



MY VOICE  
YOUR VOICE  
OUR FREEDOM

EDITORIAL

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INFOGRAPHIC

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JOURNALISTS SAFETY

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# Say ‘NO’ to impunity!

iSPEAK tackles two issues this month that are very close to our hearts – the safety of journalists and journalism education.

On November 2 we joined the rest of the world to commemorate the **International Day to End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists (IDEI)**. In the first nine months of this year, an unprecedented 13 journalists were killed on the African continent. Reyhana Masters authoritatively unpacks the thriving culture of impunity and its unprecedented rise on the African continent.

Impunity reigns and continues to deepen, because we, as citizens, do not hold the perpetrators to account. We do not demand action from our governments or justice for the slain journalists and, most importantly, we do not value the role that journalists play in our societies. We need to speak up and speak out!

In a special edition for IDEI the Namibia Media Trust’s (NMT) flagship #FreeSpeak podcast explored the issue of impunity with veteran Mozambican editor Fernando Gonçalves. He elaborated on the climate of fear that persists in Mozambique as he recalled the 2017 disappearance of journalist and human rights advocate, Ibraimo Abú Mbaruco, and who hasn’t been seen since. Numerous organisations continue to apply pressure and ask: “Where is Ibraimo?”. There is no response from the authorities who are dutybound to investigate his disappearance.

Their silence spurs us on and we will continue demanding answers and seeking justice!

On November 9, 11 and 16 the NMT and partners, the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) Malawi and DW Akademie will host the third iteration of our annual **‘Future of Journalism in Southern Africa’** conference. Professor Sarah Chiumbu discusses how journalism training is meeting the demands of a changing industry. Watch this space for more on this shortly.

A highlight of the conference will be the launch of the NMT’s latest resource, a handbook for media educators titled ‘Teaching Media Policy in Africa’.

Enjoy this and more in our November edition of iSPEAK.

Remember, the iSPEAK newsletter is free so please share the word far and wide with others who may have an interest in reading the analyses provided, and who may wish to participate in our monthly event. We are focused on providing the African context and narrative on freedom of expression issues, and look forward to providing challenging views on current debates that inform or change the way you think.

Make sure you don’t miss out on our monthly edition by signing up on **WhatsApp** or joining the **mailing list**. Feel free to get in touch with us via email on [info@ispeak.africa](mailto:info@ispeak.africa).

See you next month.

**The iSPEAK team**

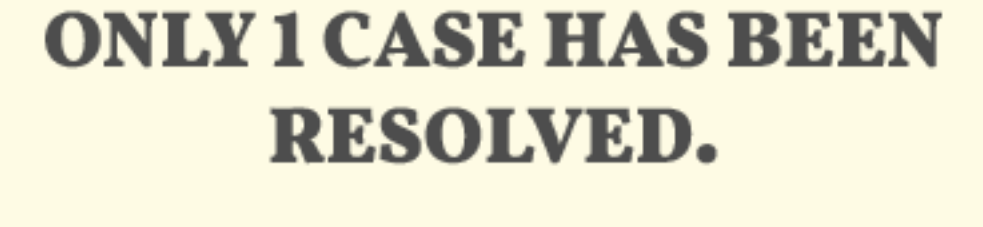
My Voice | Your Voice | Our Freedom

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**iSPEAK**MY VOICE  
YOUR VOICE  
OUR FREEDOM**NO**  
IMPUNITY

BETWEEN JANUARY 2019  
AND SEPTEMBER 2021  
**30 JOURNALISTS WERE  
KILLED IN AFRICA.**

THAT'S AN AVERAGE OF  
**10 PER YEAR**



TO DATE  
**ONLY 1 CASE HAS BEEN  
RESOLVED.**



**DON'T SHOOT THE  
MESSENGER**

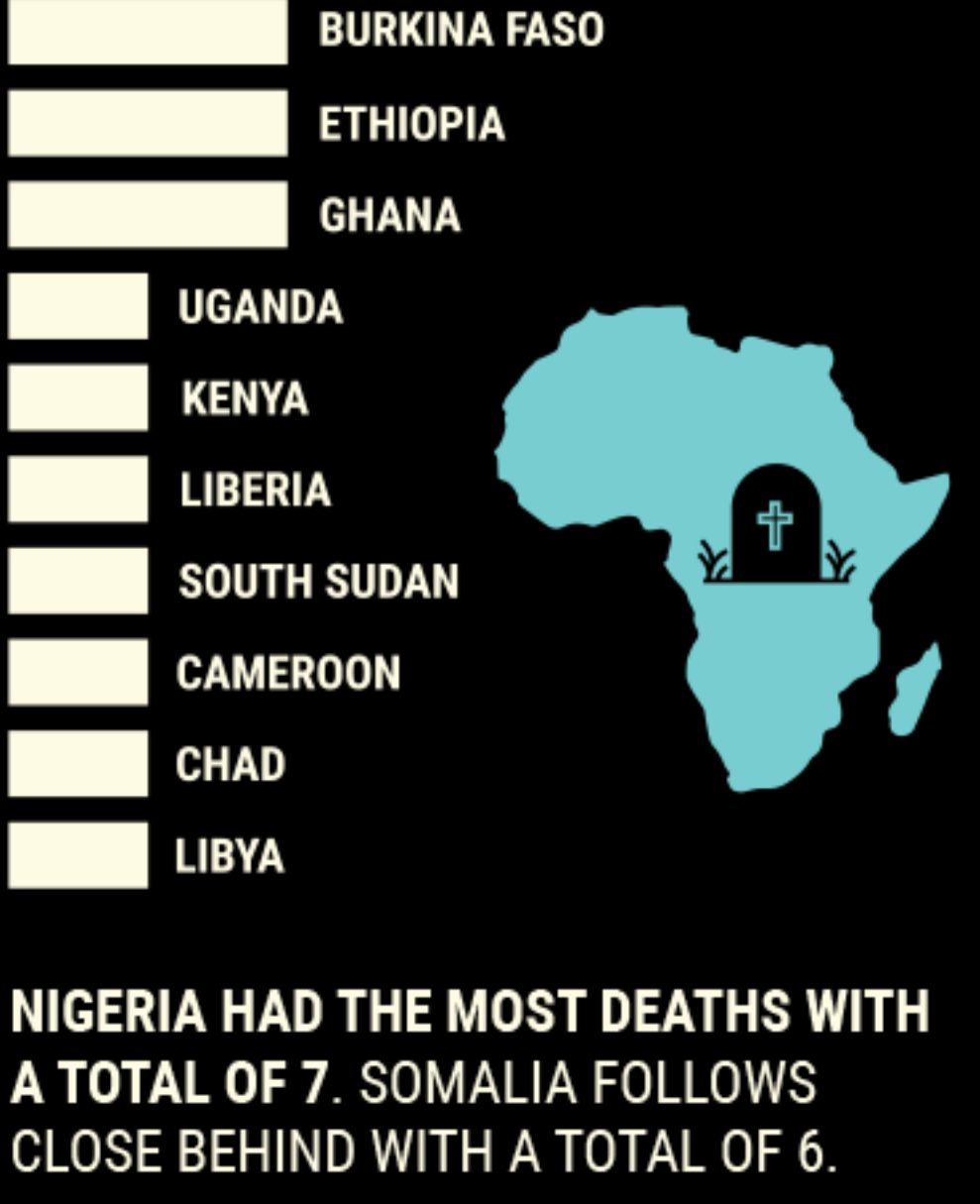
#JournalismIsNotACrime

2021 HAS SHOWN AN  
INCREASE, WITH A TOTAL  
OF **13 JOURNALISTS KILLED.**



THE COUNTRY THAT RECORDED THE  
MOST DEATHS IN 2021 IS THE DRC WITH  
A TOTAL OF 3.

