

**KENYA MEDIA SECTOR WORKING GROUP**  
**MEDIA STATEMENT**  
**Maanzoni Lodge, Machakos County**  
**April 2, 2023**

We, the Kenya Media Sector Working Group, met at Maanzoni Lodge on April 1, 2023 to deliberate on the state of the media in the wake of the current events.

As the Kenya Media Sector Working Group, we stand for an open, free, and democratic society.

A society where all can freely exercise the right to freedom of opinion and expression, including seeking, receiving, and imparting information and ideas, is foundational for democracy and liberty. Free and plural media are indispensable components for this: By providing accurate information and diverse viewpoints, they enable the public to participate in societal engagements, make informed choices, and hold our government to account.

1. The government should not do anything that denies free flow of information to the public. We have received reports of plans to shut down the broadcast media and/or the internet and throw the country into information darkness ahead of tomorrow's demonstrations. This would be a most ill-advised and a grievous assault on Kenya's democracy. From the media perspective, taking this route, will sink as a country.
2. We acknowledge that the right to peaceful assembly is the foundation of a democratic and tolerant society as enshrined in the Constitution and the media have a democratic duty to bring such information to the public. However, we note with concern the wave of attacks both offline and online meted against media workers in the line of duty.
3. While safety of journalists should be guaranteed, the Kenya Media Sector Working Group notes with alarm the increasing number of journalists targeted by law enforcement officers. Since the demonstrations by the Azimio La Umoja Coalition began on March 20, 2023, we have documented more than 20 cases of attacks and violations against journalists, including harassment, arbitrary arrests and physical attacks with state actors responsible for or encouraging a significant proportion of these attacks.
4. We take great exception to the profiling of the media and blunt threats by the Deputy President, the Prime Cabinet Secretary and the Inspector General of Police. Such sentiments, coming from the offices with the prime responsibility of protecting the media, are shocking and unfortunate.

We call upon all actors in Kenya to stop profiling and attacking journalists, as it is an attack on democracy.



5. We demand that the Director of Public Prosecution (DPP) , the Inspector General of Police (IG) and the Independent Policing Oversight Authority (IPOA) to ensure accountability for all threats and violence against journalists through impartial, prompt, thorough and independent and effective investigations. We call upon them to bring to book the perpetrators behind attacks, while ensuring access to effective remedies and compensation to the victims.
6. We demand that the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) addresses the nation to give an update on the status of investigations and plan for prosecution of the attackers. In this regard, we hereby issue to the DPP, a seven-day ultimatum to deliver a statement on the status of the investigations and prosecution of those culpable. We also call upon the Independent Policing Oversight Authority (IPOA) to update the nation on the status of investigation of police brutality against journalists.
7. Article 34 (2) of the Kenyan Constitution makes it clear that the State shall not interfere with any person engaged in broadcasting, production, or circulation of any publication or dissemination of information by any medium, or penalise any person for any opinion or view or the content of any broadcast or publication.
8. We demand that the Government commits to compensating journalists already harmed, including paying for their medical treatment and replacing damaged or lost equipment, failure to which media houses should consider blacking out government events.
9. On live coverage, our policy position is that every media house, while entitled to do live coverage, needs to have the proper equipment and deploy the proper technology that can allow delayed relay of the feed of the live coverage that may be used for purposes of incitement and vilification of others.
10. Broadcasters are encouraged to conduct proper risk assessment and to deploy equipped personnel and technology that can ensure coverage that adheres to the highest journalistic standards and ethics.
11. Media houses must prioritize safety and welfare of journalists covering conflict situations. We demand clear safety and protection protocols before they deploy journalists to cover situations that are potentially violent. Journalists deployed must be properly insured against such risks and must be provided with proper Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
12. While we acknowledge welfare issues facing many media houses, we demand that the media houses commit to a plan to settle journalists' outstanding salary arrears and statutory remittances to respective authorities for the benefit of journalists.
13. While media freedom is effectively guaranteed under the Constitution, existence of other laws that are inimical to media freedom, continues to hamper investment into the media sector. We demand a review of these legislations.
14. To ensure sustainability of media houses, policies need to be put in place that encourage reinvestment of profits into the local media industry.



15. Media Sector Associations reiterate their commitment to the media sector cohesion and solidarity.
16. Collectively, we reiterate our commitment to freedom of expression and media freedom and stress that the Government of Kenya has a responsibility to take action to accelerate greater accountability and respect for the rule of law.

This statement is issued on April 2, 2023 by the following associations of the Kenya Media Sector Working Group:

1. Kenya Editors' Guild
2. Kenya Union of Journalists
3. Article 19 Eastern Africa
4. Kenya Correspondents Association
5. Internews Kenya
6. Association of Media Women in Kenya (AMWIK)
7. Political Journalists Association of Kenya
8. Digital Publishers Association of Kenya
9. Kenya Parliamentary Journalists Association
10. Digital Broadcasters Association
11. Association of Devolution Journalists
12. Association of Freelance Journalists
13. Kenya Community Media Network.
14. Association of Professional Broadcasters
15. International Association of Women in Radio and Television
16. Association of Kenya Community Media Operators
17. Foreign Press Association, Africa