

GENEVA CENTER FOR
MULTILATERAL JOURNALISM



MULTILATERAL JOURNALISM INDEX

Pilot Index 2026

An Assessment of Reporting on Multilateral Institutions

UNITED NATIONS  NATIONS UNIES

67.4

OVERALL MJJ SCORE / 100

230 scored records · 247 coverage records

Study period 9 June-21 July 2026

Published 21 September 2026

Photo: John Heilprin/GCMJ

2026 MJl at a Glance



Media and participants at the UN Secretary-General candidates' debate, Geneva, 9 June 2026.

Photo: John Heilprin/GCMJ

67.4

Overall score

230

Scored records

27

Events

8

Direct observations

HEADLINE FINDING

Institutional self-reporting competes strongly on explanation: it slightly exceeded journalism on Substance (75.2 vs. 74.2) and scored higher on Governance Literacy (76.6 vs. 67.7). Journalism retained a large advantage in Source Diversity (54.6 vs. 32.4), reflecting the distinctive value of broader sourcing, scrutiny and external validation.

What the MJl Measures

The MJl asks how effectively coverage helps a reasonably informed non-specialist understand multilateral institutions and governance. Four dimensions contribute equally to the Core MJl Score; Visual Journalism and Distribution Reach remain supplemental.

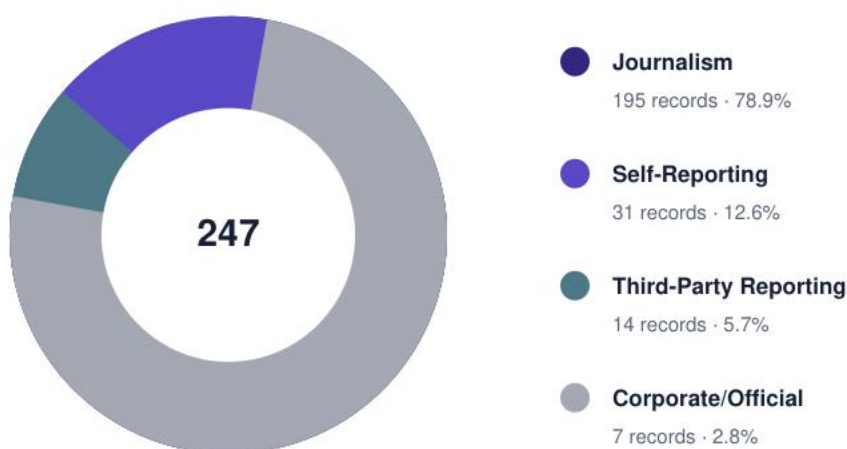
Dimension	Working definition	Status
Public Understanding	Significance, context and accessibility	CORE
Substance	Reporting value beyond announcements	CORE
Governance Literacy	Roles, mandates, procedures and mechanisms	CORE
Source Diversity	Breadth of sources and perspectives	CORE
Visual Journalism	Visual or multimedia contribution to understanding	SUPPLEMENTAL
Distribution Reach	Circulation beyond the original outlet	SUPPLEMENTAL

INTERPRETIVE PRINCIPLE

A high MJl score is not a measure of political viewpoint, audience size, institutional effectiveness or commercial success. It measures explanatory characteristics within the pilot coding framework.

The Pilot Information Ecosystem

The finalized database contains 247 public-information records. Independent journalism dominates the purposeful pilot sample, while institutional and other forms of public information are substantial enough to compare separately.



UN Secretary-General candidates' debate, Geneva, 9 June 2026 - the first day of the MJI study period.

