

World Press Freedom Day 2016

MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES STAND UP FOR BETTER ACCESS TO INFORMATION IN TANZANIA

From 2 to 3 May 2016 about 250 journalists, media representatives and guests gathered in Mwanza, taking the World Press Freedom Day as an occasion to raise concerns over the present restrictions on freedom of expression and freedom of press in Tanzania. They also commented on the resumption of live parliamentary coverage that was cut at the end of last year. The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) co-organized this event, which took place under the motto: 'Access to Information a Fundamental Freedom: This is Your Right'.

For the fourth time already the 'World Press Freedom Day' in 2016 served in Tanzania as a platform for evaluating recent developments in freedom of expression and freedom of press in the country. The International Day was proclaimed by the UN in 1994 and has ever since been annually held on 3 May in more than 100 countries around the world under one common heading.

The once more tightened restrictions on freedom of expression and freedom of press since last year are not only said to impede people's access to information, but also deprive them of the opportunity to express themselves freely. With regard to the government's recent adoption of more stringent media laws alongside the suppression of live streaming parliamentary sessions, this event considerably gained in relevance this year compared to the previous one.

The main objective was for media representatives to critically reflect upon the current state of freedom of expression and freedom of press in Tanzania while stressing special emphasis on the newly adopted restrictive media laws. The participants and the public, involved via a live broadcast, were further sensitized to these issues and were encouraged to exchange ideas concerning the strengthening of freedom of expression and freedom of press in Tanzania. The Tanzanian Minister of Information, Culture, Artists and Sports, Nape Nnauye; the Chief Judge of the Mwanza Region, Robert Makaramba; the Regional Commissioner of the Region, John Mongella; the UN Resident Coordinator, Alvaro Rodriguez; the UNESCO Country Representative, Zulmira Rodrigues; as well as the Deputy Head of the Delegation of the European Union in, Luana Reale, were among the honorable guests who participated in this event.



High Table (f.l.t.r.): Simon Berege (MISATAN), Reginald Menge (TPSF), Alvaro Rodriguez (UN), Hon. Robert Makaramba (Chief Guest), Hon. Nape Nnauye (Minister), Luana Reale (EU), Zulmira Rodrigues (UNESCO), Ernest Sungura (TMF).

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V.

TANZANIA

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Journalists and guests convened on two days, of which the first one mainly comprised presentations from media representatives. On the second day the honorable guests and supporters gave statements whereas journalists were able to report on the obstacles they tend to come across in their work. On both days there was a round of final remarks in form of a panel discussion.

Thanks to the large media attention, an extensive visibility of the event was achieved. At the same time the outcomes of the new media laws were clearly identified, profoundly debated and the awareness of participants for current challenges in the media sector was significantly strengthened. The participants unanimously called for the resumption of live parliamentary coverage. In conclusion, four joint resolutions were composed with the aim to improve freedom of expression and freedom of press in Tanzania. Two of these will be handed over to the Minister of Information, Culture, Artists and Sports and one each to the Parliament and the Supreme Court of the country.

The World Press Freedom Day, which is celebrated on an annual basis, provides one of the few opportunities for representatives of the media to exchange views with government representatives and clearly raise concerns regarding the impediments encountered in their work in front of the government and the international community. A continuation of the event is thus strongly welcomed.



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