The Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship Program brings accomplished mid-career journalists and others from various fields to 14 American campuses for a year of study and professional pursuits. Fellows are selected for their national leadership potential from nations in Africa, East Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Eurasia, Near East, South and Central Asia and the Western Hemisphere. The program exposes Fellows to state-of-the-art approaches in their fields, to encourage ties between them and their United States counterparts.

For 24 years Fellows have come to the University of Maryland’s Philip Merrill College of Journalism, a leading center for journalism education, where they take advantage of courses taught by award-winning faculty and world-renowned researchers. The Fellows gain skills preparing them for today’s innovative journalism landscape and enhance their understanding of journalism’s political, cultural and social roles in the United States and around the globe.

The university’s central location enables Fellows to draw on the rich resources of the Washington-Baltimore area.

Serap D. Rada, Ph.D. directs the Humphrey Program at Maryland and serves as academic advisor for Fellows.

With guidance from the Humphrey staff, each Fellow undertakes an individualized, non-degree program of academic coursework, professional affiliations, field trips, and consultations with experts.

The Humphrey Fellows in Journalism provide a valuable resource for the College Park community. The Merrill College has proudly hosted 277 Fellows from more than 105 countries over the last 24 years.
Karlis Dagilis is a journalist, media professional and lecturer. Most recently he worked as executive director of Latvijas Radio 5-Pieci.lv, a public multimedia radio station for youth he helped establish. His goal is to create a media literacy center in Latvia. During his Humphrey year, he plans to study computer-assisted reporting, media literacy and affiliate with an NGO that is focused on media literacy.

Sharifa Kalokola is a science journalist and a communications expert. Throughout her career she dedicated most of her work to promoting women’s health in Tanzania. During her Humphrey year, she would like to study and research media advocacy strategies to increase access to sexual and reproductive health information for Tanzanian youth.

Maria Belen Mora is a broadcast journalist and worked as an anchor and reporter for national television Red Guaraní where she focused on stories about political and social issues. Previously she was the co-host of a radio program. During her Humphrey year, she would like to focus on broadcast journalism, women in media, and multimedia skills.

Christina Psarra is a social policy analyst and a humanitarian worker whose most recent work was as head of mission for Doctors Without Borders. She started the “Refugees Welcome” project in Greece and participated in rescue missions in the Mediterranean Sea. Previously she worked in urban settings with drug users and mentally ill homeless people. During her Humphrey year she would like to focus on best practices in aid projects, poverty alleviation policies and conflict resolution.

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Shristi Rajbhandari is a former Communications and Documentation Officer for UNDP’s Rapid Enterprise and Livelihoods Recovery Project and a photographer. The project successfully revitalized lost and damaged livelihoods of nearly 12,000 micro-entrepreneurs in seven districts after the 2015 earthquakes in Nepal. During her Humphrey year, she would like to focus on effective uses of social media tools, as well as improve her multimedia and media relations skills.

Hitender Rao is a special correspondent with Hindustan Times, with two decades of reporting and newsroom leadership experience. As the bureau chief, he has covered many topics including politics, governance, society and economics. During his Humphrey year, he would like to do a comparative study of the criminal justice system in India and the United States with particular focus on prison reforms.

Waseem Abdullah is an investigative journalist working for Pakistan’s largest English daily, The News International. Waseem writes about corruption, governance, health, security and politics. As a Humphrey Fellow he is interested in focusing on digital media, computer assisted reporting and investigative journalism skills.