

UNIVERSITY OF THE
WITWATERSRAND,
JOHANNESBURG



African Centre
for the Study
of the United
States

REPORT ON WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY

BY: ALAN FWAFWA

Sadibou Marong (Head of Sub-Saharan office of Reporters without Borders):

- ❖ The World Press Freedom Index (2025) indicates that Norway, Estonia and Netherlands have the greatest freedom of press, while China, North Korea and Eritrea have the least freedom of the press in the world.
- ❖ The working conditions are either very difficult or very serious in half of the countries in the world; with Uganda, Rwanda, and Ethiopia becoming more problematic for journalists.
- ❖ There are economic issues faced by journalists including consolidation of media ownership, discriminatory allocation of subsidies, freezing of international funding etc.
- ❖ There is less media plurality, violation of editorial independence, expanding news desert, repressive regimes, explosion of misinformation, and pressure from advertisers.
- ❖ In Kenya, leading telecommunication Safaricom withdrew its advertising from Nation Media Group after the latter aired stories that were perceived unfavorable to the former.

Anton Harber (Executive Dir. Campaign for Free Expression)

- ❖ We are living in the Trump era where there is attempted redefinition of the freedom of expression.
- ❖ Trump attacks the mainstream media critical of him; in attempt to shape and control the media in a way fundamentally enemical to the media freedom.
- ❖ The same trend can be traced in Europe where the media is given the freedom to spread disinformation and hate speech.
- ❖ The rightwing administration and social media techs have changed the notion of freedom of expression, causing shifts and realignments based on power balance.

Chris Kabwato: Founder, Dir Digital Arts Africa

- ❖ The view that Ibrahim Traore is the new Nelson Mandela of our days shows that democracy is on the deathbed.
- ❖ The US and Europe are facing moral death on lecturing Africa on democratic rule.
- ❖ Young Africans see democracy as not having delivered and that populist figures may solve their problems.
- ❖ In Kenya, Uhuru Kenyatta used the military in public service work because they are perceived as disciplined and less corrupt, William Ruto used the military to handle the Gen-Z protests because the police was perceived to violate human rights.
- ❖ These absolve other African leaders such as Uganda's Museveni and Zimbabwe's Mnangagwa to be militaristic in their rule.

DGibril Diallo: CEO Africa Renaissance and Diaspora Network

- ❖ The way to enhance freedom of expression in Africa is by: Amplifying real stories in on the continent, Stronger reporting on Africa, and strengthening journalism training & practice.
- ❖ Freedom of expression is hindered through: Lack of editorial independence, lack of safety and protection, technology and digital infrastructure, media ownership- view of the media as a profit-making entity and not a human rights advancer, insufficient investigative reporting, insufficient visibility for African-owned media houses.
- ❖ Journalists need to focus not only on victims (negativity) but also on victors (positivity).

Guy Berger: Former Dir, Freedom of Expression and Media Development UNESCO

- ❖ More than ever in these totalitarian times, we see the need to call to attention the need for press freedom.
- ❖ M20 is the shadow of G20 where the G20 countries use the platform when the 20 countries advance press freedom
- ❖ It is not assured that the G20 shall listen to the M20, but they shall make some noise to be heard, anyway.
- ❖ We should not wait for the press Freedom Day to advance press freedom debates. The challenges are numerous and do not need to wait until the next press Freedom Day.

Qn & A

Qn: -Do you think there is anything the media can do to push back these tendencies by the US?

A: - We need to increasingly pool together around the world and coordinate the fight for press freedom

- Licensing private media has made the public media appear less important, yet it is. It is founded to promote public interest

Qn: -Any comments about misinformation and disinformation among militaristic rulers?

A: - Military juntas have strong ties with Russia. Burkina Faso media is aligned to France. Media strive for good journalism amidst dis/mis information.

Qn: - Any comments about the many journalists dying in the Gaza?

A: - The journalists dying in the Gaza constitutes grave human rights violation. There is need to increase vigilance on human rights violation.

Qn: -Technology and Democracy are emerging from the US and elsewhere constituting what is called technocracy. How can we counter this?

A: - In the history of technology, tensions do arise with new technologies. However, there is no need to panic and censor technology. We need access to internet. AI is necessary, and there are sufficient laws in place.