work – share your stories by contacting the union's campaigns department at campaigns@nuj.org.uk. The calendar of events in this month's issue provides plenty of ideas for themed branch meetings and opportunities to invite interesting speakers.

Aid for Gaza

Journalists in the Gaza need your help to do their job in desperate circumstances.

The IFJ is supplying vital equipment and aid. Please donate to its safety fund.

Branches can email jackiec@nuj.org to transfer from their management allowances.

DONATE NOW

The International Federation of Journalists' (IFJ) 2023 list of media workers killed recorded the highest number of deaths in recent years, the grisly total included the loss of more than 80 journalists' lives in the Israeli-Hamas war. Two journalists were murdered in Afghanistan under Taliban rule and



elsewhere in the Asia-Pacific region 10 journalists were killed across India, the Philippines, Bangladesh, Pakistan and China. All paid the ultimate price for their commitment to their jobs as journalists.

That's why our solidarity and support for journalists around the globe is so important, and why we continue to appeal to branches, chapels and members to boost the peer-to-peer help that the IFJ's Safety Fund is able to make. The NUJ membership's continuing support for that work is impressive and something we should be collectively proud of.

In Palestine, that has involved working with the Palestinian Journalists Syndicate to make sure aid, vital equipment and medical supplies including blast trauma kits are reaching local reporters and photographers – they are the only press able to operate in Gaza because foreign news organisations have been blocked by the Israeli government. That's why we are asking branches to continue to donate to the IFJ's safety fund.

Whatever challenges and opportunities 2024 brings, the NUJ will be there, providing a collective voice for our members, whether in the workplace, in parliaments, the international stage and media, right across the publishing and communications industries.

Michelle Stanistreet

2024

02



Branch action

Branches play a huge role in getting behind the union's **campaigns** and involving local politicians and communities in the causes we are fighting for, such as local news and press freedom, as well as promoting our work in the news, publishing and communications sectors. They are the bedrock of our recruitment, particularly with local journalism students. Having a speaker is always useful to help make a branch meeting interesting - here's some dates in the NUJ's diary that may prove an inspiration for topics of debate.

♥ UNIONS

February

#HeartUnions Week, 13-19

February, is about telling the story of why unions are vital for everyone at work and encouraging people not in a union to join. It's a good focus for kicking off a recruitment campaign as well as raising the profile of unions in general. This year's theme is pay: unionised workers are paid on average five per cent more than other similar workers. The TUC provides useful resources to aid **union organising** and don't forget the NUJ recruitment materials **on**

the website. Contact **campaigns@nuj.org.uk** if you need help and let us know what you are doing for **#HeartUnions week**.

LGBT History Month is a time to recognise and honour the contributions and struggles of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals and promote equality for the LGBTQ+ community. If you want to receive news about the NUJ's LGBTQ+ network events this year, update your profile details by logging in to **the website**. Check out the **2024 Pride calendar**.

March

International Women's Day is Friday 8 March and the theme is #Inspire Inclusion to "collectively forge a more inclusive world for women". The **website** has lots of information, **event packs** and resources that can be used to take part in the campaign and organise a themed branch meeting.

International Transgender Day of Visibility takes place on 31 March.

April

World Book and Copyright Day on 23 April is a celebration of books and reading and an opportunity to recognise the rights of authors and creators. Invite a local writer or

publisher or run a workshop on protecting copyright. The NUJ's **AI campaign** is calling for regulatory measures to protect creators' copyright.

Workers' Memorial Day is on 28 April. More people are killed at work than in wars. Join the NUJ's Health and Safety Council and the TUC in promoting the union's health and safety campaigns. The NUJ website has lots of information on **health and safety**. Encourage branch members to become health and safety reps who can play a powerful role in workplaces.

May

May Day is celebrated on 1 May, supporting workers' rights.

The **UK local elections on 2 May** include ballots for the mayors in England and police and crime commissioners in England and Wales.

The UN's **World Press Freedom Day** on 3 May highlights the fundamental principles of press freedom around the world. Support the union's work with the International Federation of Journalists on that day and invite a speaker to your branch.

The **Eurovision** final is on 11 May. **Mental Health Awareness Week** will take place 13 to 19 May. Invite a

Have your say

Union finances

NUJ subscriptions fund the union's diverse range of work and activities – including industrial support for members, individual and collective representation, extensive legal services and the extensive campaigning work carried out on behalf of members collectively. So how do we build a fair subscriptions structure that maintains a quality service? A national webinar will be held in the spring, with branches being encouraged to send a representative. Read the [finance paper](#) and respond to campaigns@nuj.org.uk and chrisfnuj@gmail.com

Delegate Meeting

Ideas are sought on how to revamp Delegate Meeting to make it as welcoming and accessible as possible for newcomers, more focused on broadening genuine debate and engagement in setting the union's policy agenda, and better channelling delegates' efforts and energy. The last DM instructed the union to change the use of time in imaginative and positive ways to get more out of the gathering. Submissions should be addressed to campaigns@nuj.org.uk and gerry.curran@icloud.com marking the subject line DM Renewal.