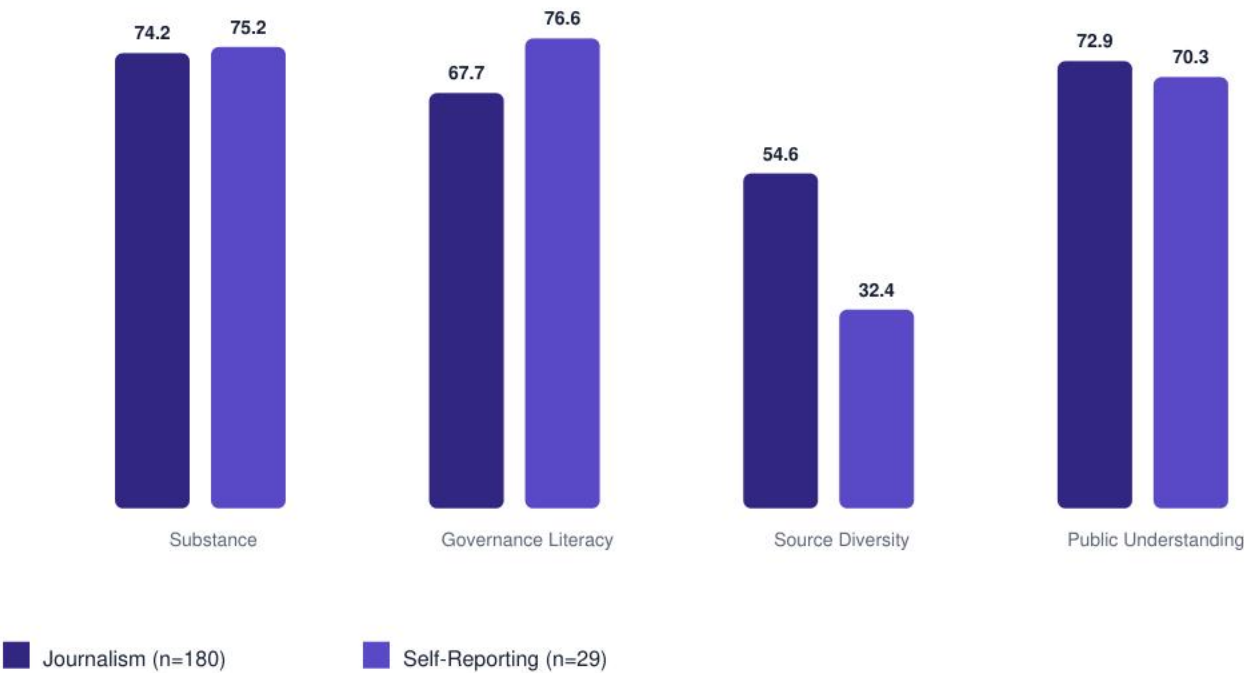
Photo: John Heilprin/GCMJ

READ THE SHARES CAREFULLY

These percentages describe the pilot sample, not the total volume of information produced in International Geneva. The structural finding is that journalism operated alongside a measurable stream of institutional self-reporting and other public-information products.

Journalism and Institutional Self-Reporting

Institutional self-reporting and journalism show different explanatory profiles across the MJI dimensions.