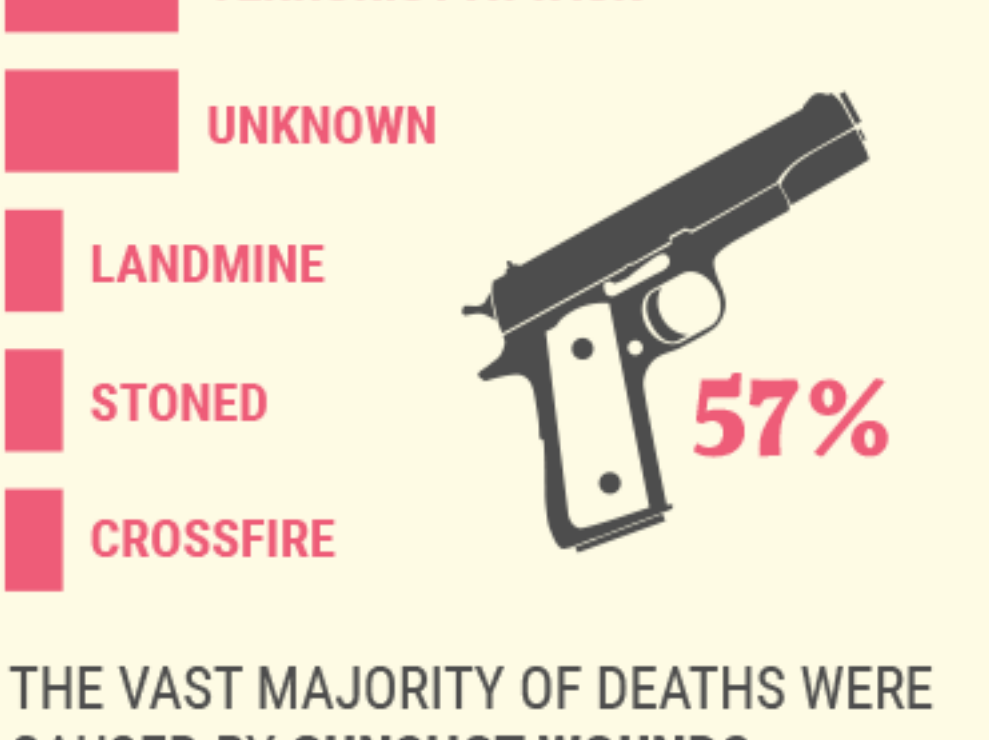
## DEATHS BY COUNTRY 2019 -2021



**NIGERIA HAD THE MOST DEATHS WITH  
A TOTAL OF 7. SOMALIA FOLLOWS  
CLOSE BEHIND WITH A TOTAL OF 6.**

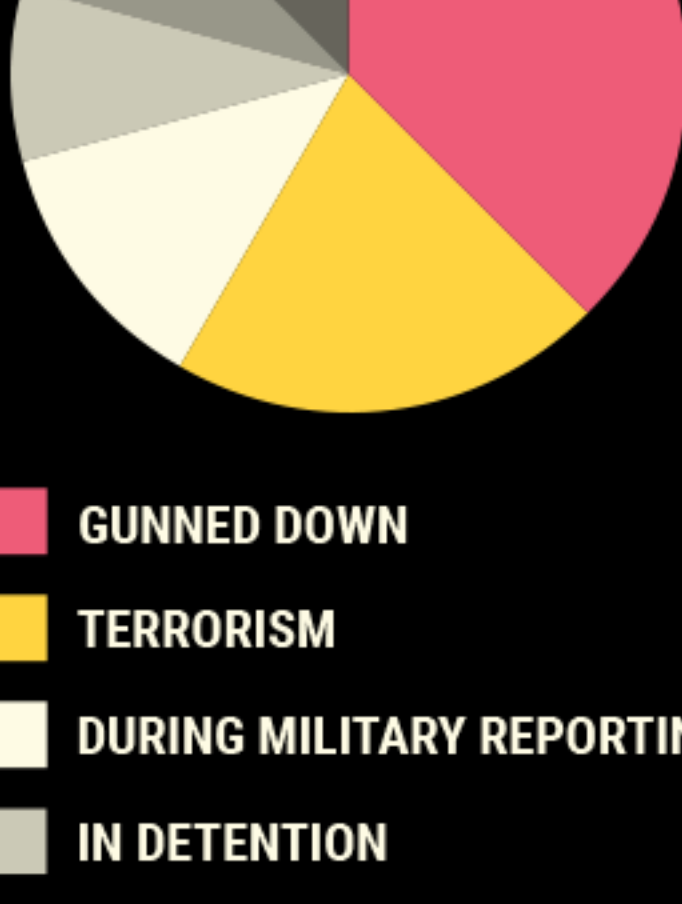
IN FACT THESE 2 COUNTRIES EACH HAD AT  
LEAST 1 JOURNALIST KILLED EVERY YEAR.

## CAUSES OF DEATH



THE VAST MAJORITY OF DEATHS WERE  
CAUSED BY **GUNSHOT WOUNDS**

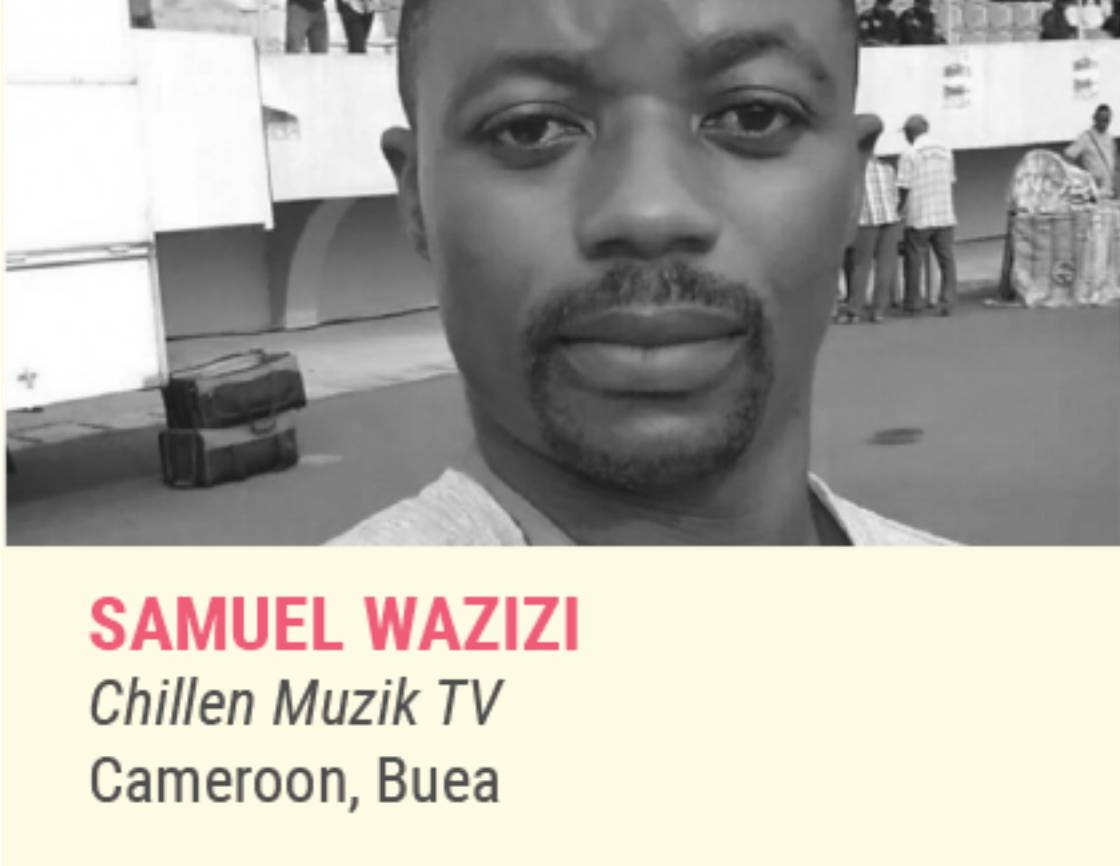
THE MAJORITY OF JOURNALISTS WERE  
**GUNNED DOWN AT HOME OR ON THEIR  
WAY HOME...**