Industrial councils

Branches have been asked to offer their opinions, suggestions, information and inspiration on reforming the future role and look of the NUJ's industrial councils. Respond to campaigns@nuj.org.uk and gerry.curran@icloud.com marking the subject line Industrial Councils Review.

mental health first aider to talk to your branch. See [NUJ resources](#). **The Hay Festival** is from 23 May–2 June.

June

The UN's **World Environment Day** on 5 June is a good event to use as a branch meeting theme.

Glastonbury Festival, 26 June.
London Pride, 29 June.

July

The Paris Olympic Games open on **26 July**.

August

The **Edinburgh Fringe** starts on **2 August**.

The **Notting Hill Carnival** kicks off on 25 August.

The **Paralympic Games** open on **28 August**.

September

TUC Congress will be in Brighton from 8-11 September.

The party conference season opens with the **Liberal Democrats** from 14 September, followed by **Labour** from 22 September and the **Conservatives** from 29 September ... unless there is an autumn general election.

October

October marks the beginning of **Black History Month** and the **NUJ's Claudia Jones Memorial Lecture** – speaker tbc.

World Mental Health Day is on 10 October.

November

TUC Young Workers' Month: organise an event or speaker that

will be of interest to young members or plan a recruitment event.

Only one in ten murdered journalists are properly investigated, says the UN, with most of the killers enjoying total impunity. Support **International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists**, on November 2. The IFJ has more [information and resources](#).

US presidential election, 5 November.

International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against

Women falls on 25 November. Support and promote the NUJ's Equality Council's work on this day.

December

Human Rights Day is observed on 10 December.

• Go to the [Press Gazette website](#) for a comprehensive calendar of events.



Who are you?

Make it your new year's resolution to send the names and contact details of your branch officers to campaigns@nuj.org.uk putting branch contacts in the subject line so we can publish an up-to-date list on the NUJ website.

2024

04

Share the unhuman truth

2024 is the year newsrooms will fully embrace AI, says an influential report based on media leaders' views

Klara Indernach writes more than 5 per cent of the German tabloid Express.de stories on a wide and varied number of subjects.

The blonde, young woman whose byline picture shows a wide smile is a virtual journalist. While her work is reviewed by humans, the writing, structure, and tone are effectively outsourced to AI.

The Reuters Institute's ***Journalism, media and technology trends and predictions 2024 report***, based on surveys with more than 300 digital publishing leaders from more than 50 countries, says: "If 2023 was a year for coming to terms with generative AI, this will be the year when newsrooms fully embrace the technologies and incorporate them into workflows."

NewsGPT describes itself as the world's first news website entirely generated by AI. Its slogan is "Share the unhuman truth" and it says "algorithms, not humans, generate news articles, eliminating personal opinions and agendas". The Reuters report notes a small disclaimer saying content may contain inaccuracies or unexpected outputs.

AI provides useful tools for journalists, such as the app Artifact

which recommends articles and can summarise news in different styles. TLDR (derived from the online expression too long, didn't read) from online media group, Rappler, converts stories into summaries, graphics, and videos.

But news publishers think AI will have a negative impact on trust in news, particularly this year with elections due in more than 40 countries and the report gives a number of examples of how fake news generated by AI has already been employed in political campaigns.

Publishers are beginning to push back against the tech companies, taking out lawsuits over copyright infringements and brokering deals for payment for copy used by OpenAI, says the report. Plus countries such as Australia and Canada now require the biggest platforms to pay news producers for content. Yet, most of those surveyed believe it will be only the big players who will benefit.

The report's authors say the news industry is adapting to this new world – the Daily Mail has launched a number of WhatsApp channels, including one that delivers daily news about the Kardashians.

Top findings

The Reuters Institute surveyed 314 media leaders in 56 countries for its ***report***.