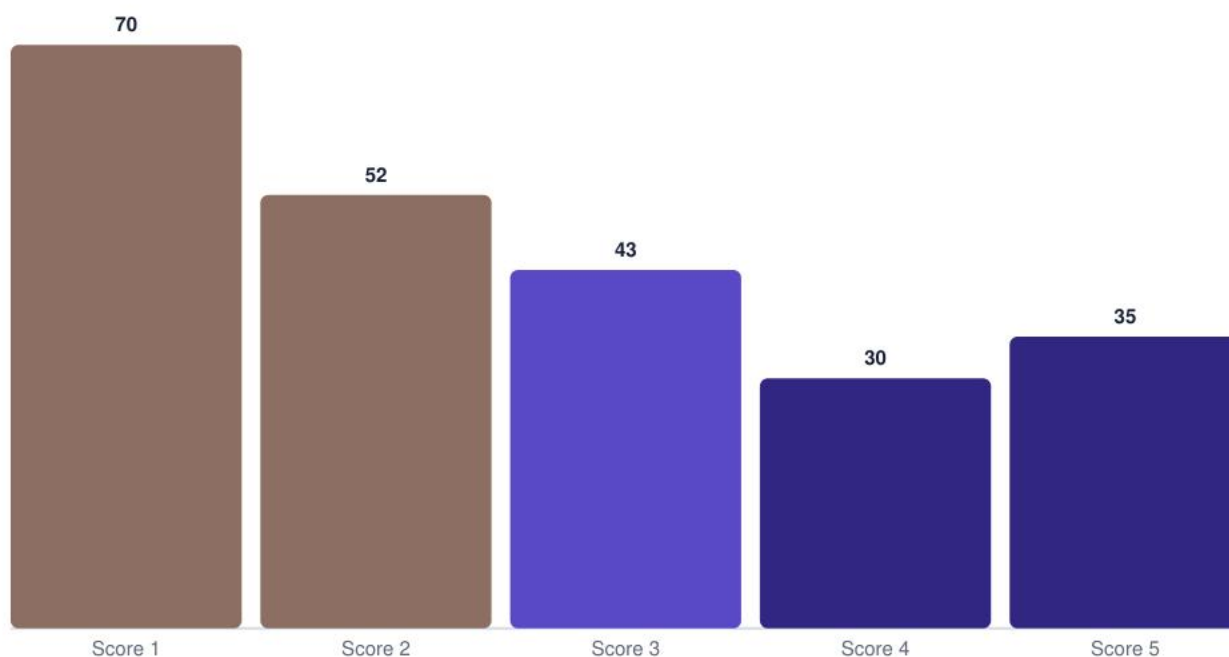


WHAT THE COMPARISON SHOWS

Self-reporting slightly exceeded journalism on Substance and exceeded it by 8.9 points on Governance Literacy. Journalism scored 22.2 points higher on Source Diversity. The result supports a competitive explanatory environment while preserving a clear distinction between institutional explanation and independent sourcing, scrutiny and external validation.

The Source Diversity Gap

Source Diversity is the clearest weakness in the 2026 scorecard. Its mean of 52.0 is 17.5 points below Governance Literacy and more than 23 points below Substance.

