

## Free Speech NGOs Divided on Leveson

There are three big, international NGOs based in London that specialise, full time, in campaigning for free speech around the world.

Interestingly, [Article 19](#), arguably the biggest and best known, has come out in favour of the Leveson Report because, it argues, “Legislation to provide a statutory basis for self-regulation does not mean state control”. In fact Article 19 went so far as to “welcome” the new report.

Index on Censorship is [against](#). Leading Index light John Kampfner has said that he is “instinctively” against “statutory regulation.”

The other key NGO in this space, [Reporters Without Frontiers](#) is silent on this issue. Privately colleagues there tell me they have been discussing Leveson but find it difficult to find a clear position. This blog pointed out [earlier this week](#) that many of the countries with statutory press councils (such as Denmark) tend to score very highly in the [RSF Press Freedom Index](#). To also to make a principled stand against alleged “statutory regulation” being introduced in the UK could be difficult.

Whatever the outcome, the fact of different views among NGOs, together with the plurality of views among politicians, can only be good for debate. Lets hope the standard of debate improves as there are still huge misunderstandings about what Leveson is actually proposing. See [here](#) and [here](#) for some background.

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