

## Call for papers - October 2025 symposium

### **Media and freedom of expression in the world from the 1980s to the present day: progress or regression?**

In 1985, four journalists founded the non-governmental organisation Reporters Without Borders (RSF) in Montpellier. Forty years later, RSF is one of the largest human rights NGOs in the world, and one of the few of French origin. In 2025, the organisation will celebrate its fortieth anniversary, marked by the transfer of its archives to “La Contemporaine: bibliothèque, archives, musée des mondes contemporains” (located on the campus of Nanterre University), and their future opening to research.

This anniversary should be an opportunity to look back not only on the history of RSF - its changes in management and strategy, its major "communication operations" and its eighty issues of photo albums - but also on the complex relationship between the media, in the broadest sense of the term, the powers that be, in all their diversity, and the organisations that defend human rights and, more specifically, freedom of expression around the world. Have the hopes of a new "human rights revolution" been fulfilled? Is the freedom to investigate and to publish the results of these investigations better guaranteed today than in the past? What are the risks run by journalists, but also by writers, artists and even ordinary citizens wishing to communicate the fruits of their work or their thoughts to as many people as possible? Has censorship in the traditional sense of the term (*a priori* intervention by a political, administrative or religious authority in the dissemination of a message) given way to more diffuse forms of control? Has the gap between the concept of freedom of expression in liberal democracies and that prevailing in authoritarian regimes widened or narrowed? To what extent is freedom of expression an absolute and universal right? What have been, and what are today, the forms of action taken by non-governmental organisations fighting for the effectiveness of this right throughout the world?

These questions, which are deliberately very broad, may be addressed from a number of angles by researchers from a variety of geographical and disciplinary backgrounds. The deadline for submitting proposals is **15 January 2025**, in the form of a PDF file of no more than one page (accompanied by a brief CV of the author). They will be assessed by a scientific committee, independent of RSF, which will draw up a list of successful proposals by **15 February 2025** at the latest. Proposals should be sent to the following e-mail address: [mediascolloque@gmail.com](mailto:mediascolloque@gmail.com)

This conference will be organised jointly by La Contemporaine and the Université de la Sorbonne-Nouvelle in October 2025.