



Abuja Declaration

Launch of the Federation of African Journalists

Adopted at the African Journalists Congress:
Building a Strong and United Voice for African Journalists

12-14 November 2007, Abuja, Nigeria

We, the leaders of the African journalists trade unions and associations gathering at the African Journalists Congress in Abuja Nigeria, 12-14 November 2007,

Considering the resolution of the African journalists' unions and associations at the regional meetings in Rabat in 2006, and the planning meeting in Dakar in 2007, that African affiliates of the International Federation of Journalists should establish the Federation of African Journalists in order to defend social and professional rights of journalists and to support freedom of media throughout the continent of Africa,

Reiterating the calls of African affiliates supported by the decisions of IFJ World Congresses in Athens (2004) and Moscow (2007) reaffirming actions to establish the Federation of African Journalists;

Believing that it is urgent for journalists and media staff to work together to meet the challenges facing all workers in defence of social, professional and gender rights, and the struggle for media freedom in Africa;

Reaffirming the commitment of the journalists through their trade unions and associations to participate in poverty reduction strategies and media development on the continent;

Hereby launch the Federation of African Journalists

The Federation, which shall act as the representative voice of journalists in the media industry in Africa, is made up of national unions and associations in Africa. It supports and includes within its network the Western African Journalists Association, the Southern Africa Journalists Association, the Central African Union of Journalists, the Northern African Network of Journalists and the Eastern African Journalists Association, and shall deal with all matters related to freedom of expression and the social and professional rights of journalists under the guidance and association of the International Federation of Journalists.

In particular, the Federation will

Campaign for trade union rights for journalists and will seek to establish a minimum set of standards for labour rights in Africa and seek to develop effective social dialogue across the region with the aim of improving working conditions for all journalists;

Defend freedom of expression and the professional independence of journalists and shall campaign vigorously for media freedom in Africa, if necessary in partnership with governments and others on the basis of full respect for media pluralism and editorial freedom from all forms of political or economic interference;

Co-ordinate actions to improve the safety and security of journalists and work with the IFEX, the International News Safety Institute, and international agencies to confront impunity and build a culture of safety in journalism;

Seek to ensure that the voice of African journalists is heard in all discussions on the defence of media freedom and journalists' rights in Africa, by seeking immediately observer status within the African Union and its agencies and the recognition of the agencies of the United Nations;

Campaign for the inclusion of media development programmes in all social and economic development and poverty reduction programmes in Africa and for all media development programmes to be led and driven by African media professionals;

Develop a comprehensive working programme, including the establishment of the Africa Solidarity Fund of the IFJ to strengthen national unions in their trade union work their defence of journalists' rights;

Improve communications and co-ordination between national and sub-regional journalists' groups.

In its work the Federation will bring light to the issues facing journalists on the continent and will inform and equip journalists' unions' leaders on the opportunities and ways to play their role as media workers voice in the building of democracy in Africa.

Finally, the Congress **agrees** to establish a steering committee, made up of IFJ Executive Committee members from the region, the leaders of the sub-regional organisations of journalists and hosted by the Nigeria Union of Journalists, in liaison with the IFJ General Secretary, to prepare the inaugural statutory congress of the Federation of African Journalists which shall be held by the end of 2008.

The participants extend their appreciation and thanks to the Nigeria Union of Journalists and their partners for their solidarity, generosity and assistance in organising this historic Congress

Done in Abuja, November 12, 2007

The African Journalists Congress

National unions and participants from: *Nigeria, Gambia, Kenya, Tanzania, Morocco, Congo (Brazzaville), Senegal, Burkina Faso, Somalia, Sudan, Uganda, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali, Chad, Niger, Togo, Zimbabwe, Zambia, South Africa.*

Representatives of:

*International Federation of Journalists
Western African Journalists Association
Northern African Journalists' Network
Eastern Africa Journalists Association
Southern Africa Journalists Association*

The Countries that Shame Africa

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We, the leaders of the African Journalists trade unions and associations gathering at the African Journalists Congress in Abuja Nigeria, 12-14 November 2007,

In the name of the Federation of African Journalists condemn without reservation all violations of journalists' rights and the repression of the media that are carried out on the continent of Africa.

We protest over and repudiate the actions of governments and authorities that shame Africa and who make a mockery of commitments to pluralism and democracy when they

- prosecute and jail journalists for doing their normal work;
- intimidate and threaten journalists for carrying out legitimate investigations;
- fail to investigate properly physical and violent attacks on journalists and media;
- encourage a culture of impunity and lawlessness.

In particular, we call on the African Union and the United Nations Human Rights Commissioners to investigate, expose and take appropriate action against countries that are in violation of the fundamental rights of the people of Africa.

We call on the African Union Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression in Africa to examine closely and to report on the actions of all governments including those of Somalia, Mali, Burkina Faso, Democratic Republic of Congo, Senegal, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Niger, Gambia, Tunisia, Egypt, Swaziland where there have been credible reports of serious violations of journalists' rights.

The Federation of African Journalists should, in close collaboration with the IFJ and regional press freedom monitoring groups, prepare a comprehensive continental report on the actions of African governments that violate the rights of journalists.

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