**53.0%**

Scored 1 or 2

28.3%

Scored 4 or 5

52.0

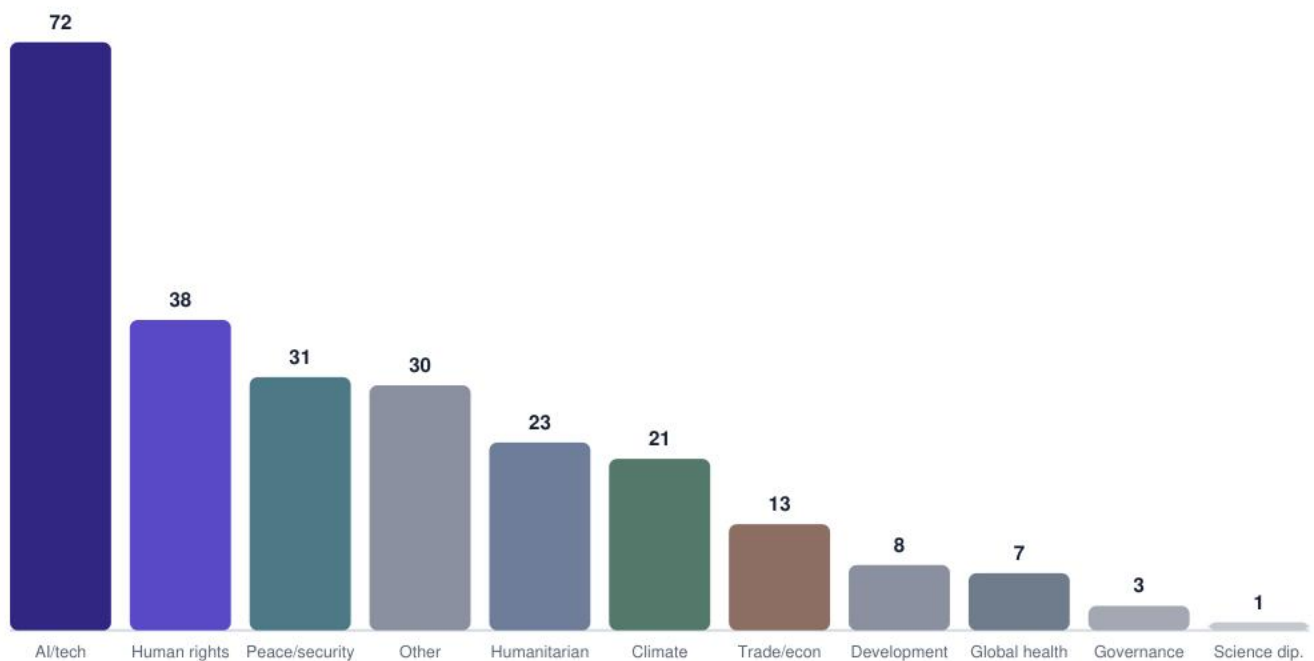
Mean / 100

INTERPRETATION

122 of 230 scored records received a Source Diversity score of 1 or 2. This does not mean every short news item should contain many sources. It does show that narrow source sets were common across the pilot information environment, particularly in institutional self-reporting.

What International Geneva Was Talking About

Coverage was highly concentrated during the six-week observation period. AI and technology alone accounted for 29.1% of the sample; the three largest categories represented 57.1% of all coverage records.



Global Dialogue on AI Governance, Geneva, 7 July 2026.

