UN Under Ban Targeted WSJ, Fox & ICP, With Targeter Montas Said Poised To Return

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Inner City Press

http://www.innercitypress.com/uncensored1montas032117.html

UNITED NATIONS, March 21 – The UN's lack of commitment to press freedom under Ban Ki-moon threatens to continue. Under Ban, even before Inner City Press was [evicted](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/14/nyregion/after-frustrating-officials-a-longtime-un-blogger-has-his-access-curtailed.html?_r=0) [without a hearing](https://spdb.ohchr.org/hrdb/32nd/public_-_OL_OTH_25.02.16_%2815.2016%29.pdf) (and remains [restricted](https://www.change.org/p/unsg-ban-ki-moon-dsg-jan-eliasson-cdc-edmond-mulet-and-usg-dpi-gallach-we-demand-inner-city-press-be-restored-to-access-to-the-un-as-a-resident-correspondent/u/18933761)) for covering the Ng Lap Seng [bribery scandal](https://www.scribd.com/doc/307245166/OIOS-Audit-of-Ng-South-South-News-OIOS-Cut-Out-Ban-Photo-Op-with-Ng-at-UNCA-Ball) and its connection to UN Department of Public Information chief [Cristina Gallach](https://youtu.be/p60SiOm33Es?t=34s), there was talk of cease and desist letters to the Wall Street Journal, Fox News and Inner City Press, with the latter targeted for removal from Google News. This was in 2009 and involved Ban's then-spokesperson Michele Montas, who acknowledged being in on the meetings. Photo of some documents [here](http://www.innercitypress.com/UN8May09.pdf). Now, as Inner City Press reported [yesterday](http://www.innercitypress.com/gallach6vacancy032017.html), Montas has been seen around the "new" UN under Antonio Guterres, with DPI staff saying she is near to taking over from Gallach, even being vetted by the US Mission to the UN. Can people change? Sometimes. But because of this history of censorship, Inner City Press and the [Free UN Coalition for Access](http://www.funca.info) (which says candidates to head DPI should answer public questions on due process for journalists) run this history now: how could the any Mission committed to media freedom accept this? [From the archives:](http://www.innercitypress.com/un1vspress060209.html)

"minutes show that Ban's Spokesperson and three of his Under Secretaries General met about "reporting by the press, particularly Fox News, the Wall Street Journal, and Inner City Press," at which it was proposed to write "cease and desist" and "letters before action" and, "with regard to Inner City Press... complaining to Google News."

   At the UN noon briefing on June 2, UN Spokesperson Michele Montas confirmed her participation, while arguing that she doesn't have to account for her participating in such meetings. Video [was] [here](http://webcast.un.org/ramgen/ondemand/pressbriefing/2009/brief090602.rm?start=00:14:49), from Minute 14:49 to 18:41.

   The minutes, prepared by Under Secretary General Angela Kane’s Department of Management, recite that Ms. Kane met on May 8 with "Mr. Akasaka, Ms. Montas, Ms. O’Brien [the UN’s top lawyer and] Mr. Meyers" [*sic*, chief speechwriter and Director of Communications Michael Meyer] to devise a strategy to counter negative coverage of the UN by the three above-named media outlets.

  "With regard to Inner City Press, we should also consider complaining to Google News (they host Inner City Press)," the minutes continue.

  While extraordinary, this would not be without precedent. [In February 2008, after a similar complaint, Inner City Press was temporarily removed from Google News](http://www.innercitypress.com/un1google021408.html).

  The delisting, and the UN, were [criticized by the Government Accountability Project](http://www.whistleblower.org/content/press_detail.cfm?press_id=1310), a Washington-DC whistleblower protection organization, and were [covered by Fox News](http://www.foxnews.com/story/0%2C2933%2C331106%2C00.html).

