



Media Foundation for West Africa

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

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December 3, 2018

President Muhammadu Buhari,
Aso Villa, Yakubu Gowon Crescent,
The Three Arms Zone, Asokoro,
Abuja, FTC, Nigeria

Your Excellency,

Petition for Investigations into the Killing of Four Journalists in Nigeria in 2017

We undersigned press freedom organisations in West Africa wish to urge Your Excellency to use your good offices to ensure that the killings of four Nigerian journalists in 2017 are resolved.

In what certainly raises deep concern over the safety of journalist situation in Nigeria, four journalists were killed in separate incidents in the course of last year. In each of the cases, the victim was shot dead by unknown gunmen in circumstances that are yet to be fully investigated.

Famous Giobaro, was a desk editor with the state-owned Glory FM 97.1 in Bayelsa State. On April 16, 2017 he was shot and killed by unknown attackers at his residence. The attackers did not steal anything which reduces the possibility of a robbery motive.

On July 8, 2017, another 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 as he was heading home from work.

The third incident occurred on November 16, 2017. Ikechukwu Onubogu, a cameraman with Anambra Broadcasting Services (ABS) based in Awka, 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.

The fourth incident occurred on November 23, 2017 when the lifeless body of Abdul Ganiyu Lawal, a freelance broadcast journalist in Ekiti State, was found in the bush. The journalist, who was also an amateur hunter, had gone on a hunting expedition at the Apepe Farm area when he was shot by unknown assailants.

We believe that only thorough investigations and prosecution can bring justice to the victims and their families.

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Your Excellency, these killings contravene 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 seeming impunity surrounding these killings therefore tarnish the reputation of Nigeria as a democratic state and as safe place for journalists. The killings also call into question your government's commitment to protecting press freedom in line with the UN Plan of Action for the safety of Journalists.

We are confident that your office will take urgent measures to ensure that these attacks against journalists are investigated and the perpetrators are brought to book.

Signed:

1. Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA), Ghana
2. International Press Centre (IPC), Nigeria
3. Observatoire indépendant nigérien des médias pour l'éthique et la déontologie (ONIMED), Niger
4. Observatoire pour la déontologie et l'éthique dans les médias (ODEM), Benin
5. Observatoire de liberté de la presse, de l'éthique et la déontologie (OLPED), Cote d'Ivoire
6. Association guinéenne des éditeurs de la presse indépendante (AGEPI), Guinée
7. Union des journalistes indépendants du Togo (UJIT), Togo
8. Maison de la Presse (MP), Mali
9. Regroupement de la Presse Mauritanienne (RPM), Mauritania
10. Convention des jeunes reporters du Sénégal (CJRS), Senegal
11. Gambia Press Union (GPU), Gambia
12. Centre national de presse-Norbert Zongo (CNP-NZ), Burkina Faso
13. Media Reform Coordinating Group (MRCG-SL)-Sierra Leone

14. Sindicato De Jornalistas e Tecnicos De Comunicaçao Social Guinea Bissau (SINJOTECS), Guinea-Bissau
15. Centre for Media Studies and Peace Building (CEMESP), Liberia
16. Associação dos jornalistas de Cabo Verde (AJOC), Cape Verde