Photo: John Heilprin/GCMJ

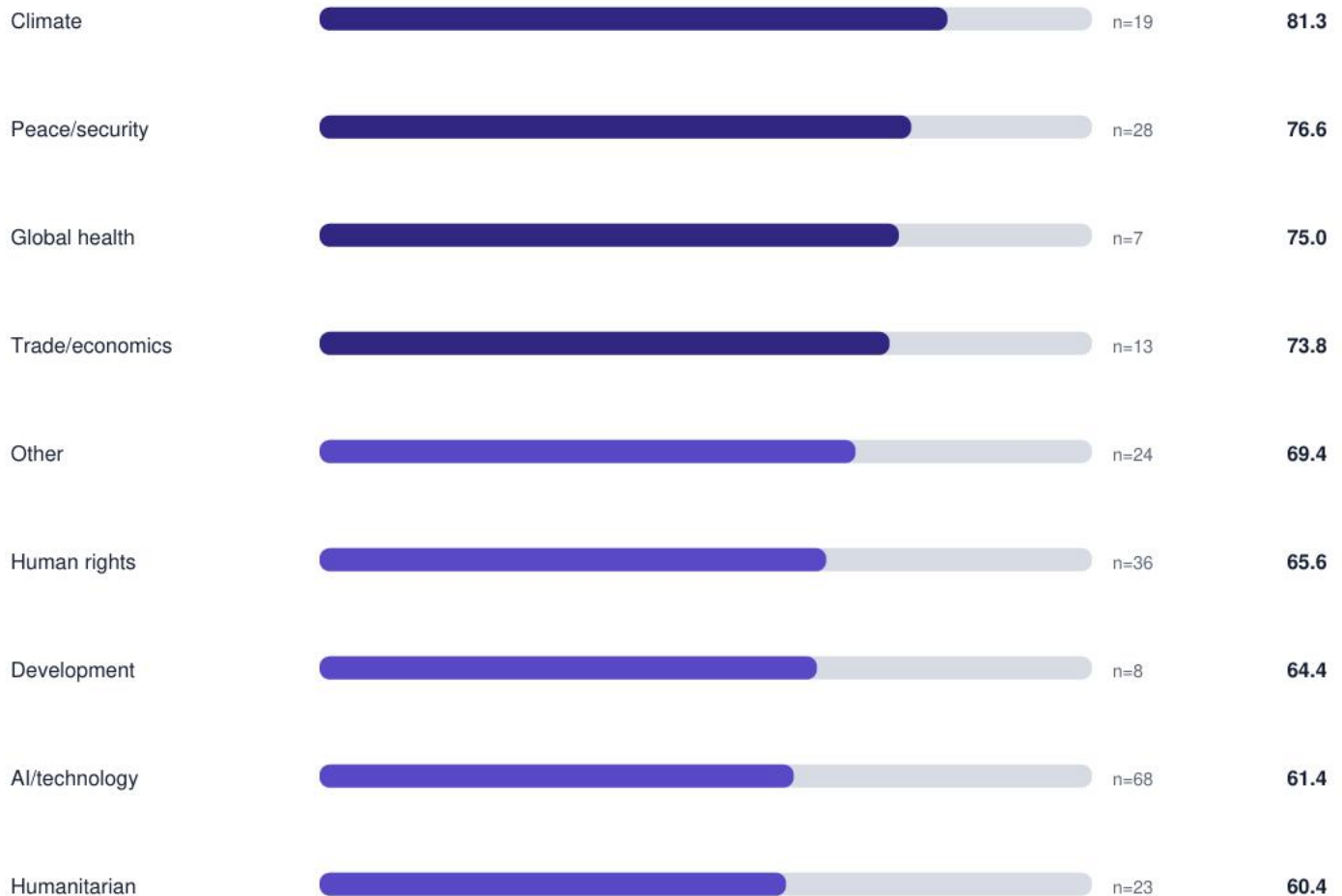


AI for Good Global Summit, Geneva, 7 July 2026.

Photo: John Heilprin/GCMJ

Explanatory Quality by Topic

Mean MJl scores varied substantially across topics. Because the sample is purposeful and some categories are very small, the main comparison shows only topics with at least seven scored records.



DESCRIPTIVE, NOT CAUSAL

Climate coverage had the highest mean MJl score among topics with at least seven scored records (81.3), while humanitarian coverage averaged 60.4. These are descriptive pilot results, not population estimates or judgments about the importance of the underlying issues.

Distribution Reach: How Far Did Coverage Travel?

Distribution Reach is coded separately from journalistic quality. Among 240 coded records, the median reach score is 1 and the mean is 2.1 on the five-point scale.

132

records at reach level 1

Most items remained close to their original outlet.

47

records at reach level 5

A smaller group was widely syndicated or amplified.

REACH AND QUALITY ARE DIFFERENT VARIABLES

Among scored records, mean MJl scores were 69.5 at reach level 1, 69.4 at level 2 and 61.1 at level 5. The descriptive correlation between MJl and Distribution Reach is weakly negative (-0.16). The pilot does not establish causation.

DATA NOTE

One database record carries a reach value of 0, outside the nominal 1-5 scale. It is retained in the master database and excluded from nominal-scale distribution graphics. This is documented rather than silently corrected.

Visibility Is Concentrated

Coverage clustered around a relatively small number of organizations, processes and major events. The Human Rights Council was the most frequently coded organization or process.



Demonstrators gather in Geneva ahead of the G7 Summit, 14 June 2026.

Photo: Sydney Wiser/GCMJ

VISIBILITY IS NOT SIGNIFICANCE

The table is an indicator of concentration, not a complete organization-by-organization census. Some records refer to multiple institutions, and 30 coverage records did not contain a specific organization code.

Source: MJI Master Database v4.3, finalized pilot dataset.

Eight Findings From the 2026 Pilot

1

Substance is a relative strength.

The pilot mean of 75.3 was the highest of the four core dimensions.