- GUNNED DOWN**
- TERRORISM**
- DURING MILITARY REPORTING**
- IN DETENTION**
- DURING PROTEST**
- OTHER**

...FOLLOWED BY BEING KILLED DURING  
**TERRORIST ACTIONS IN PUBLIC SPACES**

## CASE SPOTLIGHT:



**SAMUEL WAZIZI**

Chillen Muzik TV

Cameroon, Buea

Cause of Death: **Unknown**

Cameroonian journalist Samuel Wazizi was arrested by Buea district police on August 2, 2019. He was accused of terrorism for allegedly supporting the separatists in relation to his reporting on the Anglophone armed conflict. A few days later he was moved to a military facility and was denied from seeing his lawyer, family and friends. 10 months later, a military official appearing on television in June 2020, let it slip that Wazizi had died in custody. The military launched an investigation into his death but the findings were never made public. To date there has never been an independent inquiry into the circumstance of his death and his family have not been able to retrieve his body.

Status: **Unresolved**

# Journalists caught in the crosshairs of impunity

By Reyhana Masters

Over the last **three years** there's been a sharp increase in threats, assaults and attacks on media practitioners and media outlets in Africa. Just this year alone, 13 journalists have been killed in nine months.

On the one hand, transgressions are being committed by people who recognise the critical role of the media in holding power to account, and in sharp contrast there is the blatant dismissal of the media's integral role as the fourth pillar of accountability by governments. This is evidenced by their aversion to carrying out meticulous investigations into the **crimes being committed against journalists**. Undoubtedly an **alert** and courageous media is a clear threat to the agenda of all these adversaries.

Reyhana Masters unpacks the thriving culture of impunity while in conversation with Zoe Titus, director of the Namibia Media Trust.

As the world marks International Day to End Impunity #2021, Africa is grappling with shocking **statistics**. Although it may be difficult to prove that all 13 murders are directly linked to their profession, it is nonetheless disturbing.

Zoe Titus: *I think that this is a shocking number. It's unprecedented and it really requires engagement by the public, and by policy makers. Since this onslaught on journalists and journalism is problematic for our democracies, it should be very, very worrying to all citizens.*

Giving impetus to the boldness of these attacks, is the lack of political will in providing credible and coherent responses to these violations. The thriving culture of impunity is not only an indicator of how the media is being purposefully debilitated, but it also points to weak policing and justice systems.

April 7 marked two years since the **disappearance of Ibrahimo Abu Mbaruco** in the Cabo Delgado region of Mozambique. A collective effort by international and African civil society organisations **asking Mozambican President Filipe Nyusi** to carry out a thorough investigation into his enforced disappearance was disregarded. As was their deep concern about the violence inflicted by government forces against journalists reporting in the region.

The **death of Cameroonian journalist Samuel Wazizi** – 10 months after he was taken into military custody – was announced in the most shocking manner, leaving the media fraternity and media advocacy organisations reeling in disbelief.

Wazizi was arrested on August 2, 2019 and detained at a police station in the western city of Buea, after being accused of being a terrorist. That was the last time his lawyer and family had any contact with him. "For ten months, the Cameroonian authorities concealed his death and refused to provide any information about his fate to his family and lawyers, and to NGOs that had raised the issued." Two years later, the family still don't know when or how **Wazizi died**.

At one point in time it was possible to link the targeting of journalists to very specific State and non-State actors, but over the years the list of wrongdoers has expanded and the reasons behind their actions are manifold.

At the core of Africa's thriving culture of impunity is the lack of political will to investigate the killings of journalists in any meaningful or impactful manner, leading to the lack of accountability that further fuels the tendency to continue attacking the media.

Zoe Titus: *The lives of journalists seem to hold very little value because those that take those lives do so with impunity because there are no repercussions for what they do. Perpetrators wield both political and economic power. It's an indictment on our society because we allow it.*

This is driving media advocacy organisations into taking desperate action.

The **pronouncement** by Minister of Information and Culture, Lai Mohammed at the 39th Session of the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation in 2020, that: "the Nigeria media is acknowledged as one of the freest in the world", is disputed by Edetaen Ojo – the executive director of Media Rights Agenda who highlighted in his tweet just a day before #IDEI2021 that: "In Nigeria, killers of journalists enjoy impunity in all cases - 100%! No one has ever been arrested or charged with killing a journalist, much less convicted or punished!"



Subsequently, **MRA has filed a suit** at the ECOWAS Community Court of Justice in Abuja over the failure of the Federal Government of Nigeria to effectively investigate, prosecute and punish perpetrators of the murders of 11 journalists killed between 1998 and 2019, and is asking the court to direct the Government to pay the families of each of the journalists N10 million as reparation.

Zoe Titus: *Right now, there is a coup in Sudan, protests in eSwatini and a few months back, there was an insurgency in Mozambique. A lot of this has to do with both political and economic forces, and power plays between different factions, who are seeking political power, economic power, and who are willing to let citizens suffer for very selfish interests. It's driven by greed and it's based purely on a lack of accountability. At the core of it is a lack of appreciation for the need to develop and sustain an equitable society.*

As much as it is necessary to highlight attacks, it is equally imperative to understand the circumstances which make journalists vulnerable.

Journalists are particularly exposed :

- In rich resource states that fall into the category of failed states with flailing economies. This is especially so, where the State has tight control over those resources and cronies are benefitting from the sales of these resources.
- In countries where the economy is decline and there are subsequently high levels of **corruption**.
- In countries where there is the lack of political will to carry out independent and thorough investigations into the death of journalists;
- In countries where crimes against the media are politicised;
- In regions where governments have failed to contain armed groups as is the case in the Sahel region;
- When reporting people-driven protests demanding democratic reforms in authoritarian States and
- To the growing intolerance in the political sector with ruling parties brutally opposing opposing views and opposition parties attacking the media for reporting their inadequacies.

A prime example of a highly volatile country to operate in, is the Democratic Republic of Congo. Ravaged by war almost two decades ago, the country is still **fraught with political instability**, armed clashes and human rights violations. This unwittingly places journalists at the centre of the target.