- 47% said they were confident about the prospects for journalism in the year ahead;
- Two-thirds worried about a sharp decline in referral traffic from Facebook and X (Twitter) and will be turning to WhatsApp and Instagram instead. Video networks such as TikTok and YouTube remain strong.
- About a fifth (22%) say they will cut costs as volatility in the advertising market heralds another tough year.
- Increased production of videos, podcasts and newsletters, with the introduction of charging for some are predicted.
- 80% expect subscriptions will be a more important revenue than display and native advertising.
- Expect more AI bots and personal assistants. A third (35%) of news executives believe most deals with AI companies will benefit only the big publishers.
- News avoidance and news fatigue remain a major source of concern.
- Print will continue to decline. Watch out for a shift towards bundling of digital news and non-news content, such as games.
- Voice-activated devices are likely to displace the smartphone.

CAMPAIGN



Goal!

Laura Hartley shares her passion for reporting on women's football as a specialist writer

Women's football is leaping into uncharted territory, reaching levels of interest never seen before: young girls and boys are still talking about that famous Alessia Russo backheel that helped the Lionesses on their journey to win the 2022 Women's Euros. It is the best time to be a women's football reporter, witnessing history every time Arsenal break another Women's Super League (WSL) attendance record and as other teams surpass their attendance numbers. Of course, it was that final at Wembley on 31 July, 2022 when Sarina Wiegman, Leah Williamson, Mary Earps and the whole Lionesses squad became household names. Earps has gone on to become arguably the most successful female English footballer of all time, winning the FIFA Best women's goalkeeper award in 2023, the World Cup golden glove, WSL golden glove for 2022/23 season, Finalissima winner, and Sports Personality

of the Year 2023 (SPOTY).

SPOTY winners are chosen by public vote and, despite being pitted against Stuart Broad, one of England's most successful cricketers, it was a huge success not just for Earps but for everybody she represents. For all the little girls who didn't think they could make it, or be able to achieve their dreams, she's a real life example that they can.

It isn't just England reaping the rewards. The Republic of Ireland reached their first ever World Cup in 2023; Northern Ireland played in the 2022 Women's Euros; while Scotland were back on the international stage with a friendly

against England at the back end of 2023. Wales almost qualified for the 2023 Women's World Cup and it marked a huge moment in history for the national team.

Yet the sport isn't just about the national teams and WSL, grassroots football, where it all began for these international football talents, is hugely popular.

Visibility is vital to maintaining women's football's high profile and every tier of the sport must be seen and supported. It is the media giving these teams and players a platform and writing match reports. Being part of this history-making sport is one of the best jobs in the world right now, so it's disappointing to see Reach Plc scoring an own goal by vastly reducing their women's football reporting team. Coverage will be limited, talent has been lost, and readers hoping to read about their favourite team will be shortchanged.



Lioness Mary Earps



Election year

The UK may be on an election footing, but there's still plenty of important legislation to cover

With a UK general election almost certain this year, the NUJ will be setting out the union's policies to promote public interest journalism and public service broadcasting, regulate Artificial Intelligence to protect journalistic integrity and journalists' rights, keep journalists safe to do their job and promote a free and diverse press and publishing industry. The union works with its cross-party Parliamentary Group to raise awareness of issues and on legislation which affects our members and the media and publishing industries. The union will also be monitoring legislation such as the Media Bill and Digital Markets, Competition and Consumer Bill and supporting initiatives such as Kim Johnson's (pictured) private members' bill.

End joint enterprise
NUJ Parliamentary Group member Kim Johnson explains how her bill would end miscarriages of justice where people are jailed for being involved a crime committed by someone else.

Joint Enterprise is a hidden scandal – thousands of people go to prison,

often with life sentences despite not making any significant contribution to a crime.

It's a racist scandal too, with black people 16 times more likely to be prosecuted for homicide or attempted homicide under Joint Enterprise than white people, according to a Crown Prosecution Service **study** carried out after legal action by Liberty and campaign group Joint Enterprise Not Guilty by Association (**JENGbA**), which recently won the Longford Prize recognising campaigns for prison reform.

I became aware of these miscarriages of justice watching Jimmy McGovern's shocking **BBC drama, Common**, directed by David Blair. Since being elected, I've heard directly from JENGbA and some of the thousands of families they represent – and the more I learn, the more outraged I become.

Victorian-era legislation provides powers to prosecute those who "aid or abet" a crime, but common law over time has shifted this far beyond its original intention. Parliament needs to step in and fix this "wrong

turn", as the Supreme Court described it in 2016. The campaign to change the law has been led mainly by women whose loved ones are serving mandatory life sentences for crimes committed by others.

My simple one-line **Joint Enterprise (Significant Contribution) Bill**, which will be debated by MPs on Friday 2 February would amend the Accessories and Abettors Act 1861 to clarify that someone must make a "significant contribution" to a crime

to be criminally liable. However, the government could use its majority to block it reaching the next stage where a committee of MPs subject bills to greater scrutiny.

