



UGANDA JOURNALISTS ASSOCIATION

FRIDAY 26 MAY 2024

Press Statement.

LAUNCH OF THE 2024 WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY ACTIVITIES.

As you are aware, the media fraternity in Uganda joins the rest of the world to commemorate the World Press Freedom Day (WPF) on May 3rd every year.

May 3rd acts as a reminder to governments of the need to respect their commitment to press freedom and is also a day of reflection among media professionals about issues of press freedom and professional ethics. It is also a day of remembrance for those journalists who lost their lives in the pursuit of a story. **The international celebrations for this year will be held under the theme; "A Press for the Planet, Journalism in the face of Environmental Crisis".**

The Uganda Journalists Association (UJA) with its partners will lead the celebrations in line with the theme, with an overarching objective of advancing the press freedom in Uganda and advocate for the pivotal role of journalism in environmental conservation and other aspects such as democracy, good governance, patriotism, human rights, socio economic transformation, development. Through various organized activities, the initiative seeks to reinvigorate the government, development partners and other stakeholder's recommitment to the ideals of press freedom and those highlighted aspects.

Series of activities that will be held before, during and after, in commemoration of the 2024 May 3rd-WPF include the following:

1. Media Football Gala.

During the 2022 WPF celebrations, The Uganda Journalists Association adopted sport including football as a new innovative tool of advocacy for press freedom since sport is a unifier of all players that are charged with the duty of ensuring the enjoyment of press freedom in Uganda. Happy to note that some including the judiciary have already registered their teams. The Football Gala tournament involves media house teams across the country, media organizations and non-media organizations. **It will be held on Sunday 5th May 2024, at City High Secondary School playground near DHL offices- Lugogo by pass- Kampala, 8:00 am -5:30 pm. All participating teams are requested to register with our organizing team at a fee of 50,000 shs. only- media houses/ organizations and 200,000 shs, via 0775 271 777**



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and 0755 339 947, to help with preparations. We thank God that what started as nothing the WPFM Media Football singly by UJA has become something to imitate about by other players in the media sector. You can refresh your mind in relation to the gala using the following links:

<https://ujaofficial.org/2022/05/10/pictural-world-press-freedom-day-uja->

[football- .gala/cn.facebook.com/whispereyeneews/videos/719045485952397](https://www.facebook.com/whispereyeneews/videos/719045485952397)

2. Tree Planting.

Under this, we are continuing with our tree planting campaign of indigenous trees in Kampala and other parts of the country in collaboration with our environment partners; My Tree Initiative as part of the broader initiative to plant one million trees across Uganda by 2025, as a response to the prevailing problem of climate change that has adversely impacted agriculture and public health. It was launched during the 2021 WPFM celebrations.

3. The Modern-Day Heroes Awards and Press Conference.

These awards will be given in recognition of outstanding individuals and organizations that have made enormous contribution turning around the landscape of media sector, country and environment/ climate. It will be observed on Friday 3rd May 2024, WPFM. A joint press conference with all the Uganda Journalists Association (UJA) partners will be addressed in Kampala, shaping the gist of the day.

4. Stake Holders' Outreach Engagements.

These aim at moving the stake holders with the duty of ensuring the protection and enjoyment of press freedom recommit to the ideals of the same. For example, UJA held engagements with different stake holders including the European Union (EU).

Threats, Concerns and Challenges against Journalism Practice in Uganda;

Exploitation of journalists.

The commemoration of the 2024 WPFM in Uganda comes at the time of increased threats and challenges against the press freedom



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and media sector in Uganda, the despite legal framework in place providing for journalism safety. For example, although Article 29, 40, 44 of the 1995 constitution and Universal Declaration of Human Rights guarantees enjoyment press freedom, it remains blatantly violated un fortunately by the authorities and gate keepers that are charged with the duty of ensuring its protection.

As we speak now, more than 100 hundred journalists have been laid off work as of January 2024 and Friday 26 April 2024 by different media houses and they can hardly survive with their families. All the multimedia companies in Uganda have fired journalists citing the economic hardships in the country. The news rooms of most media houses are now almost empty as a result of intimidation, forced resignations and departures arising out of the same painful experience.

Sadly, the ICT and National Guidance ministry is aware of all the happenings, but has deliberately chosen not to care. The ICT ministry officials should know that by making necessary interventions against injustices as and when are occasioned on journalists are not doing any of us a favor, but simply exercising their obligatory duty. If they can't salvage this situation, they should then immediately resign or even be replaced with others that will serve with care, by the appointing authority, to redeem our dear profession that is destined to extinction because of the I don't care attitude and selfishness. While the economy is faced with challenges, it cannot be used as justification for the sackings since the exploitation of journalists has been around here for long with impunity, and therefore, must stop before the worse becomes the worst.

Going forward, we would like to make the following prayers;

1. Parliament to interest itself by exercising its monitoring role to find out as to why there is persistent exploitation and violation of journalists and their economic rights by the employers and explore lasting and fair solutions like it has been done with other professions.
2. His Excellence the President, Yoweri Kaguta Museveni should fast track the process of government's capitalization of the Uganda Journalists Association (UJA) SACCO as per his February 11th 2023, Kyambogo meeting with journalists, like it has been done with other professionals. This will alternatively and partly help with addressing the exploitation plight.



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UJA Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Elections.

We would like to humbly inform all UJA members that matters to do with holding our AGM and completion of elections will be addressed in detail after having the WPF out of the way.

We express our gratitude to all teams from different media houses, media and non-media organizations that have resolved to register for the Sunday May 5th 2024, Media Football Gala that we may together use it with a strong voice against perpetration of blatant violation against press freedom with all responsible stake holders.

We equally thank all stake holders including individuals, fellow journalists, corporations, partners, for providing all the requisite support towards successful preparation for our WPF activities, may God bless you.

The 2024, WPF activities are therefore, hereby officially launched.

"The Pen is Mightier than the Gun."

MATHIAS RUKUNDO,

PRESIDENT UJA