While it is considered **one of the wealthiest countries in Africa** in terms of resources, it is also rated in the **top 10 of the most highly corrupt countries** and has the poorest citizens in Central Africa. Civilians are caught in the crossfire of attacks between military and armed insurgent groups in the eastern part of DRC. Responding to the escalating violence, President Felix Tshisekedi placed the Ituri and Nord Kivu provinces under a military siege but this has done little to deter the attacks on the media. With radio being the most popular medium for dissemination of information, broadcasters operating in the area are **caught in the crosshairs** for reporting on the conflict.

In May 2021, broadcaster Barthelemy Kubanabandu Changamuka was fatally shot at point blank range in Kitshanga. On August 8, **Héritier Magayane** who worked for state broadcaster Congolese National Radio and Television (RTNC) was found with his throat slit in North Kivu province and just two weeks later **Joël Mumbere** Musavuli was stabbed and killed in his home in Ituri province.

On September 26, **Prince Syaghendera**, "a reporter for Tuendelee community radio and the Bunia-Info24 news website was forced to go into hiding after his home in Komanda, in Ituri province, was **reduced to ashes** in the space of a few hours," as reported by Committee to Protect Journalists.

This observation is supported by the latest **Global Impunity Index** recently unveiled by the Committee to Protect Journalists which places Somalia as the world's worst country for unsolved killings of journalists.

**Attacks and deterrence on journalists**

There have been numerous incidents of journalists being prevented from reporting on political events and being indiscriminately attacked by party loyalists as seen in Zambia's **polarised political landscape** during the campaign period. Attacks even spill into the pre and post electoral processes as witnessed during **Uganda's tense and brutal 2020/21 electoral campaign**. Even media-friendly Ghana had reports of journalists being attacked during its December 2020 election. Currently news crews in South Africa covering the campaign period of the pending municipal elections are being targeted by criminals and party members.

Journalists covering protests and demonstrations are being assaulted alongside civilians in countries like Nigeria, Guinea, Togo and most recently in South Sudan and **eSwatini**. Unfortunately the very qualities that make for an exceptional journalist are the same talents that make a journalist a moving target - most specifically to corrupt politicians and government officials colluding with corporates to covering up malfeasance.

Why should the attacks on the media matter to us all?

Zoe Titus: *I work from the perspective that if a journalist's life is at risk, or if a journalist is shot or mowed down, or attacked for doing his or her work, it is fundamentally all citizens who suffer as a result. There are so many really good examples of how the media has changed people's lives. I work with an organization and a media house that can speak to that. I mean, we cannot imagine for example, Namibia's independence, without considering the role that The Namibian newspaper has played in that.*

The most critical issue moving forward, is how to get people and even more importantly, policymakers to pay attention to the crimes being committed against journalists on this continent. For in as much as the media advocates on behalf of citizens and their rights, the public has to speak out for journalists too.

Zoe Titus: *If we go back and consider for a moment how African civil society organizations and policy advocates have contributed and impacted global policy on media freedom and freedom of expression, there is no doubt that we have the capacity to lead a campaign that delivers justice to the journalists and most importantly, the families of journalists who have been persecuted.*

*But it requires a concerted, focused and collective effort designed by and led by African civil society organizations which is supported by diverse global actors.*

*We've done it before and we can do it again.*

**Read more**

**Reyhana Masters is a passionate advocate for media freedom and freedom of expression. She uses her grounding in journalism to weave compelling stories to sketch the African context and challenge regressive narratives on freedom of expression and policy issues on the continent.**

# Media ethics: How digital disruption reshaped ethics and professionalism

*By Mulatu Alemayehu Moges*

In this article, I attempt to reflect on major digital disruptions that have brought significant changes in the media industry specifically on journalism ethics and the profession based on the principles of the Windhoek Declaration. At most, this reflection mirrors experiences and research from Ethiopia. A key consideration in the Windhoek declaration was the need for a professional, independent and diverse media that serves society. The question today is, what has changed more so in the era of digital media and is journalism adhering to the ethics and codes of the profession.

One cannot deny that digital technology has revolutionised the ways in which media operates throughout the world. Digital technology has made reporting (production and dissemination) both easy and difficult; easy in terms of collecting, processing and disseminating information to large audiences in various forms. At the same time, digital technology has created an opportunity for all interested to act as information or news mediums or purveyors to produce content and reach out to their target audiences. News and information production has increasingly been informalised more so by the prevalence of citizen journalism. Many people have turned to platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and other such platforms to create content and disseminate to their followers and in some cases without due consideration of media ethics. Some writers have large followers and can influence national narratives either positively or negatively. These people with huge followers have come to be known as influencers. This ultimately makes the right to freedom of expression more viable, especially in less democratic countries but equally fraught with danger in the era of misinformation. Oftentimes social media driven violence and hate speech has resulted in social instability. Mainstream media has been tempted, in some cases, to follow the lead of social media in fear of losing audiences hence compromising ethics.

In Ethiopia and globally, digital technologies have had a huge impact on mainstream media, with as an example, the number of audiences declining over the years yet significantly rising on social media more so the sensational ones. The expansion of digital technology in Ethiopia has seen mainstream media such as radio, television and newspapers changing the way they interact with audiences. The media are now live-streaming news and engaging audiences on platforms such as Facebook and YouTube which in itself brings new demands on ethics in terms of moderating debates or feedback and verifying stories posted on such social media platforms. Nevertheless social media platforms have increased mainstream media's disseminating power allowing local media to reach out to global audiences, more so Ethiopia's huge diaspora estimated at 3 million. More importantly, online streaming provides an opportunity for the audiences to reflect on views and engage the content by commenting, liking and sharing. This shows how digital technology has changed the overall production and dissemination of information and in a way shifted the practice of journalism from a strictly newsroom-driven content production to a situation where audiences are equally a key player in content production considerations. In many ways newsrooms are in an ethics minelfied in which new skills and new routines are needed to avoid mistakes.

It is also fair to note that digital technology has allowed journalists to move from mainstream media to the digital platforms or online journalism. Journalists working in hostile areas of Ethiopia are increasingly using online platforms to share their stories and remain safe. Some work under the cover of anonymity for their safety which yet again raises ethical questions on the authenticity of the content they share. A positive outcome of online journalism is however that media and journalists have opened new revenue streams with new business approaches emerging in which journalists are making money from online news sharing platforms, consequently engaging in various business development models



**Oftentimes social media driven violence and hate speech has resulted in social instability. Mainstream media has been tempted, in some cases, to follow the lead of social media in fear of losing audiences hence compromising ethics.**

Another area of concern for journalism in relation to digital platforms are the unintended consequences in which journalists are under pressure from social media audiences to process and share information which may not be fully verified. As a result of pressure to "break the story", mainstream media journalists are falling into the social media trap by reporting unsubstantiated information often informed by social media posts. This has presented a huge challenge for media ethics with journalists standing accused of reporting unverified information or falsehoods. In many countries this has become a media policy flashpoint with governments accusing the media of peddling fake news.