That's why I am inviting NUJ branches to get involved the campaign to raise public awareness of

the issue by writing to their local MPs and taking part in a JENGbA demonstration outside Parliament on 2 February. I encourage all journalists to keep an eye on this important story and, if possible, help give it the coverage it deserves.

• Kim Johnson is the Labour MP for Liverpool, Riverside, and can be contacted at **JointEnterpriseBill@gmail.com**. Learn more about the campaign at **jengba.co.uk**



TRAINING

07



Boost your career and digital skills

Two new free training opportunities have been launched by the NUJ

Leadership in the Newsroom is an exciting programme to provide mid-career journalists, both staff and freelances, with newsroom management and strategic planning skills. The training consists of a one-day, in-person session at various locations across the UK and Ireland. The union is actively encouraging members from underrepresented groups in journalism to take part to increase



diversity in management roles and tackle the barriers many say they face.

Online training sessions, News Verification Skills for Journalists, will help strengthen digital skills and develop the next generation of newsroom leaders. It covers topics such as spotting fake news, disinformation, misinformation and propaganda.

The training has been devised with support from the Google News Initiative. Go **to the NUJ website** to find out more and book your slot.

Have your say

Complete the **NUJ Learning Needs Survey** by January 31 so the union can ensure its trade union training programme is fulfilling your training needs and is delivered in the best way possible.

Check out the latest **programme for reps.**

Professional skills

We all need to update and refresh our professional skills, especially freelancers who do not always have access to training.

NUJ Training Wales and **NUJ Training Scotland** have a huge range of courses, workshops and online resources which are also available to members elsewhere in the UK and Ireland.

The NCTJ's **Journalism Skills Academy** offers freelance NUJ journalists a 15 per cent discount on its professional training courses by using the code FL15. The **Centre for Investigative Journalism** runs a range of courses on using data to aid investigative journalism and create stories.

Reps' training

The NUJ's four-stage **free programme** and other courses will equip members to become effective reps. You can contact **tutrain@nuj.org.uk** for more information, plus register interest for workshops in organising and campaigning – covering recognised and unrecognised workplaces – and getting your voice heard to develop your individual and collective voice.

INFO

Get Active

Catch up on the NUJ's events, campaigns and resources and get involved.

AI

Artificial Intelligence is a fast-moving technology which will affect all of us at work. Go to the **Journalism before Algorithms** website page for more information.

The **TUC's guide** on artificial intelligence for union reps has helpful information on encouraging and participating in consultation when AI use is considered at work.

Campaigns

The **NUJ's Pay Campaign** calls for fair pay and flexible working and provides practical support to chapels when dealing with employers and on the rights of freelancers.

Let's Stop SLAPPs: go to the **website page** to see the latest on our campaign to stop lawsuits brought by the powerful and rich against journalists to censure and stymie reporting.

Recruiting students: there's lots of info, FAQs and materials for branches and chapels to encourage local journalism, publishing and photography students to join the union **on the NUJ website**.

Useful stuff

Freelance members can access help and useful information in the union's **freelance resources**.

Protect your sources: your rights as a journalist and how to protect your sources.

Legal assistance: one of the many benefits of NUJ membership is its legal advice.

Health and safety: advice, guidance and news.

The **safety toolkit** is a mobile friendly resource to help media workers protect themselves and their journalism from harm.

Photographers: **the toolkit** has tips and a number for legal assistance when covering protests, and guidelines on taking photographs in public places.

Storysmart: is a set of online training modules to help journalists prepare to work in hostile environments and keep their data safe.

TUC Organising at Work: guide on building strong

workplace unions. NUJ **recruitment materials**.



Mental health: find help for **post-traumatic stress disorder**. NUJ freelance members can apply for to the **Rory Peck Trust** for urgent financial assistance or treatment for psychological support. **Other resources**, includes a mental health toolkit.

Reporting on refugees: inaccurate terminology and commentary can cause confusion and breed prejudice.

The **NUJ code of conduct** has set out the main principles of UK and Irish journalism since 1936.

Donate

The **IFJ's safety fund** helps journalists across the globe, including in Ukraine and Afghanistan and those covering the Israeli-Hamas war.

The NUJ's **George Viner Memorial Award** provides bursaries for black and minority ethnic students.

NUJ extra helps members and their dependents who have fallen on hard times.

NUJ extra

NUJ training

The union provides a free programme of **training for reps**. **NUJ Scotland Training** and **NUJ Training Wales** provide a huge range of professional skills courses.

Social media: Keep up with the latest breaking news, offers, campaigns, solidarity events and more on **Twitter**, **Instagram** and **Facebook**.