



PRESS STATEMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PUBLIC ATTACKS AGAINST JOURNALISTS ARE A THREAT TO PRESS FREEDOM AND SOIL KENYA'S GLOBAL IMAGE

The Media Council of Kenya takes great exception to the ongoing attacks and profiling of the media and journalists, which is a big threat to independent and free media in the country.

The attention of the Council has been drawn to the shocking and unfortunate remarks made by Investments, Trade and Industry Cabinet Secretary Moses Kuria against Nation Media Group and its staff.

In his remarks, both on video and text dated 18th June 2023, circulating in social media, the CS threatens public officers against advertising on NMG platforms, with sacking, which amounts to commercial censorship and incitement of the public against the media house. Further in his tweet on the same dates, Kuria made derogatory remarks referring to NMG staff in unprintable words.

The Council notes that this is the most extreme, since independence that individuals have pushed media and government relations to the brink and lowered the country's dignity.

The Conduct of the Cabinet Secretary falls below the threshold as set out in Chapter Six of the Kenyan Constitution for state officers as well as Article 34 on media freedom since they amount to profiling and targeting of specific journalists working for a media house.

Disagreements and misunderstandings are the hallmark of a democracy. While we appreciate the government's concerns about perceived negative coverage in the media, it is important that the media receives a coherent and consistent narrative from the State to enable a balanced coverage of government initiatives.

As a democracy, we must appreciate the watchdog role of the media to hold government and those in power to account. This will mostly be perceived as an attack and may make certain people uncomfortable. Public officials have a duty to provide timely and accurate information to ensure an informed public.

The professional conduct of media and its workers is governed by the Code of Conduct for the practice of Journalism while the Media Complaints Commission is mandated to handle grievances against media.

The Media Council is urgently engaging government and media stakeholders to address the relationship between government and media to protect freedom of the media and ensure accurate coverage of public affairs and decent handling of grievances when they arise.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Omwoyo Omwoyo', with a stylized flourish at the end.

David Omwoyo Omwoyo, MBS

Chief Executive Officer & Secretary to the Council