

# Maria Ressa - Opening statement at IGF Leadership Panel press conference - July 14 2023

**Maria Ressa:** It's been an incredible 24 hours, a little bit more, where we've been focused on... and it's the Internet in so many ways, but since I'm the journalist, I'm the bearer of bad news, and that, you know, the social harms... well, the harms aren't just social, they're political, many of the things I used to study, counter-terrorism, and the kinds of marginalization that we're seeing today. All of this.

On the counter-terrorism part, what used to radicalize people are now in our politics.

So, offhand, just the three points which we've raised in the IGF.

The first is, it is, by design... so I'm focused more on the apps on top of the Internet, which the father of the Internet helped create, but, of these, you have heard me say this over and over again, when lies spread six times faster than facts, that is an MIT study from 2018, it is the beginning of the cascading failures that makes it impossible to have facts.

Without facts, you can't have truth. Without truth, you can't have trust. Without that, we have no shared reality. We cannot solve any problem, let alone the existential problems we're dealing with.

Those are some of the issues that we're starting to grapple with now,

and it is amazing to have an incredible group of people to do this, and to hopefully harness all of what the United Nations can do through the Internet Governance Forum.

I think, just on the last part of that, what can we do right now? These cascading failures are impacting your kids, are impacting your independence, because if you don't have integrity of facts, you cannot have integrity of elections, so this goes throughout our entire society.

Finally, the last part, you will have just seen the headlines of a prominent politician who resigned yesterday, a woman politician. It is those who are marginalized, who are already marginalized in the physical world, who are further marginalized,

and I would point that women in particular, whether they're journalists, researchers, or politicians, are attacked significantly more. In the Philippines, as early as 2017, women journalists were attacked at least ten times more than men. You now have another prominent female politician, in the EU, just resigning yesterday. You do not want to do this. Women hold up half the sky, to quote another journalist.