



Namibia Media Professionals Union (NAMPU)

02 October 2023

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NAMPU CONDEMNS SUSPENSION OF NEW ERA MANAGING EDITOR, JOHNATHAN BEUKES

The Namibia Media Professionals' Union (NAMPU) expresses its deep concern and strong condemnation regarding the suspension of Mr. Johnathan Beukes, the Managing Editor of New Era Newspaper. This incident raises serious questions about press freedom, journalistic independence, and the protection of journalists' rights in Namibia.

Mr. Beukes, a dedicated journalist and competent editor, has been suspended from his position without any formal charges being brought against him. This suspension appears to be a direct result of his unwavering commitment to fulfilling his professional duties without fear or favor. His apparent "offense" seems to stem from exercising his constitutional right to freedom of expression, notably through his recent editorial titled "No Confidence in Secretive Judiciary." In a democratic society like Namibia, press freedom is a fundamental pillar of our democracy. Journalists bear the essential responsibility of delivering accurate and unbiased information to the public, holding those in power accountable, and promoting transparency within all branches of government.

The role of the media is to act as a watchdog, ensuring transparency, accountability, and the dissemination of unbiased information to the public and it is imperative that media professionals are allowed the freedom to report objectively and without undue interference. Any attempts to manipulate the media for political gain or to dictate what should constitute news are deeply concerning and detrimental to the principles of democracy. Mr. Beukes' editorial focused on a matter of significant public interest - the transparency of the judiciary. Just like any other branch of government, the judiciary should not be immune to scrutiny. We wish to remind the leadership of New Era, as well as its appointing minister, Dr. Peya Mushelenga, that it is imperative for the media to hold all institutions accountable with the same rigor as it does with the legislature and executive. The judiciary, like any other institution, should not be treated as sacrosanct.

We have taken note of the apology issued by New Era's leadership but are deeply concerned about their statement that they have "failed the judiciary and have taken corrective measures internally and will close the loopholes that exist." We call upon New Era Publications Enterprise to provide clarity on whether these steps indicate a curtailment of press freedom and interference with the work of journalists.

Furthermore, we wish to emphasize that the New Era newspaper operates as an entity funded by taxpayers' money, and the public has every right to be informed about the functioning of all

institutions, including the judiciary. Transparency in governance is non-negotiable, and the media serves as a vital conduit for ensuring this transparency.

NAMPU therefore calls upon the Ministry of Information, Communications, and Technology (MICT) to immediately reinstate Mr. Beukes and provide a full and transparent account of the reasons behind his suspension. We demand that the rights of media professionals to report freely and independently be respected and protected. Furthermore, we urge the government and all stakeholders to safeguard the independence of the press and respect the critical role that journalists play in our society. Freedom of the press is a cornerstone of democracy and must be preserved at all costs.

NAMPU stands firmly united in defending press freedom, upholding the rights of journalists, and safeguarding the public's right to information.

We will continue to monitor this situation closely and advocate for press freedom and editorial independence in our country and we urge all stakeholders to join us in protecting these essential democratic principles.

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Issued by:

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