



November 2, 2020

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**STATEMENT AT SOLIDARITY MARCH TO MARK THE INTERNATIONAL  
DAY TO END IMPUNITY FOR CRIMES AGAINST JOURNALISTS, 2020**

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**‘You are not alone’.**

Today we say to journalists all over the world who are facing persecution for doing their jobs, that they are not alone. We stand with them!

Our reality in Namibia may be quite different. We have not witnessed the killing of journalists, arbitrary arrests, kidnappings ... But we cannot turn a blind eye when colleagues elsewhere are killed, languish in jails and live in fear of persecution simply for doing their jobs.

This particular day – 2nd November – was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in 201, as the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists. Today is a day of reflection. It is an opportunity to focus our attention on journalists who are being persecuted, forcibly disappeared or killed - with priority given to the numerous unsolved crimes against journalists.

What we have to reflect on is that the pervasive nature of impunity is not something that emerges suddenly. The culture of impunity intensifies over a lengthy period of time when people in positions of power and authority continue unchecked for crimes committed against journalists.

It is important for journalists and media rights organisations to demonstrate and garner public support across borders to demand answers from governments on why they are expending energy, time and resources in persecuting the media instead of probing corruption.

On this day it is important to remind the world that Cameroonian journalist Samuel Wazizi’s death cannot go unsolved. Samuel was picked up by military police last year. It took 10 months for the army to confirm that he was in detention and that he had died in the meantime – in their custody. Today, nearly one year since his death his body has not been returned to his family. They have not been able to bury him. And no investigation underway.

We must demand the Mozambican government to seriously investigate the disappearance of Ibraimo Abu Mbaruco who went missing in April 7.

We should be asking for updates on the murders of undercover Ghanaian journalist Ahmed Hussein-Suale, Marko Agei Makoor in South Sudan and 70-year-old Nigerian journalist Benjamin Ekom.

We have to express our outrage that for the sixth year in a row Somalia retains the world title as the worst country when it comes to prosecuting murderers of journalists on the CPJ 2020 Global Impunity

Index. It is up to us to support Somalian media and demand that authorities investigate cases of killings or attacks on journalists, media outlets and critics.

We should stand with them in support of their demands for justice.

Standing in solidarity on home soil is vital, but why is it necessary to collectively come together on issues far removed from our realities?

For journalists operating in difficult environments, acts of solidarity from colleagues are a lifeline. Standing in solidarity is one of the most powerful counter measures to an excess of power. Collective continental voices remind brazen governments that state-sanctioned misdeeds will not go unnoticed. It becomes an even more powerful tool as it reverberates across borders and continents.

So today, we say to colleagues here in Namibia and across the world ... ‘continue to speak truth to power. Be bold in your efforts to uncover wrongdoing. When they come for you, remember, you are not alone. We stand with you!’.

**A moment of silence before we depart.**

Zoé Titus  
Director

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