



Communiqué on Safety of Journalists in Ghana

Annually, May 3 is commemorated globally as World Press Freedom Day (WPFDD). The day is set aside to celebrate press freedom successes, assess and discuss press freedom challenges, emerging issues and ways forward. It is also used to pay tribute to journalists who have lost their lives in the line of duty or demonstrated exceptional courage by working in very dangerous environments.

Ghana's press freedom environment is often described as one of the freest in Africa. However, due to recent press freedom violations in the country, including the killing of Ahmed Hussein Suale, a member of investigative journalist Anas Aremeyaw Anas' team, the country has dropped four places from 23 to 27 in the 2019 edition of the World Press Freedom Index by Reporters Without Borders.

From February 2018 to March 2019, the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) recorded a total of 22 violations against journalists and media workers with half of them being direct attacks against journalists. In March 2019 alone, there were death threats against Manasseh Azure Awuni, brutalities against three journalists from the New Times Corporation and an attack on Accra-based Radio XYZ.

Unfortunately, the high levels of impunity that accompany the violations further compound the situation. The increasing number of abuses and culture of impunity continue to threaten the safety of journalists' situation in the country.

On the special occasion of the 2019 World Press Freedom Day, we the undersigned, after thorough deliberations at the Stakeholders' Dialogue on Safety of Journalists in Ghana organised by the MFWA and GJA, call on the following stakeholders to

Government

- Prioritise and promote the safety and protection of journalists and media organisations
- Ensure that both state and non-state actors respect and protect press freedom and freedom of expression
- Demonstrate commitment to fighting impunity by demanding investigations into assault cases against journalists and media workers and making reports from those investigations public



- Ensure that security agents stop violating press freedom and freedom of expression rights.
- Ensure that security agents who abuse journalists and media workers are duly punished.

Security Agents

- Expedite investigations into violations against journalists, media workers, and media organisations
- Train and sensitise security agents to appreciate the work of the media in democratic societies and to work collaboratively with them.

Journalists, Media Mangers and Owners

- Work with high standards and professionalism at all times
- Report attacks and violations against journalists, media workers and organisations to the police
- Commit to using all legal means to ensure justice for media persons whose rights are violated in the line of duty.

Signed by:

- 1) Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA)
- 2) Ghana Journalists Association (GJA)
- 3) African Freedom of Expression Exchange (AFEX)
- 4) Editors Forum Ghana
- 5) DW Akademie
- 6) Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative Africa Office
- 7) Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition (GACC)
- 8) Penplusbytes
- 9) STAR GHANA
- 10) Tiger Eye PI
- 11) Institute of Democratic Governance (IDEG)
- 12) International Human Rights Funders Group (IHRFG)
- 13) CYIB Curious Minds
- 14) PRINPAG



- 15) Joy News
- 16) Daily Graphic
- 17) Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC)
- 18) Peace FM
- 19) Ghana News Agency (GNA)
- 20) Adom FM
- 21) Ghanaian Times
- 22) Accra FM
- 23) Ghanaweb
- 24) UTV
- 25) GHOne TV
- 26) Today Newspaper
- 27) Atinka FM
- 28) The Chronicle
- 29) Metro TV
- 30) Zakaria Tanko Musah, Head of Legal of Department, Ghana Institute of Journalism (GIJ)