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*PUBR56801 Writing for Public Relations
Assignment 3 – Pitch Letter
By Mariya Kadar*

Dear Ms. Jenzer,

Imagine that one day you get detained for publishing an article online about a political issue you're passionate about. Envision the feeling of helplessness as you are arrested and beaten by police for simply expressing an opinion at odds with the government. Picture the terror of not knowing what will happen next to you and your family.

Living in fear of persecution for online activity is where 39 percent of the global internet population found themselves in as many countries like China, India, Belarus and Myanmar have resorted to extreme measures to keep the free speakers at bay and silent. Unfortunately, today, only 21 percent of global internet users can express their opinions online without fear of being arrested or even executed. Many governments and tech companies constantly discover new ways to monitor and to control the public online. Using spyware, cutting off internet connectivity, shutting down mobile networks and removing websites, in addition to arrests, physical attacks, and even murder are all examples of free speech being taken away with the goal of keeping power in the hands of a few.

A violent attack at the U.S. Capitol fueled by Donald Trump's rhetoric on the internet has proven that these issues are closer to home than one might have thought.

There is still time to do something about the erosion of our freedoms. I am writing to turn your attention to a study published by Freedom House – an international non-profit and non-governmental human rights advocacy group based in the United States that has been studying political freedoms for over 80 years. The report was written by their director for technology and democracy Adrian Shahbaz – a frequent media commentator who appeared in the New York Times, BBC, CNN, C-SPAN. Adrian found a troubling trend of global internet freedoms declining for 11 consecutive years and the internet freedoms in the United States declining for the last five years. To improve the situation, he made recommendations of practices that, if followed by policymakers, can help.

The improvement is not possible without journalists like yourself standing up for what is right. I hope you will consider reviewing and sharing this publication. Please let me know if you would be interested in receiving a printed version of the report.

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter and please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions,

Mariya