



## Media Foundation for West Africa

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

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
Conseil d'Administration

**Chairperson/Présidente**

**Mrs. Sophie Ly Sow**  
Director, NEXUS Groupe  
Dakar, Senegal

**Members/Membres**

**Mme. Hilda Regina Melicio Teofilo**  
Director, SAPO Cabo Verde  
Praia, Cape Verde

**Mrs. Fatoumata Baldé Yansané**  
Directrice Exécutive, Coalition des Femmes  
Leaders de Guinée (COFEL)  
Conakry République de Guinée

**Prof. Kwame Karikari**  
Dean of the School of Communication Studies,  
Wisconsin University of Ghana,

**Executive Director**  
**Directeur Exécutif**  
Mr. Sulemana Braimah

Lieutenant General Obed Boamah Akwa  
Chief of Defence Staff  
Ghana Armed Forces  
Accra

May 3, 2020

Dear Sir,

**Petition: Investigate Military Brutalities against Journalists during  
COVID-19 Lockdown, Ensure Justice is Served**

The Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) presents its compliments to you.

We are writing to you as West Africa's leading press freedom organisation, to express our concern about the assault on journalists by soldiers deployed to enforce the recent lockdown in the wake of the COVID-19 emergency, and to kindly seek your assistance to have the attacks investigated to ensure justice.

In the first incident, a soldier reportedly assaulted Yussif Abdul Ganiyu, General Manager of Kumasi-based Zuria FM on April 2, 2020. The journalist was attacked by a soldier while he was covering a clean-up exercise at the Kumasi suburb of Aboabo-Akorem as part of efforts to fight the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The journalist told the MFWA that the female soldier, Second Lieutenant Betrot Ampoma, who he understands to be the commander of the patrol team at Asokore Mampong Municipality, bundled him into the patrol vehicle with registration number 49 GA 68, and assaulted him. The journalist reported that his phone was seized.

He said Lt Ampoma had called anonymously two days earlier to confront him over a report the station had published on its Facebook page on the alleged military brutalities against a 71-year-old man who had flouted the lockdown order.

Abdul Ganiyu, who is also a local correspondent for Deutsche Welle (DW) Radio, said he was released by the soldier after the intervention of the Asokore Mampong Municipal Chief Executive, Honourable Alhaji Alidu Seidu, who was leading the clean-up exercise he was covering.

In the second incident, a soldier assaulted Samuel Adobah a reporter for TV Africa in on April 10, 2020. Adobah was covering a fire outbreak at Olebu in Ga Central Municipality in Accra when a soldier who was part of a COVID-19 enforcement team attacked him. The journalist had been allowed to go ahead with his duties after showing his professional identity card to the military officers who had arrived in a vehicle with the inscription 'Operation Calm Life' and registration number of 49 GA 68 to enforce the lockdown.

However, one member of the military team, identified only as Damfour, arrived later and assaulted the journalist. The officer slapped Adobah from behind and pounded him on the ground, while the crowd shouted “he is a journalist.” Mr. Damfour also destroyed the journalist’s phone by stomping on it.

The reporter made a formal complaint to the police before proceeding to the hospital where he was treated for headache and body pains and discharged.

The MFWA finds these attacks on journalists by soldiers enforcing the COVID-19 lockdown as unfortunate and out of line with their mandate. We believe that the military authorities are equally concerned about these acts of brutalities by officers of the military institution which is highly respected for its discipline.

We are therefore humbly urging you to have these incidents investigated and the culprits sanctioned to serve as a deterrent to others.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sulemana Braimah', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Sulemana Braimah

Executive Director