



## Media Foundation for West Africa

Fondation pour les Medias en Afrique de  
l'Ouest (FMAO)

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS Conseil d'Administration

#### Chairperson/Présidente

##### **Mr. Edetaen Ojo**

Executive Director, Media Rights Agenda,  
Lagos, Nigeria

#### Members/Membres

##### **Mr. Adu Amankwah**

General-Secretary, ITUC–Africa  
Lome, Togo

##### **Mr. Soule Issiaka**

President, Association pour la Promotion des  
Médias –Bénin  
Directeur, Radio-Ecole 89.FM,  
Porto-Novo, Cotonou, Benin

##### **Mrs. Sophie Ly Sow**

Director, NEXUS Groupe  
Dakar, Senegal

##### **Mme. Filomena Tavares Correia Silva**

Director/Editor A Semana  
Praia, Cape Verde

##### **Prof. Kwame Karikari**

Dean, School of Communication Studies,  
Wisconsin International University College,  
Accra, Ghana

##### **Executive Director Directeur Exécutif**

Mr. Sulemana Braimah

March 8, 2017.

Mr. Ibrahim Kpotun Idris  
Inspector General of Police  
Louis Edet House, Area 11 Garki, Abuja  
Federal Republic of Nigeria

Dear Sir,

### **Petition over Killing of Four Journalists in Nigeria: Demand for Thorough Investigations and Disclosure**

In our monitoring of the freedom of expression (FOE) environment in West Africa in 2017, we (Media Foundation for West Africa, MFWA), recorded four separate incidents in which a total of four journalists were killed by unknown gunmen in Nigeria.

In the first incident, unknown gunmen shot dead Famous Giobaro, a desk editor with the state-owned Glory FM 97.1 in Bayelsa State. The attack was carried out at the residence of the journalist on April 16, 2017.

Following the incident, the MFWA's partner organization in Nigeria, International Press Centre (IPC), said in a statement: "This is one incident that should not be allowed to lie low" and called on your outfit to "investigate the matter with a sense of urgency."

On July 8, 2017, a second journalist was killed under similar circumstances in Edo State. Lawrence Okojie, who worked with the Nigeria Television Authority (NTA) in Edo State, was shot dead by unknown assailants shortly after he alighted from the staff bus at a junction near his home.

Reports said the Police had arrested one suspect in connection to the murder. Sadly, however, no further developments have been communicated to the public.

A third incident of targeted assassination of journalists occurred on November 16. Ikechukwu Onubogu, a cameraman with Anambra Broadcasting Services (ABS) based in Awka, the capital of Anambra State, was found dead with bullet wounds, four days after he was reported missing by his family. Onubogu was at home with his wife on November 12, 2017 when he received a phone call from an unknown person, subsequent to which he picked his camera and went out, probably to meet his would be killers unknowingly.

The media fraternity in Nigeria had barely finished grieving over the killing of Onubogu when it was plunged into further mourning about a week later. On November 23, 2017, the lifeless body of Abdul Ganiyu Lawal, a freelance broadcast journalist in Ekiti State, was found in the bush at the Apepe Farm area. The journalist, who was also an amateur hunter, had gone on a hunting expedition when he was shot by unknown attackers.

While the motives for these murders are not yet known, only proper and effective investigations can establish whether the victims were killed because of their work, hence the need to unravel these assassinations.

These wanton killings are inconsistent with Article 33(1) of Nigeria's constitution which states that "Every person has a right to life, and no one shall be deprived intentionally of his life." This article is also in line with Article 6 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights which says that "Every individual shall have the right to liberty and to the security of his person."

The fatal attacks on journalists and the seeming impunity surrounding them put Nigeria on the wrong side of the law with regard to the 2014 ruling of the ECOWAS Court which indicted the Gambian government for failing to properly investigate the murder of critical Gambian journalist, Deyda Hydera.

The Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) believes that these vicious killings have the potential to put fear and induce widespread self-censorship among journalists in Nigeria. Such a scenario will call into question the Nigerian government's commitment to protecting press freedom and creating a free and safe environment for journalists, in line with the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity.

We therefore appeal to you to use your good offices to ensure that investigations into these killings are intensified as a matter of urgency and the culprits arrested to face the law. We wish to urge you, in the meantime, to update the people of Nigeria and the media fraternity in West Africa about the current status of these cases by the end of the first trimester of the year.

We count on your favourable response.

Yours faithfully,



Sulemana Braimah  
(Executive Director)

CC: Police Commanders for Ekiti, Anambra, Edo and Bayelsa States