Ethiopian newsrooms have been caught in this crisis and many have no capacity for orienting journalists to guard against these ethical lapses and code of practice breaches. While journalists are concerned with professional and ethical values in relation to online platforms, there appear to be no concerted effort both in Ethiopia and sub-Saharan Africa on suitable responses hence a growing fear of the erosion of media ethics. The challenges that mainstream journalism faces in keeping itself at the forefront of news stories production and dissemination is the competition from social media and in that a desire to catch up and keep audiences. A key factor is that online media content producers do not exhaustively apply the codes of ethics to report stories objectively, hence they get caught in misinformation and in cases of sensationalism. The temptation is high for mainstream journalists to keep pace with social media, hence the ethical traps and pitfalls that many journalists are falling into. This is because social media content producers are not measured with the same professional yardstick as social media content producers or influencers. Social media is often measured by the number of clicks, views, likes, comments and shares which is also a source of income for them and far less on ethics and objectivity, balance or fairness. The interest of social media content producers is to reach out to a large audience, hence the rush to post stories without thorough investigation or verification. In the mainstream media, clicks don't hold space and the judgement on journalists is harsher should they be found on the wrong side of professional ethics and codes. In essence journalism is facing its most trying times and how the profession will develop into the future is a matter of conjecture. What cannot be denied is that journalism must remain truthful to facts yet responsive to audience needs.

The other issue that has been observed in the current media is an expansion of hate speech in news stories or posts. The use of hate speech is increasingly becoming rampant in both online and mainstream media. This is largely supported by the fact that digital media allows information to be shared more quickly and sometimes in real time. Social media audiences and content creators often talk without restraint and express their ideas on different platforms using inciteful speech on polarising issues, such as ethnicity in the case of Ethiopia. This is sometimes observed in the mainstream media too. In a rapid assessment of the content of mainstream media over a three-month period, I discovered that 20% of the selected content from the online media platforms such as Facebook and YouTube were littered with speech that had the potential to incite conflict and animosity, thus posing a danger to the community.

It is evident that one cannot ignore the current digital revolution. Rather, it is prudent to find areas of synergy and collaboration with the current revolution in technology whilst being mindful of maintaining journalism values and ethical standards.

As we mark 30 years of the Windhoek Declaration it is important to reflect on issues of professional development of media in the era of digital media platforms. There is a need to keep journalism professional while enhancing its reach and capacity through digital platforms. Balancing this will require resources for training, new tools on how newsrooms operate and media literacy awareness to guard against misinformation and disinformation often at the heart of conflict, violence that we now see in many societies.

***Mulatu Alemayehu Moges (PhD) is an Assistant professor of Journalism and Communication at Addis Ababa University.***

# In Zimbabwe, a journalist's family detained, tortured to bait him

by *Mduduzi Mathuthu*

THERE was just enough time to pick up my laptop and a toiletry bag. I walked briskly, taking footpaths and avoiding the main road leading to my house. Just five minutes later, the phone rang. It was my brother, speaking in a low tone. “They’re here. Nathan had jumped over the two-meter-high perimeter wall as a white 4x4 vehicle pulled up at our gate. The doors were open before the vehicle came to a stop. I had a terrible feeling about it,” he whispered from his hideout. He had observed six (6) men and a woman enter the house.

Inside, my elder sister Nomagugu picked up the story. “They say you must come now Fa, or they will take me,” she said. The menacing visitors, armed with guns, had identified themselves as police officers, but they would not show their badges. They told my sister they had seen me jump over the wall and I had to come back, or they would take her with them as bait.

My sister, her voice trembling with fear, had just done a brave thing. Fa is Nathan’s nickname. She was selling them a dummy. She just wanted me to know they were there; that Nathan had escaped – and more urgently for her she was telling me to keep walking.

By now, my family is accustomed to me getting in the crosshairs of the ruling regime in Zimbabwe, which has ruled the country since independence from British rule in 1980. To them, it’s almost like living with a drug dealer – you always expect a knock from the police, except the only opium the regime wants me to stop is, plying the masses with the truth of their industrial-scale corruption, abuse of office and cyclic election fraud.

## Where it all began

In 2001, I was chased down a dirt road in Nyamandlovu, in the province of Matabeleland North, by men carrying axes. I was a junior reporter for The Daily News, then the biggest circulating newspaper in the country, and had answered an SOS by a white ostrich farmer whose land was being invaded by men claiming to be independence war veterans. I was let go after a barrage of kicks, slaps and punches. They also hurt my arm which I carried in a sling for a week.

Less than a year later, I was with two colleagues Eugenia Mauluka and Collin Chiwanza in Wedza, Mashonaland East province, when again – answering a call by another besieged white farmer – we were surrounded by the invaders who beat us blue with a motorbike chain. We were saved by a brave soldier who ordered the brutality to stop, and fired shots in the air to emphasise his seriousness.

I left for university in the United Kingdom shortly after, and was lured back years later to take up a role as editor of The Chronicle, a state-owned publication. It was a brave call by the information minister Jonathan Moyo, who had an ambitious plan to reform state media.

In 2014, just a year after my return, President Robert Mugabe described me and other new editors appointed to head state newspapers “weevils” working within to bring down his government. In the end, I was turfed out after publishing a story highlighting the then Vice President Emmerson Mnangagwa’s role in the 1980s massacres of the minority Ndebeles in southern Zimbabwe.

Mnangagwa is now the president, and the men rummaging inside my house were his agents. They carried a warrant signed by a magistrate which accused me of “organising and advocating for illegal demonstrations against the government of Zimbabwe pencilled for July 31, 2020,” – the next day. The document further said I was “believed to be manufacturing, storing and distributing to members of the public some materials for use during the illegal demonstrations.” It empowered those carrying it to seize my “cellular phones, computers, cameras, offensive or subversive material likely to be used during the illegal demonstration.”

**I had been living in fear of a police raid for weeks after ZimLive, the online newspaper I founded, ran a series of articles exposing multi-million fraud in the procurement of COVID-19 drugs and equipment.**

## A visiting scene from the past

My 73-year-old aunt who was visiting from our rural home would later tell me that the scene reminded her of Gukurahundi, the 1980s killing of thousands of minority Ndebeles, many of whom were dragged out of their homes as their families watched, forced to dig their own graves and then bayoneted. Mnangagwa headed the intelligence ministry then, whose agents identified targets to be abducted, tortured or killed.

As I trudged on, not sure of my destination, I sent out a tweet: “Police are at my house.” Then I remembered I had a Twitter friend a few streets from my house. I headed there. A knock at the gate and she opened. “I saw the tweet, come in,” she said, saving me the trouble of explaining why I needed refuge.

There was a reason I had left the house with such haste. Earlier that day, Nathan had dispatched three nephews in two vehicles to a hardware shop to buy some materials for our aluminium fabrication business. When they did not return, and were not answering their phones, he got worried and drove into town looking for them. Driving past the main central police station in Bulawayo, he saw two of them – the drivers Amandlenkosi and Advent – talking to men in civilian clothes. A third nephew, Tawanda Muchehiwa, was not part of them. He called me to relay what he was seeing, and I told him then the picture was not good, he had to get away from there and race home.

I had been living in fear of a police raid for weeks after ZimLive, the online newspaper I founded, ran a series of articles exposing multi-million fraud in the procurement of COVID-19 drugs and equipment. At the heart of it was a company called Drax International fronted by a local businessman, Delish Nguwaya. Nguwaya is a known business associate of President Mnangagwa’s twin sons Shaun and Collins. The web also involved the health minister Obadiah Moyo, who was later arrested and then sacked.

The investigation angered the ruling party, which called several press conferences demanding that the media should stop “attacks” on the “first family.”

