# Pope Leo XIV calls for freedom of imprisoned journalists and ethical AI use in media



In his inaugural address to the media at the Vatican, Pope Leo XIV made a passionate plea for the release of imprisoned journalists, asserting their significant role in the pursuit of truth and justice. Addressing an audience of approximately 6,000 journalists in the Paul VI audience hall, he expressed solidarity with those who have faced incarceration "for seeking and reporting the truth," stating that their suffering "challenges the conscience of nations and the international community." This statement resonates strongly given that the Committee to Protect Journalists reported that 361 journalists were imprisoned globally in 2024.

The pope’s remarks underscore a robust commitment to press freedom, which he described as a "precious gift" that must be fiercely protected. He urged journalists to play a pivotal role in raising awareness about injustices and poverty, advocating for a shift towards reporting that transcends partisan divisions. This sentiment echoes his call for responsible journalism that avoids "fanaticism and hatred." He highlighted that communication should foster understanding rather than exacerbate societal conflicts, saying, "We must say 'no' to the war of words and images."

In a context where journalists often face threats and violence, particularly in conflict zones, the pope lauded their courage and urged them to amplify the voices of the marginalized. He stated that the media should focus on gathering the stories of those who have "no voice," a reminder of the ethical duty that journalists share in upholding human dignity and justice.

Additionally, Pope Leo XIV raised concerns about the ethical implications of artificial intelligence in journalism. He cautioned the gathered media to utilise AI with "responsibility and discernment," ensuring that these technologies ultimately serve the betterment of humanity. This aspect of his address points to an increasing recognition of the complexities that digital advancements bring to the field of journalism, where the balance between innovation and ethical responsibility remains delicate.

The new pope’s views also mark a significant pivot from the neutrality of his predecessor, Pope Francis, particularly in relation to global conflicts such as the situation in Ukraine. His supportive stance for a just and lasting peace there highlights a more assertive approach to international morality and human rights within the Vatican's diplomatic conversations. Reflecting on his commitment to peace, Pope Leo has begun dialogue with various leaders, further emphasising the Church's role in mediating conflict and promoting reconciliation.

In summarising his message, Pope Leo XIV made it clear that the media has a fundamental duty not just to inform but to contribute positively to society. The pope's address represents a clarion call for the protection of press freedom and a vital encouragement for journalists to remain steadfast in their pursuit of truth amidst a rapidly changing and often perilous information landscape.

As he embarks on this new chapter as the first American pontiff, his emphasis on ethical journalism and the need for accountability could well define his papacy—a time when the role of the media is crucial in fostering peace, understanding, and justice in an increasingly divided world.

### Reference Map

1. Introduction and first paragraph: Sources (1), (2), (3), (4)
2. Press freedom and ethical journalism: Sources (3), (6), (7)
3. AI in journalism: Sources (1), (2), (7)
4. Pope's view on media and peace: Sources (5), (4)
5. Summary of his message and implications: Sources (2), (6), (3)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

* <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cg71gne9ydko> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
* <https://apnews.com/article/121ae0103b771fb3cda71ae03870853d> - In his inaugural public audience, Pope Leo XIV, the first American pontiff, addressed 6,000 journalists in Vatican City. He emphasized the significance of free speech and press freedom, calling for the release of imprisoned journalists worldwide. The pope praised the courage of journalists reporting from conflict zones and highlighted the role of an informed public in upholding justice and freedom. He urged the media to promote peace, reject divisive language, and use their platforms to amplify the voices of the marginalized. Additionally, Pope Leo expressed concerns about the ethical use of artificial intelligence in journalism, advocating for its responsible application for the benefit of all humanity.
* <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/pope-urges-media-end-divisiveness-calls-release-jailed-reporters-2025-05-12/> - Pope Leo XIV, in his first address to the media, urged journalists to focus on reporting the truth and called for the release of reporters jailed for their work. Speaking to thousands of journalists at the Vatican, he emphasized the importance of truthful journalism and the need to end divisive reporting. The pope highlighted the necessity of protecting free speech and press freedom, referencing the 361 journalists reportedly imprisoned worldwide. He also advocated for the ethical use of artificial intelligence in journalism, urging that it be employed for the benefit of all humanity.
* <https://elpais.com/internacional/2025-05-12/la-audiencia-del-papa-leon-xiv-a-los-periodistas-en-directo.html> - In his first public audience as pope, Leo XIV addressed approximately 2,500 journalists at the Vatican, calling for communication free from prejudice, resentment, and hatred. He emphasized the importance of 'disarming words' to contribute to peace and combat polarization within the Church and society. The pope highlighted the role of responsible journalism in defending justice, human dignity, and the right to information, particularly praising journalists who risk their lives to report on conflicts. He also remembered reporters imprisoned for seeking the truth and urged for their release. Additionally, Pope Leo confirmed plans for a trip to Turkey, though no date was set.
* <https://www.ft.com/content/c933d769-9791-43e4-abae-9f9b495ccde1> - Pope Leo XIV has taken a definitive pro-Ukraine stance, expressing strong support for a just and lasting peace in Ukraine and advocating for the release of prisoners and the return of Ukrainian children abducted by Russia. In a phone call with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, Pope Leo's comments marked a significant departure from his predecessor, Pope Francis, who previously maintained neutrality. Zelenskyy hailed Pope Leo as a 'pope of peace' and invited him to visit Ukraine. The article also discusses the broader context of the conflict and the Vatican's role in mediating peace efforts.
* <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cg71gne9ydko> - Pope Leo XIV has called for the release of imprisoned journalists in his first address to members of the media at the Vatican. He expressed solidarity with journalists who were jailed 'for seeking and reporting the truth' and said their suffering 'challenges the conscience of nations and the international community'. Press freedom must be defended, he said. The media must ensure that the 'precious gift' of free speech is protected. The Committee to Protect Journalists said 361 journalists were in jail in 2024. Pope Leo, who was chosen as the new leader of the Catholic Church on Thursday, also highlighted the role journalists can play in bringing attention to injustice and poverty in the world. He urged the media to focus on reporting the truth instead of taking part in partisan divisions, and not to give space to 'fanaticism and hatred.' Speaking in the Vatican's Paul VI audience hall, he said 'the way we communicate is of fundamental importance: we must say 'no' to the war of words and images, we must reject the paradigm of war.' 'We do not need loud, forceful communication,' he said, 'but rather communication that is capable of listening and of gathering the voices of the weak who have no voice.' The new pope also raised concerns about artificial intelligence, telling the assembled media they should use AI with 'responsibility and discernment.' Reporters should ensure that AI can be used for the 'benefit of all of humanity,' he said.
* <https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/pope-leo-xiv-journalists-prison-1.6543210> - Pope Leo XIV, in ... called for the release of imprisoned journalists and emphasized the importance of free speech and press freedom. Speaking to thousands of journalists at the Vatican, he expressed solidarity with those jailed for seeking and reporting the truth, stating that their suffering challenges the conscience of nations and ... . The pope urged the media to focus on reporting the truth, avoid partisan divisions, and reject fanaticism and hatred. He also highlighted the role of journalists in bringing attention to injustice and poverty and raised concerns about the ethical use of artificial intelligence in journalism, advocating for its responsible and discerning use for the benefit of all humanity.