



MULTILATERAL JOURNALISM INDEX

Pilot Report 2026

Executive Summary

International Geneva | Study period: 9 June to 21 July 2026

UNITED NATIONS  NATIONS UNIES

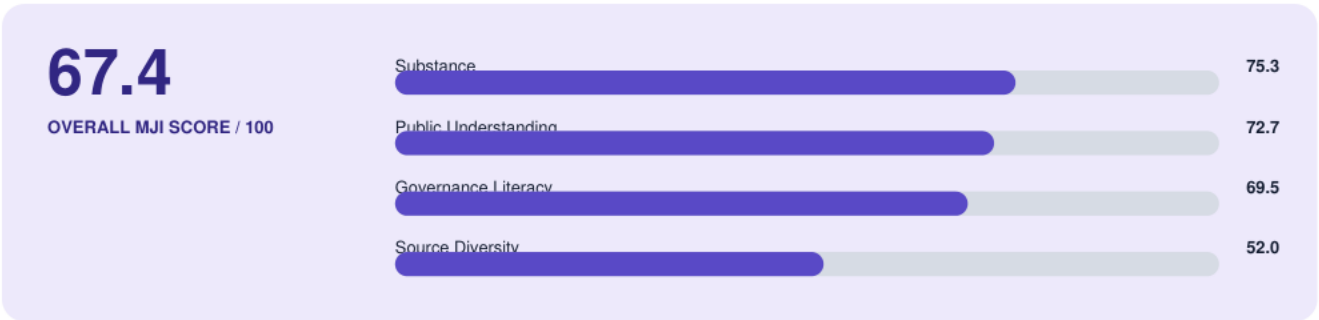
PUBLISHED 21 SEPTEMBER 2026

Based on MJJ Master Database v4.3

Photo: John Heilprin/GCMJ

At a glance

The Multilateral Journalism Index (MJJ) Pilot 2026 examines how journalism explains international organizations, diplomacy, and global governance within the International Geneva ecosystem.



UN Secretary-General candidates' debate, Geneva, 9 June 2026. Photo: John Heilprin/GCMJ.

Conducted from 9 June to 21 July 2026, the pilot combined content analysis, direct observation, case studies, and ecosystem mapping. The findings suggest that journalism covering multilateral governance generally performs well in providing substantive information and explaining why developments matter, but less consistently in explaining the institutional processes through which decisions are made and in incorporating a broad range of perspectives.

Five things the pilot revealed

01 Reporting capacity is concentrated.

A relatively small specialist and wire-service community carries much of the reporting load.

02 Institutional significance and media visibility do not necessarily align.

03 Governance is harder to explain than outcomes.

04 Scientific and technical subjects occupy a substantial share of reporting.

05 Journalism and institutional self-reporting perform different explanatory functions.

A recurring finding was that institutional significance and media visibility do not necessarily align. High-profile political events and crises generally attracted greater attention, while technically or procedurally significant governance processes sometimes received comparatively limited coverage.

Many significant multilateral stories also cross institutional boundaries. Artificial intelligence governance, climate policy, pandemic preparedness, and nuclear diplomacy involved networks of organizations, governments, scientific institutions, technical bodies, and diplomatic processes rather than single institutions acting independently.



G7 protest, Geneva, 14 June 2026. Photo: Sydney Wiser/GCMJ.

Science, technology and a changing information ecosystem



Global Dialogue on AI Governance, Geneva, 7 July 2026. Photo: John Heilprin/GCMJ.

Scientific and technical subjects occupied a substantial place within the reporting observed during the pilot. Artificial intelligence and technology constituted the largest thematic category, with 72 coverage records, while climate governance, global health, nuclear verification, telecommunications, and other technically complex subjects also formed part of the reporting environment.

Different explanatory functions

Journalism vs. institutional self-reporting - fully scored records



54.6 vs. 32.4

Source Diversity - journalism advantage

67.7 vs. 76.6

Governance Literacy - self-reporting advantage

Reach is not quality

Distribution Reach emerged as distinct from explanatory quality. Some strongly explanatory journalism reached comparatively limited audiences, while some widely distributed reporting provided less institutional explanation.

What the MJJ establishes

Taken together, the findings suggest that the central challenge of multilateral journalism is not simply reporting international events. It is helping audiences understand the institutions, procedures, authority structures, technical knowledge, and decision-making processes through which global governance operates.



AI for Good Global Summit, Geneva, 7 July 2026. Photo: John Heilprin/GCMJ.

The findings suggest that it can.

The pilot does not rank journalists, media organizations, or international institutions, nor does it claim statistical representativeness beyond the study period. Instead, it establishes an initial evidence-based baseline and tests whether multilateral journalism can be examined systematically using a transparent analytical framework.

What comes next

Future editions are intended to refine the coding framework, strengthen reliability testing, incorporate structured qualitative interviews, extend observation over longer periods, and examine additional institutions and centers of multilateral governance.

DATA AVAILABILITY

The MJJ Pilot Report 2026 and MJJ Pilot Index 2026 are based on the finalized MJJ Master Database v4.3. Aggregate findings are reported publicly; the record-level research database is maintained by GCMJ and is not publicly released.