I was acutely aware that the regime wanted to know our sources who supplied the documents that unravelled the fraud. For this, they would have to cook up a charge which would allow them to enter my home and office with dubious authority to seize my cameras, computers and my phones.

My fears had only heightened in early August, when Hopewell Chin’ono, a journalist who had also reported on the Drax scandal, was arrested and accused of inciting Zimbabweans to stage violent protests against the regime. During a raid on his home in Harare, police broke down a glass door to gain entry. They took away his computers, phone and a video camera.

## Torturing my family as bait

While still digesting the drama of the preceding hours, a lawyer who had arrived at the police station called to say he had three members of my family – the two nephews seen by Nathan earlier and my sister, the hostage. “No, they must be four,” I insisted, sending him back to look for my other nephew, Tawanda, a second-year journalism student at a local university.

Tawanda was not there. The police said they had not arrested him. Then, talking to Advent and Amandlenkosi, the lawyer realised something terrible had happened. Almost half-a-dozen vehicles had surrounded the nephews. As the two were bundled into a sedan and driven to the police station, Tawanda was driven away in an Isuzu pick-up truck to an unknown destination.

Barely clinging to life, Tawanda was dumped near a railway line close to our home three days later, but only after a High Court judge had ordered the state to produce him. Doctors who treated him said his kidneys were barely functioning. His buttocks were just but a large open wound, the result of repeated beatings during torture. More than once, they put a gun to his head and told him it was over.

Tawanda’s abductors, who were five (5), wanted to know who finances ZimLive and who was our contact at the British and United States embassies – a preposterous assumption that all criticism of the government is sponsored by western countries.

Eventually, the three family members at the police station were let go after several hours of haggling between the lawyer and police. Tawanda, who spent three weeks in hospital and subsequently two months in rehab, has sought refuge in neighbouring South Africa, abandoning his studies, family and the only life he knew. I spent months living in hiding, emerging only after my lawyer challenged the warrant police used to enter my home based on political lies.

To date, no-one has been arrested for the abduction and torture of Tawanda. Dramatic CCTV footage of his abduction which was later obtained by ZimLive has provided a rare insight into the operations of a shadowy unit of Mnangagwa’s security forces known as the Ferret Team, which rights groups say is behind the abduction and torture of over 70 activists in the last 18 months.

Operating outside the law, and with impunity, the Ferret Team has highlighted a harsh reality for journalists under Mnangagwa’s authoritarian rule. A journalist must choose what they value more: exposing corruption or their family. While I am alive, I choose both.

***Mduduzi Mathuthu is the editor of ZimLive.com***

# Exiled for offending the king

*By Eugene Dube*

Publishing informative and critical articles which touched on the king and governance issues led to me being branded a revolutionary journalist and being forced to go into exile by King Mswati III's police officers. The Royal Eswatini Police officers raided my house without a search warrant from the 23rd of April 2020 and several times more during ensuing days.

As the sun peeked over the horizon, I would be anxious about what would happen to me and my family.

During the first raid, I suffered bruises on the shoulders as I tried to escape through the window due to fear of being arrested and tortured by Eswatini Police officers. They came four times after, during the month of April 2020, armed with guns and forcefully entered my house and seized personal gadgets and documents, including a laptop, three cell phones, 12 notebooks and company documents.

"When we come back for you Eugene, we will leave you reeling in a pool of blood. Why do you criticise the king? Stop criticising the king," threatened senior police Superintendent Clement Sihlongonyane during the interrogation.

"Eugene's case must be handled by a magistrate who has a history of giving harsh sentences. Let us find a magistrate who can do such a job," whispered Sihlongonyane to his colleagues.

It was at this point that I realized that this was pure persecution.

On 24 April 2020, I left my house at 06:15 am to buy bread from a local shop. To my surprise, I received a phone call from a relative alerting me that the police officers were back again, fully armed with guns.

On that very day I had to sleep in a forest in fear of police's continued torture and detention. For over five days in the forest, I had no food or roof over my head. I had to survive on bread alone.

Earlier before the raids and my exile, Eswatini police also had tried to force me to testify against the EFF Swaziland President Ncamiso Ngcamphalala who was my source of information on the many corruption scandals in Eswatini. I refused, hence the continued harassment, raids on my home and threats of arrest.

Opposition leader Ngcamphalala is facing charges of sedition, after I published an interview with him on the Swati Newsweek website. Section 24 of the Constitution of eSwatini promotes freedom of expression, but this right remains elusive as both journalists and sources of information are harassed. The police informed me that criticizing King Mswati III constitutes high treason.

**eSwatini must reform its repressive media and free expression laws and enforce legislation preventing police from harassing journalists and interfering with their work.**

Fearing for my safety, on May 5th, 2020 I used one informal crossing route in southern eSwatini to escape and seek asylum into South Africa. I took a risk at dawn and crossed the Mozane River.

On 30 May, 2020, Eswatini weekly publication the Independent News quoted the National Police Commissioner, William Dlamini, as having said that journalists writing negatively about the king would be muzzled. I took this as a reference to me and other journalists seen as troublemakers by the government.

My troubles began when I published various articles criticising the government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In the first article, published on 8 April 2020, I published an article titled "King Reckless on Swazis' Health". In this article, the Swati Newsweek constructively criticized King Mswati's government for failing to enforce social distancing in local hospitals when COVID-19 first hit Eswatini. The second article, which aggravated matters, was titled "King's removal possible". This story, published on 14 April 2020, was an interview which featured the president of the opposition party, Economic Freedom Fighters of Swaziland Ncamiso Ngcamphalala.

In this story, Ngcamphalala said eSwatini should have a constitutional monarchy, not an absolute monarchy. Linked to the statement by Ngcamphalala was a widely publicised statement made in December 2020, by EFF South Africa opposition leader Julius Malema, declaring that King Mswati III of eSwatini would fall.

The formation of EFF-Swaziland was inspired by the South African EFF led by Malema. I believe this might have scared King Mswati III; hence his police officers sought to silence Ngcamphalala and myself.

Honestly, it is difficult to work as a journalist in eSwatini. My action to leave followed a road well-travelled by many, such as the former Eswatini Observer, managing editor Musa Ndlangamandla who was forced to leave Eswatini in 2012.

The late eSwatini Prime Minister Barnabas Dlamini wanted him incarcerated for promoting democracy.

My story and that of many other journalists is an ongoing story of media repression in Swaziland. Ex Times of Eswatini newspaper journalist Andile Nsibande was assaulted by police officers while covering a workers' strike in Nhlangano in August 2018. According to an article published by the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) on 1 May, 2020, eSwatini Royal Police officers had arrested and tortured another exiled independent editor Zweli Martin Dlamini for writing critical articles about the absolute monarch in his Swaziland News online newspaper.

I find life in exile miserable as it is expensive to afford basic needs like quality healthcare, shelter, food and clothing and the fact that I can no longer practice journalism is depressing. I slept on a grass mat for 14 days when I first arrived in South Africa and later two good Samaritans lent me blankets and a wooden bed. I have faced attempts to rob me of my few possessions in exile and I cannot recall the times I have had to flee from criminals in Durban. I have realized that independent journalism is a crime in eSwatini. I later reported this matter to the African Union on 17 July, 2020 but I have not received feedback thus far.

On January 12, 2021 whilst still in exile, I was exposed to COVID-19. On the second day, my health deteriorated further; hence I visited a clinic for medical treatment. Luckily, I survived after treatment.