   Since January 2009, Inner City Press has not only covered [whistleblower issues](http://www.innercitypress.com/un1retaliation051609.html) within the [UN Medical Service](http://www.innercitypress.com/un1medical042309.html) and but has persistently questioned the [UN’s and Ban Ki-moon’s inaction as thousands of civilians were killed in Sri Lanka](http://www.innercitypress.com/un1may6srilanka050709.html), including the UN’s [double standards](http://www.innercitypress.com/un1may3srilanka050509.html) and withholding of satellite photos and its estimates of civilian casualties." We'll have more on this.

  Amid complaints about slow staffing-up in Washington, less noticed is the UN's failure to publish opening notices for several top jobs, use of a Lusophone fund in UNOPS (Inner City Press [scoop here](http://www.innercitypress.com/scoop1unclearfunding032017.html)), failure to disclose when senior officials leave and now a troubling second extension of the time to apply for the UN Department of Public Information job which Ban Ki-moon murkily gave to Cristina Gallach, who became his / The Evicter. There is a lack of transparency. Now the vacancy is extended a second time, from March 20 to March 27, amid the rumor, panned in DPI, that Ban Ki-moon's former spokesperson Michele Montas is in the mix. Where is the reform?

 On March 13, Inner City Press asked the UN's Dujarric, [UN transcript here:](http://www.un.org/press/en/2017/db170313.doc.htm)

Inner City Press: I've noticed that two new senior-level vacancies have been announced at OHRM [Office for Human Resources Management] and the UN University, but I also… that the one for DPI [Department of Public Information], the deadline was extended.  Can you give some sense of… it was said to be 6 March.  Now it's 20 March.  Also, OCHA [Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs], for example, there are other posts that neither have been extended nor have they been advertised.  But, particularly on the extension of DPI, I wanted to… does this mean that they were unsatisfied with the applications they got?  What's behind it?

Spokesman:  I don't know.  I'm happily not involved in the recruiting process.  I think, as any hiring manager has the authority to do, we can… the recruiting deadline can be extended for a number reasons.

  Even since Gallach's position was belatedly opened for application, she has held a [murky](http://www.innercitypress.com/unacceptable13dpi021617.html) award session for a airline for adding a UN sign to one plane, has [wasted public funds](http://www.innercitypress.com/turtlebay2draingallach030317.html) flying once again to her native Barcelona and has restricted the Press from events on [Sexual Abuse in Conflict](http://www.innercitypress.com/unpress45censoredbygallach030617.html), [Disappearances](http://www.innercitypress.com/unpress41censoredbygallach021717.html),  the [death](http://www.innercitypress.com/unpress42censoredbygallach022017.html) of Vitaly Churkin, [Ghana](http://www.innercitypress.com/unpress45censoredbygallach030617.html), and others. We'll have more on this.

   Last February UN Under Secretary General for Public Information Cristina Gallach [ordered](http://www.innercitypress.com/un1icpouster021916.pdf) Inner City Press to leave the UN on two hours notice, and had it physically ejected by eight UN Security officers, [audio here.](https://soundcloud.com/innercitypress/un-security-deputy-mcnulty-orders-press-to-leave-unsc-stakeout-or-hell-use-nypd-un-censorship)

  There was [no due process](https://spdb.ohchr.org/hrdb/32nd/public_-_OL_OTH_25.02.16_%2815.2016%29.pdf), and no appeal since.

  There was, however, a conflict of interest. Inner City Press had begun asking Gallach about her links to the UN bribery scandal of Ng Lap Seng in October 2015, [video here.](https://youtu.be/p60SiOm33Es?t=34s)

 Gallach in retaliation evicted Inner City Press and had its [files thrown out onto First Avenue.](https://youtu.be/VDOHW1zruiE) She has tried to give its office to an Egyptian state media which rarely comes to the UN, and never asks questions. Inner City Press [remains restricted.](https://www.change.org/p/unsg-ban-ki-moon-dsg-jan-eliasson-cdc-edmond-mulet-and-usg-dpi-gallach-we-demand-inner-city-press-be-restored-to-access-to-the-un-as-a-resident-correspondent/u/18933761)

   One year ago, covering the UN corruption scandals which have resulted in two sets of indictments for bribery involving the UN, Inner City Press was ordered to leave the UN Press Briefing Room by then Secretary General Ban Ki-moon's spokesman Stephane Dujarric.

