

KAMPALA DECLARATION ON JOURNALISTS AS BEARERS AND PROMOTERS OF HUMAN RIGHTS

PREAMBLE

Conscious of the fact that human rights are inborn and inherent to all human beings regardless of their status;

Cognisant that Human Rights are not favours or privileges granted by the state or any other authority;

Aware of a deteriorating media situation in Uganda and its impact on: press freedom, freedom of expression, conscience and opinion and the safety of journalists in Uganda;

Aware of the role of the media in keeping under the review, the promotion and protection of Human Rights;

Aware of the codes of conduct of the media, RDCs and political parties;

We, Journalists as duty bearers and promoters of human rights meeting in Kampala on 9th December 2010 declare our commitment in advancing the human rights agenda.

Recognising our responsibility as citizens to observe and respect other peoples' rights in the course of our work and knowing that monitoring of human rights is part of our watch dog role as journalists;

We acknowledge the importance of the media in the democratization process and the mandate we derive from the constitution of the Republic of Uganda (Article 29 and 41) as well regional and international treaties ratified by Uganda;

We confirm that the professional ethics of journalism impose on us obligations towards observance of additional rights like right to privacy, right to reply, right to fairness, right to respect in grief, right to balance in reporting, right to the voiceless to be heard, right to decency and human dignity, right to accurate information;

We note that whereas, the media has expanded the scope of news coverage, events and developments, they do not consciously bring out the human rights perspective. Journalists and media organisations should understand their social responsibility to:

- Expose breaches of human rights
- Educate public on their rights and rights of others
- Observe human rights in execution of their work

We applaud the contribution from journalists, media and human rights organisations and the support from development partners.

CONCERNED ABOUT

extra judicial killings of journalist, illegal arrests of journalists, detention, mob justice, intimidation, assault, unfriendly media laws, high level of impunity, delayed court judgments, poor remuneration of journalists, government interference, mushrooming militia groups and unregulated institutions and police harassments.

DEMAND that; the environment under which the media operates in Uganda is safe, policy friendly and based on legally binding laws that conform to the constitution and international treaties.

RECOMMEND THAT:

The new government

- Respects the independence of regulatory bodies, the media and judiciary;
- Creates an enabling environment and supports the self regulating mechanisms;
- Puts in place a media policy to clearly spell out the duties and responsibilities of all statutory bodies in respect to the media in Uganda;

The Parliament

- Repeals all unfriendly media laws;
- Amends the labour laws;

The Judiciary

- Expeditiously disposes pending media cases and new cases that may arise;
- Dismisses all case of sedition against journalists;
- Exercises and demands for its independence;

The Media

- Popularize the ethical code of conduct as a way of applying human rights based approach;
- Use the existing networks to popularize the importance of the media in a democratization process;

- Ensures that proprietors desist from interfering with media contents
- Strengthen the existing network with the media institutions;
- Build strong partnerships with other stakeholders in the struggle to respect and promote human rights.

We, the representatives of the media hereby resolve to adopt the following strategies:

Strategy 1:

Encourage professional colleagues and media in general to make a more conscious coverage of human rights issues as a social responsibility.

Encourage journalists to learn about and internalise the basics of human rights including international treaties, national laws and constitutional provisions.

Strategy 2:

Capacity building: The media should build capacity in human rights based reporting through:

- Training of student and in-service journalists in HRBA skills
- Develop a core pilot team
- Select model media houses willing to start HRBA

Strategy 3:

Media houses should mainstream human rights reporting through:

- Making HR a separate beat like police, sport, courts or parliament
- Developing skills to enrich stories with HR values
- Creating human rights desks as soon as practicable

Strategy 4:

Networking:

Journalists should network with those organisations already involved in aspects of human rights work, such as the UHRC, HR NGOs, Police, Anti-corruption Coalition, FHRI, UDN etc.

Journalists should strengthen networking and synergising with existing media organisations to co-own this process, have a common purpose and maximise on advantages.

This draft declaration was adopted on **9th December 2010 in Kampala** at a workshop for journalists and human rights activists.

The following representatives participated in the workshop and the drafting of this declaration:

Anecho Victor	KFM
Isaac Senabulya	TOP TV/RADIO
Stephen Bwire	MOVEMENT TIMES
Namiro Pheona	DEMBE FM
Nakkungu Harriet	SUUBI FM
Ronald Sebutiko	VISION VOICE
Nzito Arafat	RADIO SIMBA
Samuel Ssebuliba	SUUBI FM
Cissy Nankanja	CBS FM
Lucy Ekadu	VISION MEDIA GROUP
Ssempala Robert	SUUBI FM/ HRNJ - U
Haruna Kanaabi	INDEPENDENT MEDIA COUNCIL OF UGANDA
John Kusolo	POWER FM
Henry Okech	SIMBA FM
Mike Gesa Munabi	STUDENTS FOR GLOBAL DEMOCRACY UGANDA
Sendagire Edward	STUDENTS FOR GLOBAL DEMOCRACY UGANDA
Otim Ivan	STUDENTS FOR GLOBAL DEMOCRACY UGANDA
Kanjunjuzi Lillian	STUDENTS FOR GLOBAL DEMOCRACY UGANDA
Nkonge Thomas	TOP RADIO
Wasswa Richard	CBS FM
Andrew Bagala	MONITOR PUBLICATIONS
Mulindwa Mukasa	WBS / APTN
John Baptist Wasswa	MAKERERE UNIVERSITY
Geoffrey Wokulira Ssebagala	HUMAN RIGHTS NETWORK FOR JOURNALISTS