## **A case for reform.**

eSwatini must reform its repressive media and free expression laws and enforce legislation preventing police from harassing journalists and interfering with their work. All the 32 media and free expression laws in eSwatini must be amended and others repealed altogether. There is a need for a crisis committee for the media in eSwatini, tasked with helping journalists who have been arrested, exiled or jailed. Amongst its duties, the crisis committee could ensure that the safety of the journalists is guaranteed. I have been a victim of greedy lawyers who hike fees willy-nilly during cases. Journalism bodies must fight against such abuse and build solidarity networks that include regional and international media and free expression networks. Additionally, there is an urgent need for eSwatini journalists to be trained on safety issues on a regular basis. Furthermore, the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) should identify a new generation of progressive Swazi journalists who will protect press freedom and support the call for democracy in eSwatini. These journalists should be assisted to establish their own websites to advance the course for good governance and democracy in eSwatini and report uncensored and informative stories.

***Eugene Dube is the editor of Swati Newsweek, an online publication. He is currently living in exile in South Africa.***

# Journalism training: Meeting the demands of a changing industry

By Sarah Chiumbu

## A New World

The practice of journalism has evolved since 1991, when the Windhoek Declaration on 'Promoting Independent and Pluralistic Media' was signed. Rapid developments and the use of information technologies, including mobile computing and increased access to the internet, have transformed how news is produced, distributed, and consumed. Journalists no longer have a monopoly over news production and dissemination.

Audiences have become producers of news and now compete with professional journalists to break news. Citizen journalism now both comment against and compliments professional journalism. Traditional media such as hard copy newspapers continue to lose readers to the likes of Google and Facebook. Traditional broadcasters are competing against video streaming services such as Netflix, Showmax, and Amazon Prime.

Today's audiences spend more time on mobile smartphones than reading a hard copy newspaper or watching news on television. Google and Facebook dominate news space though they are not publishers themselves in the strictest sense of the word.

Loss of audiences has consequently led to the loss of advertising revenue. As newsrooms lose advertising revenue, inevitably, they downsize and shut down. Many journalists have lost their jobs the world over.

The current environment, which allows anyone to produce news, has led to the scourge of 'fake' news. Collins dictionary named 'fake news' the word of the year in 2017. News websites with a propensity to create and spread rumours and falsehoods are on the increase in Africa. Social media sites such as Twitter, Facebook and WhatsApp are actively used to spread disinformation and misinformation.

The fourth industrial revolution brings new realities where machines rely on artificial intelligence to perform tasks that humans would typically perform. As a result, the journalism industry is being transformed as process automation, and the use of algorithms becomes more mainstream.

## Newsrooms Adapting

Newsrooms are adapting. They are finding, as noted by Amy Schmitz Weiss<sup>1</sup>, new forms of multimedia storytelling through mobile and tablet platforms, engaging audiences through social media channels, and employing new ways of doing investigative journalism with sophisticated data-driven techniques. A different set of skills is now required for journalists to thrive in this new environment. Whereas previously, there was a clear distinction between broadcasting and print, convergence is now the order of the day. It is no longer enough to be a prolific writer whose well-articulated pieces draw readers to newspapers printed pages. The changing landscape requires a storyteller capable of utilising written text, audio, and visuals.

Therefore, journalism is no longer just about writing stories but content creation across different digital platforms.

Like other industries, the news industry is adapting to the new realities of the fourth industrial revolution. Newsrooms elsewhere are already experimenting with using bots and artificial intelligence to collect information and automate news production. Developments with machine learning and algorithms point to a future where there is an increase in automation of the news production process. Shujun Jiang and Ali Rafeeq<sup>2</sup> argue that new job titles in newsrooms will include enhanced reporter, augmented reality producer, bot developer, principal researcher, ecosystem manager, platforms manager, lead data scientist, and automation experience designer".

The training of journalists in this ever-changing environment needs to be agile enough to acknowledge these new trends and adapt accordingly.

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In a society characterised by big data, it is no surprise that data journalism has become key in converged newsrooms. This data comes in the form of statistics, visuals, maps, financial flows, etc. As noted by Allen Munoriyarwa<sup>3</sup>, there is an increase in data journalism uptake in African countries, particularly in South African countries. Data journalism led to the exposure of corruption cases such as 'State 'capture' in South Africa. There is, therefore, a need for journalists to be adequately trained so they can fully analyse big data. Data can be highly complex, and traditional journalism skills may not be able to unpack such complexities. Courses in data analytics are becoming increasingly crucial for the digital era journalist.

The days of big media houses employing multitudes of journalists are past. New online news websites are competing against traditional big media houses. In South Africa, respected titles such as Daily Maverick, Business Tech, and Moneyweb are exclusively distributed online. The same is happening in other Southern African countries such as Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Namibia. Traditional media houses have established online presence with some introducing paywalls to try and recoup some lost revenue. The paywall model has so far not managed to stem the tide of revenue loss because there are many equally good free sites online. In Zimbabwe, Alpha Media gave up on paywall after failing to attract a significant number of subscribers. As journalists lose jobs, entrepreneurship is increasingly becoming a way out. Therefore, it is imperative that journalism training includes entrepreneurship to equip journalists with skills necessary to face a world with limited newsroom opportunities.

## The Future is Digital: What Needs to be Done?

With journalism content now increasingly available online, are journalists adequately trained to meet the demands of this changing landscape? The prevalence of online media, demands journalists who are skilled differently from the days of traditional media dominance. If journalists are to meet the demands of a converged newsroom, it is vital that their training shifts from specialisations such as broadcasting and print.

Converged newsrooms require journalists capable of telling stories using all these formats. Lack of equipment, such as video cameras and audio recorders, is no longer an excuse. Training can utilise smartphones that can now perform all tasks of creating visuals, audio, and written text. The availability of editing apps for smartphones makes it possible for a journalist to create, for example, a news documentary without the need to employ a specialist video editor. Some universities, such as Rhodes University, University of Eswatini, University of Johannesburg, University of Cape Town, and the University of Botswana, are already implementing such training. Still, it is safe to say all training institutions need to follow this route.

Many editors complain that journalists who join newsrooms from training institutions are not ready to work and often need several more weeks of training in the newsroom to do some decent work. While there are several arguments to this view, what is indisputable is that training needs to adapt to converged newsrooms' needs. Training should emphasise data journalism, artificial intelligence and research skills in the digital era, and so on. Journalism curricular in Europe and the USA now contains several modules in digital media and electives relevant to digital realities. It is crucial that training institutions in Southern Africa are not left behind. Skills such as Google Analytics, HTML, and JavaScript have become vital for journalists and training institutions need to include such in their curricula as is already happening elsewhere in the world.

Basic coding skills are also becoming increasingly necessary. Institutions such as the Institute for the Advancement of Journalism (IAJ) based in South Africa help with short courses. It offers short courses such as Mobile Journalism (MOJO), Social media as Source and Platform, Becoming a Multimedia Journalist, etc. While these may help mid-career journalists, there is a need for universities and other diploma- giving institutions to adapt their curricula to train journalists who are ready for the evolving newsroom from day one. Organisations that offer journalism training, such as the Media Institute of Southern Africa, Media Monitoring Africa and IAJ mentioned above, need to work together with entities such as Code for Africa that leverage technology and data-driven practices for storytelling.