  Other correspondents were allowed to stay in the briefing room, which Dujarric had "lent" them. But he insisted that Inner City Press leave. [Video here.](https://youtu.be/es9Hg-87chg)

  Inner City Press asked to see any paperwork that the event was closed; none was provided. Inner City Press stated that if a single UN Security official asked it to leave, it would. Finally one guard came and said Dujarric wanted it to leave.

  Inner City Press immediately left, uploaded the already live-streamed Periscope video, and continued digging into the corruption that's resulted in the indictment for bribery and money laundering of Ban Ki-moon's brother Ban Ki Sang and nephew Dennis Bahn.

  But three weeks afterward, without a single conversation or opportunity to be heard, Ban's Under Secretary General for Public Information Cristina Gallach ordered Inner City Press to leave the UN, after ten years, on two hours notice. [Order here.](http://www.innercitypress.com/un1icpouster021916.pdf)

   This was enforced, as Inner City Press worked on its laptop at the UN Security Council stakeout, by eight UN Security officers led by Deputy Chief McNulty, who tore Inner City Press accreditation badge off its chest and said, "Now you are a trespasser." [Audio here.](https://soundcloud.com/innercitypress/un-security-deputy-mcnulty-orders-press-to-leave-unsc-stakeout-or-hell-use-nypd-un-censorship)

  Inner City Press was marched down the escalator and around the UN traffic circle, without even its coat which was up in its longtime office. It was pushed out of the gate and its laptop, in a bag, was thrown on the sidewalk and damaged.

  The next work day when Inner City Press arranged for a fellow journalist to sign it in as a guest so it could cover the Security Council, UN Security official Matthew Sullivan said it was Banned from UN premises worldwide. [Audio here.](https://soundcloud.com/innercitypress/feb-22-2016-un-security-tells-icp-youre-banned-its-un-property-you-cant-stay-here)

   After three days covering the UN from the park in front in the sleet, and articles like this one, Inner City Press re-entered with a "non-resident correspondents" pass - to which it is still, more than eleven months later, confined.

  The then-US Mission under Samantha Power and Isobel Coleman, even [petitioned by the DC-based Government Accountability Project,](https://www.scribd.com/doc/300709433/US-Mission-to-UN-Is-Asked-to-Ensure-ICP-Gets-Its-Office-UN-Pass-by-GAP) did nothing. Indirectly, a offer was made of an upgraded pass if Inner City Press would agree to a gag order, to which it would not and will not agree.

  There has been no UN opportunity for appeal or reinstatement. After having five boxes of Inner City Press' investigative files [thrown on the sidewalk in April](https://youtu.be/VDOHW1zruiE), Gallach is [giving its office](https://www.change.org/p/unsg-ban-ki-moon-dsg-jan-eliasson-cdc-edmond-mulet-and-usg-dpi-gallach-we-demand-inner-city-press-be-restored-to-access-to-the-un-as-a-resident-correspondent/u/18933761) to an Egyptian state media Akhbar al Yom which rarely comes in, a correspondent Sanaa Youssef who had yet to ask a single question.

Her only claim is that she was once, decades ago, a president of the United Nations Correspondents Association, the group to which Duajrric "lent" the UN Press Briefing Room, without notice or written record, on January 29, 2016.

 Even as the scope of Ban Ki-moon's corruption is being exposed upon his return to South Korea, [here,](http://english.hani.co.kr/arti/english_edition/e_national/779247.html) his successor Antonio Guterres has yet to reverse this year of censorship and no due process. On January 6 Dujarric and Gallach led him on a tour of... the UN Correspondents Association, which now wants him again in their clubhouse. (More on this to follow.)

 On January 27 as Inner City Press moved to cover Guterres at the UN's Holocaust event, it was targeted by UN Security and told it could not proceed without a minder, who did not appear for over 15 minutes.

 All of this must change. This is a scam, and censorship: the UN's Censorship Alliance. We will have more on this.