

10 June 2020

H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat
Chairperson, African Union Commission
African Union Headquarters
P.O. Box 3243, Roosevelt Street W21K19
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

SUBJECT: Silence the Guns but Don't Silence the Journalists

Excellency,

WE, the undersigned journalists' unions and associations in Africa backed by the Federation of African Journalists (FAJ) and the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), applaud the African Union and its member states for launching the campaign on "Silencing the Guns: Creating Conducive Conditions for Africa's Development".

Having taken note of the decision by the African Union's Peace and Security Council (PSC) at its first seating of June 2020 to support the appeal from yourself and the UN Secretary General António Guterres calling for an end to conflicts and the cessation of all hostilities, we concur that Africa needs to end gun violence in all its forms and shapes.

However, we believe that this call should be expanded to include journalists who are regularly gunned down just for doing their job in keeping their citizens informed. There is no year that passes, without a journalist being murdered in Africa and, worse still, the perpetrators are not held to account.

We therefore urge you, Your Excellency, to make an integral part of your call to silence the guns a specific pledge for an end to the deadly violence against journalists in Africa, as a means of silencing them and instilling fear in their fellow journalists.

As the PSC backed your call for the cessation of hostilities and the ending of conflicts, we also urge you to call on AU Member States to end hostilities targeting journalists such as arbitrary arrests, intimidations, spurious criminal persecutions, stigmatisation and denial of access to information which have accrued during the fight against the coronavirus pandemic. African governments cannot defeat COVID-19 alone, and must include journalists and the media in general in the fight against the pandemic in every country.

We thank you for your attention to this important matter, and let's all stand together to silence the guns but let us not allow journalists in Africa to be silenced.

Yours sincerely,

1. Associação sindical dos jornalistas de Cabo Verde (AJOC)
2. Association des journalistes du burkina (AJB)
3. Botswana Media and Allied Workers Union (BOMAWU)
4. Fédération Syndicale des Travailleurs de la Communication (FESYTRAC)
5. Gambia Press Union (GPU)
6. Ghana Journalists Association (GJA)
7. Journalists Workers Union of Tanzania (JOWUTA)
8. Kenya Union of Journalists (KUJ)
9. Media Workers Association of South Africa (MWASA)
10. National Union of Somali Journalists (NUSOJ)
11. Press Union of Liberia (PUL)
12. Rwanda Journalists' Association (ARJ)
13. Sindicato dos jornalistas Angolas (SJA)
14. Sindicato Nacional de Jornalistas de Moçambique (SNJ)
15. Sudan Journalists Union (SJU)
16. Syndicat de la Presse et de l'audio-visuel de Djibouti (SPAD)
17. Syndicat des journalistes et techniciens de la Communication sociale (SINJOTECS)
18. Syndicat des Professionnels de l'Information et de la Communication du Sénégal (SYNPICS)
19. Syndicat National de la Presse Marocaine (SNPM)
20. Syndicat national des journalistes du Cameroun (SNJC)
21. Syndicat national des journalistes tunisiens (SNJT)
22. Syndicat National des Professionnels de la Presse (SNPP)
23. Syndicat National des Professionnels de la Presse de Côte d'Ivoire (SYNAPPCI)
24. Uganda Journalists Union (UJU)
25. Union Burundaise des Journalistes (UBJ)
26. Union des Journalistes Tchadiens (UJT)
27. Union Nationale de la Presse du Congo (UNPC)
28. Union nationale des journalistes du Mali (UNAJOM)
29. Union of Journalists of South Sudan (UJOSS)
30. West African Journalists Association (WAJA)
31. International Federation of Journalists (IFJ)
32. Federation of African Journalists (FAJ)