2

Source Diversity is the clearest weakness.

The mean was 52.0; 53.0% of scored records received a 1 or 2.

3

Institutional self-reporting competes on explanation.

It slightly exceeded journalism on Substance and by 8.9 points on Governance Literacy.

4

Journalism retains a strong sourcing advantage.

Journalism averaged 54.6 on Source Diversity compared with 32.4 for self-reporting.

5

Topic visibility is highly uneven.

AI/technology represented 29.1% of the sample; the three largest topics represented 57.1%.

6

Explanatory performance varies by topic.

Among categories with at least seven scored records, mean MJI scores ranged from 60.4 to 81.3.

7

Reach does not equal explanatory quality.

The most widely distributed records did not, on average, receive the highest MJI scores.

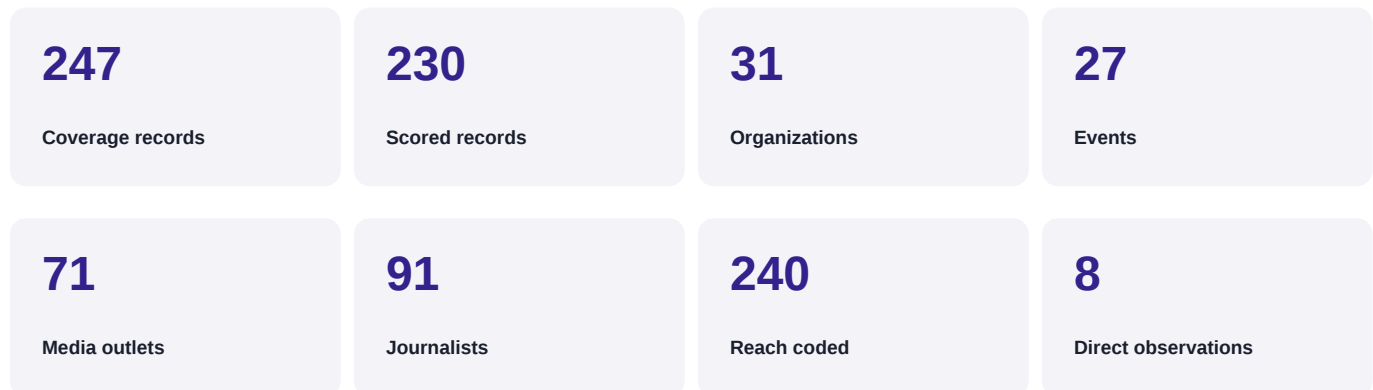
8

The ecosystem itself is part of the story.

The pilot documented 31 organizations, 71 outlets, 91 journalists, 27 events and eight direct observations.

Methodological Notes and Future Development

The Pilot Index is based on the finalized MJI Master Database v4.3. It is a descriptive pilot rather than a statistically representative survey of all multilateral journalism.



Key limitations

- Six-week observation period; purposeful rather than random sampling.
- Seventeen coverage records lacked complete numeric coding across all four core dimensions.
- Inter-coder reliability testing was not completed during the pilot.
- Visual Journalism remains supplemental; Distribution Reach remains separate from quality.
- Source-type and topic comparisons use uneven sample sizes and are descriptive.

Next steps

Future editions will extend the observation period, broaden the sample, strengthen inter-coder reliability testing and refine the methodological framework. They may also incorporate structured qualitative interviews and comparative applications in other centres of multilateral governance.

DATA AVAILABILITY

Aggregate results and headline findings are reported in the Pilot Index and Pilot Report. The record-level research database is maintained by the Geneva Center for Multilateral Journalism and is not publicly released.

Source for all charts and calculations: MJI Master Database v4.3, finalized pilot dataset.



Multilateral Journalism Index

Pilot Index 2026

An independent Swiss nonprofit initiative examining journalism covering international organizations and global governance.



Explore the MJi

gcmj.ch

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