



**American  
Red Cross**

Int'l Humanitarian Law  
Youth Action Campaign

## American Red Cross' International Humanitarian Law Youth Action Campaign: Presentation on Journalism in Conflict by Clarissa Ward

International Humanitarian Law Youth Action Campaign Summit Representatives attended a meeting with Clarissa Ward on the topic of journalism in conflict. Advocates had the opportunity to ask questions and consider the dangers, benefits, and importance of journalists covering current news.

Tuesday, July 22nd, 2025, 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM ET

Written by: Joyce Yun and Camarie Irmén

**SUMMARY:** Summit Representatives met with journalist Clarissa Ward on July 22nd, where they discussed Clarissa's journey to becoming CNN's Chief International Correspondent and the importance of journalism in sharing more perspectives, especially those of the average citizen. This brought to light the importance of international humanitarian law keeping journalists safe during armed conflict.

American Red Cross Youth Action Campaign representatives had the unique opportunity to sit down with Clarissa Ward, CNN's Chief International Correspondent, and explore her experiences reporting on various conflicts around the world. When Clarissa was a senior at Yale University, 9/11 occurred, prompting her to become more interested in studying and understanding the world's undercurrents. In 2002, she took an internship with CNN in Moscow, with the ultimate goal of providing reliable news from the forefront of conflicts as a reporter. Soon after, she began working as the overnight desk assistant at Fox News, and eventually, she was offered a position as a producer at Fox, which led her to spend the summer of 2005 in

Baghdad. However, Clarissa felt unfulfilled with that mission, as she believed her and her team failed to capture the lives of ordinary Iraqi citizens. This emphasis on the citizens, the ordinary people, is what makes Clarissa's reporting so captivating. The stories of innocent civilians' lives during such horrific and extraordinary times force viewers to confront the ramifications and repercussions of the United States' actions, and give ordinary people a platform to express how conflicts are impacting them, pushing a less geopolitically centered perspective. Clarissa then travelled with ABC News as their Moscow correspondent, eventually being promoted to ABC's Asia correspondent. She traversed all over Asia, covering news from tsunamis in Japan to China's efforts to become greener. In 2015, she earned the title of CNN's Chief International Correspondent, covering a myriad of topics, including the 12-day war and the death of Pope Francis. Clarissa is an internationally renowned reporter, winning 12 Emmys, 2 George Foster Peabody Awards, 2 Alfred I. duPont-Columbia Awards, 2 Edward R. Murrow Awards, and a George Polk Award, and she still manages to balance life at home and her demanding job.

Recently, Clarissa has noticed a shift from a majority of Americans relying on TV for news to social media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and others. Many find this dramatic change alarming, especially considering the prominence of TV news just a few decades ago. Due to the nature of social media algorithms, creators frequently collect information from the news, form their own opinions on the topic, and broadcast their take. The popularity of this kind of reporting puts pressure on reporters to take a stand on issues and become a voice of moral reason for the public, despite the importance of being impartial in journalism. Additionally, social media content creators are not held to the same standards as traditional TV reporters, and this can push people to feel outraged, distressed, or helpless solely to feed the algorithm. News outlets must make uncovering the most accurate available version of the truth their number one priority, and amplify the voices of ordinary people ignored or failed by their government.

Thinking about next year's theme of Journalism and Armed Conflict, it is important to understand that journalists need protection during war in order to speak the civilians' truth and bring light to the brutal realities of war. Without international humanitarian law, it would be even more dangerous for journalists to cover news in warzones. Clarissa Ward additionally shared an experience she had while talking to an Iraqi man. She explained that he talked about learning about America and the Statue of Liberty and all the great American things since being a little kid. He then asked Clarissa if she were to ask the American school children about Iraq, what would they say? This is one example of a voice being heard that wouldn't have been heard without journalists, illustrating the vital role journalists play in creating a more open-minded, understanding, compassionate, and peaceful world.