

PRESS START LAUNCHED



MEMO 98 is a partner of [Transitions \(TOL\)](#) in a project called [Press Start](#) which is the first global crowdfunding platform for reporters in countries where the press cannot report freely, potentially revolutionizing the way independent journalism is funded in the developing world and emerging democracies. We seek out talented and influential journalists who might live in impoverished countries with scant resources to support their crowdfunding campaigns, or any independent journalism at all. Or they might lack the foreign-language skills or the right contacts to mount a successful crowdfunding campaign on their own. Then we link them up with donors large and small around the world.

Our journalists are nominated by respected journalism organizations in their countries and then selected by Press Start staff, who also review their project proposals. That's how Press Start is unique. Here's why it's important: a mere 13 percent of the world's population lives in countries where the press can report freely, according to [Freedom House](#). Today, the vast majority of people – more than six billion – live in countries where journalists risk their careers, and sometimes lives, to report on governments, businesses, and other powers, exercising what is a democratic right in other nations. While we can't stay the hand of a brutal dictator, we can help keep alive this flame of independent journalism by supporting those journalists brave enough to keep writing, despite the threats. They deserve our attention and support – especially as authoritarian states and movements grow bolder and are ever more ready to target those who would hold them to account.

Press Start was created by Transitions, an organization with nearly 20 years' experience working with journalists under threat. It aims to be a lifeline for reporters in difficult circumstances to finance their stories and practice the watchdog journalism so necessary for democratic development. For more about our vision for the site, [click here](#).