The prevalence of the so-called fake news necessitates that journalism curricula adapt to equip journalists to be relevant in this environment. Fact checking has become key in this environment where disinformation and misinformation are ubiquitous. Journalism training in Southern Africa needs to emphasise fact-checking if the profession is to maintain and regain some lost trust. Journalists need to be trained on how best to fact-check information before publishing. Working with organisations such as Africa Check may help training institutions. Perhaps it is time, as argued by Bruce Mutsvairo and Saba Bebawi, to have Fake News as a standalone module rather than as a component of other modules.

It is important to state that incorporating digital technologies does not negate the importance of theory in journalists' training. There is a need for balance to avoid valorising technology over journalistic talent and an awareness of complexities of world politics, economy, and social and cultural realities that help contextualise the news. If theory was not important, then IT professionals could just be employed in newsrooms. The changing environment still requires journalists capable of providing deep analysis of world events. This only now needs to be done in multimedia forms so stories can be disseminated via different platforms.

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# Safety and Security in Volatile Countries

## *Surviving to tell the story of South Sudan*

By Michael D. Aggrey

In many parts of South Sudan, a person wearing civilian casual clothes walking through the streets while carrying an AK47 machine-gun on the shoulder can survive arrest, but one with a big camera on the shoulder cannot.

John was carrying a camera when the security man asked him to follow him, confiscating the camera eventually. He was an independent journalist going to cover the arrival of the wounded businessmen and cattle keepers who were being brought in from the town of Maridi, after being wounded during the clashes that took place on 26 December, 2019 between cattle keepers from Lakes State and the farmers in Maridi. Ironically it was the cattle herders who were armed with rifles including AK-47s.

An alert on John's arrest was immediately issued by the Association for Media Development in South Sudan (AMDISS), a membership network of media organizations that leads advocacy and training across the industry. AMDISS' officers went to rescue their colleague and secure his equipment. John's arrest is not an exception but the norm in South Sudan. As one participant at a training workshop once said in Juba in 2016, *"Carrying the camera in South Sudan is in itself an invitation to personal insecurity"*.

Arrests of journalists can take place anytime and anywhere in South Sudan. On October 27 2020, the Chamber of Commerce in Central Equatoria called a press conference to talk about the rising prices of commodities in the country. Just as the briefing was underway, a group of National Intelligence and Security Service agents swarmed the venue. They didn't arrest the officials giving the press conference, but went after the media, arresting and detaining five reporters. The journalists' tools, including cameras and recorders were confiscated and those arrested were from various media outlets. The five journalists were later released after six hours and were told not to publish or broadcast the story. Their crime, according to the security agents, was that the journalists were reporting on the streets and in market places without a letter of permission from the Media Authority.

This story is just one of many of the struggles that journalists face in South Sudan.

It becomes even more difficult when one is seen attempting to take photographs. A journalist's camera is associated as "a tool of the spy" for an enemy - in the context of the country's polarised and often violent politics.

Moreover, the majority of South Sudanese are fearful of talking to the media in order to avoid intimidation. To them, doing so might result in arrest or detention by the government security operatives. Consequently, mainstream media suffers. Hope has been found in new online based media including social media platforms such as Facebook, that are taking centre stage as alternative sources of receiving and sharing information.

In May 2019, a social media agitation of threats, by a movement that called itself the Red Card Movement (RCM) caused mayhem in political circles for announcing it was preparing to topple the government. This prompted the government to abort planned celebrations to mark the Sudan People's Liberation Army or Liberation day. Instead, a heavily armed military took over the streets of Juba to monitor the situation. The exercise cost the government a lot in terms of time, effort and money.

The truth however was that the Red Card Movement was an online movement that seems to have neither structure nor any tangible plans to cause violence or lead any protests. But as a result of their online presence, they however succeeded in sending the message of a need for good governance in South Sudan.



### Historical origins

What fuels this environment of media repression is located in the history of the country.

South Sudan, the youngest country on the continent, was, until 2011, part of Sudan. The practice of journalism, was at some point, controlled by the security apparatus with little, if any, space for independent journalism. Independence of the media was limited, if not outright non-existent. Draconian laws made it hard for the media to blossom. National security officials had to approve the content of a publication or broadcast beforehand. On attainment of its Independence, the culture and practices of the 'old Sudan' were passed onto its new authorities in the now South Sudan. The majority of the people currently occupying public office in South Sudan worked within the previous system of Sudan so attitudes and practices have not changed. The same old repressive laws were copied and pasted and used against the media in the new state.

The high hopes of peace and stability expected in South Sudan were dashed with the ensuing civil war pitting former allies. The civil war has marked South Sudan as one of Africa's conflict ridden countries in which peace has been elusive. The country is struggling to rebuild its crippled institutions through a transitional peace accord signed in 2018 and meant to resolve an ongoing internal armed conflict that started barely 2 years after independence. It is risky to practice journalism amid militarized protagonists. Since 2012, 12 journalists have been killed in South Sudan under various circumstances and none of the investigations into the killings have been conclusive and or made public.

In research on the status of safety and security in South Sudan, carried out by AMDISS in 2020, and involving 91 respondents - made up of journalists and editors - 57% reported not receiving help from the authorities in the face of adversity, abuse, harassment in the course of duty. When asked whether journalists feel protected by the Media Authority (MA) to carry out their work, 52% reported that they do not feel so, while 47% agreed that the MA has been somewhat protective of journalists. In 2020 alone, AMDISS recorded 60 cases of media violations of various nature.

### A ray of hope

The fact that half of the journalists thought the Media Authority has been helpful, is a step in the right direction. Part of the reasons for this is that the authority grew out of efforts largely steered by AMDISS to convince the government to enact democratic media laws.

South Sudan media laws were enacted in 2013, after 7 years of advocacy. These laws are, however, not being fully implemented and observed as some officials are resistant to change. In addition, the bodies discharging the said laws have not been fully established due to a lack of political will. This lethargic approach to implementation of media policies is exemplified by the non-renewal of the Media Authority Board which expired in 2020. This has resulted in stagnation on the push for a vibrant and independent media, thereby perpetuating a state of impunity on crimes against journalists.

Despite all the safety and security concerns of journalists in South Sudan, many journalists have survived to continue telling their story in this volatile situation even after being arrested, detained, harassed and often released without charge. In some parts of South Sudan journalists are forced to take political sides or face arrest for harassment. It is remarkable that media workers have survived the odds and maintained their role in keeping both the people of South Sudan and the international community informed on developments in the country.

My hope, concerning the safety and security needs of journalists in South Sudan, is that journalists remain alert and aware of security triggers and take measures to protect themselves.

At the end of the day there is no story worth losing one's life for.

Overall safety and security of journalists can be improved when policy decisions to foster a democratic media and information landscape are put into practice without prejudices.

For example, the Media Authority (MA) has to wholly protect media interests and act independently of the interests of other authorities.

The MA must defend journalists being persecuted from unlawful arrests and must create all the necessary units responsible for arbitration and safety as provided for under the media law.

The National Security Service should avoid arresting journalists with impunity and seek mediation over arrests. The seizure of newspapers and removal of articles at the printing press, which happens often, has to end.

No media house should be closed down by any security organization as experienced in the past without a court order. These attacks have caused a shrinkage of media. In 2014, South Sudan had over ten newspapers but by 2021 on four are operational.

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## **SAFETY OF JOURNALISTS**

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