



UNION OF TANZANIA PRESS CLUBS (UTPC)

PRESS FREEDOM VIOLATIONS REPORT YEAR 2021-2022

Union of Tanzania Press Clubs

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INTRODUCTION

The Union of Tanzania Press Clubs abbreviated as UTPC, is the umbrella body of press clubs in Tanzania. So far, there are 28 press clubs in Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar which are the members of UTPC.

UTPC was registered in 1998 under the Societies Act (CAP. 337 R.E 2002) and given a certificate number S.A 8976.

The main goal of UTPC is to promote professionalism on journalism through press clubs, which eventually contribute in promoting development in the country.

The Union publishes various publications with the aim of promoting journalism in the country and this report is part of that endeavor.

This report is the product of media violation reports collected by Press Club coordinators who are located in all 28 press clubs around Tanzania.

We invite all stakeholders to read this report and use it for engagements and promoting safety of journalists in Tanzania.

PREAMBLE

Freedom of the media, freedom of expression, and the free flow of information are essential for a modern and democratic society. It incorporates the right of freedom of speech, the right to freely disseminate information, and the right to receive this same information as encapsulated in Article 18 of the constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania.

The media should therefore be independent and free from vested interests such as advertisers, sources, story subjects, media owners, special interest groups or any other influences both internal and external that suppress access to, or transmission of information.

For a decade UTPC has been a hub of promoting freedom of media in Tanzania by providing a monitoring function against the journalists free from being assaulted, arrested or mistreated in anyway.

Notwithstanding, UTPC in partnership with other media stakeholders continued granting financial and legal assistance for the journalists who faces problems resulted from journalism work.

1. Arrest and detention

On 30 July of the year 2022 Dickson Kapungu a journalist reporting for Global Online TV, was called for questioning at Tunduma police station allegedly for publishing a false story about a young girl aged 8-10 who was abused by her step mother. Kapungu reported that, the young girl was locked in the house for three days, the action that denied her rights contrary to the law of the child Act No. 21 of 2009 of the United Republic of Tanzania.

The police ordered Kapungu to produce the evidence of the story, but he requested to see his lawyer first. The request was granted, so the next day he showed up at the police station accompanied with his lawyer, provided to him by the mechanism for journalists' protection. Kapungu submitted the evidence of the story and later he was released under the condition that he might be needed anytime.

On 20th of June 2022 Yassir Mkubwa a journalist reporting for RVS Online TV, was arrested and detained for a day at Madema Police station in Zanzibar while his equipment were confiscated by the police. He was accused of publishing a story that was alleged to have embarrassed the President of the Revolution Government of Zanzibar Dr. Hussein Ali Mwinyi.

The allegation came after a journalist interviewed one of the member of the ruling party Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) who provided opinion on the current development situation in Zanzibar. He was arrested for committing Cyber Crime according to the police statement.

Following that situation, various media stakeholders including MCT and THRDC took immediate action upon the situation to make sure his rights were granted. After a close follow-up by the THRDC, Yassir was later released on bail and required to report to the police station every Thursday of the week for unknown period of time.

On 12th May of 2022 Mr. Ally Ismail a reporter from Ayo TV, was captured and detained by police and his equipment were confiscated after he was seen taking pictures in the crime scene where the body of a dead person was found at FPCT church located at Banawe area in Kigoma. The police accused him of taking pictures of a crime scene without identifying himself. He was taken to Kigoma town police station for questioning and later they returned his equipment (camera, mic and cellphone) but the pictures and other information were deleted from his devices. The Police told him that they did not realize that he was a journalist.

On 6th February 2022 six journalists named, Allan Issack of Nipashe, Julias Msagati of Star TV, Profit Mmanga of Wasafi TV, Janet Mushi of Mwananchi, Amina Ngahewa from ITV and Apolo Benjamin of Daily news digital, were detained and threatened with a gun by the security officers of the Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority (NCAA) while traveling back to Arusha. These journalists went to Ngorongoro to cover a Ngorongoro crisis story.

The NCAA officers detained the journalists without telling the reason as to why they were detained. The journalists kept asking why they were detained, the NCAA guards said it was the order from the top officers. Later, the journalists were asked to provide their identities, permissions and gate passes to NCAA, after that, they were moved to the main entrance gate where they waited for many hours before transferred to another car that has no registration numbers. They were moved to the Hotel located in Karatu town where they met the top Guard Officer identified by the name Bajuta who questioned the journalists on their reasons to attend the Ngorongoro villagers meeting.

While this was taking place, Arusha Press Club leaders were closely following-up the incidence by communicating with responsible authorities including the Arusha Regional Commissioner. Later the journalists were released while Arusha Press Club was on the process to look for their releasing procedures.

On 6 February of 2022, a journalist name Suzy Butondo reporting for Mwananchi Newspaper in Shinyanga region, received a threat message from Masengwa Ward Executive officer Mr. Hussein Majaliwa. Majaliwa said he will beat Suzy claiming that she reported a false story about a group of hyena that threatens the safety of students when they go to school. Mr. Majaliwa said "Nitakupiga kwa kuandika habari za uongo, mimi sikusema hivyo" a swahili statement that means "I will beat you for reporting a false information, I didn't say that"

The threats came after Mr. Majaliwa received a phone call from the District Commissioner for Shinyanga Ms. Jasinta Mboneko warning him about the reported story while highlighting that such information should be reported to the security committee first.

However, few days later Majira news paper of 17/02/2022 reported that the Shinyanga District Commissioner Ms. Jasinta Mboneko announced to wipe-out the group of hyenas that were threatening students. This means the story that was reported by Suzy Butondo brought an impact.

On 13 April 2022 Raymond Mihayo, a journalist reporting for Raia Mwema Newspaper and Omary Mwambo reporting for Radio Kwizera, were threatened to be arrested and detained by Shinyanga Regional Police Commander after they reported the statistics of impregnated and raped students in Shinyanga region. According to the Commander the statistics were false and overstated.

These statistics were collected from the gender and children's desk at Kahama district provided by Mr. Tiho Masatu who is responsible to provide such information.

After the story was published, Mr. Masatu denied to have been provided the statistics to the journalists when he was questioned by the RPC about the matter.

On 17th February 2022 a journalist named Joseph Kimambo reported for Dar Mpya Blog was arrested by the NCAA officers allegedly to cover a story in an internal meeting held by The Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa where journalists were not allowed to report or cover any story on the proceedings of the meeting. In that incidence, the driver for PINGOs forum organization Mr. Majuka Ngisaayo was also arrested.

However, Arusha Press Club leaders made a close follow-up on the matter and the journalist was released by the order of the Arusha Regional Commissioner.

On 24th February 2022 Victor Korumba a journalist reporting for Global Online TV and Alphonse Kusaga reporting for Triple A Radio, were arrested by the Police in Arusha. The journalists were following the incidence of the Police claimed to hit and arrest the civilians. After their arrest(journalists) transferred to Sakina Police station and later to the Central Police station for questioning and provide statement to the Regional Crime Officer (RCO) However, the journalists were later released, after the Arusha Press Club leaders made a close follow-up on the situation.

On 2nd March 2021 Dickson Kapungu reporting for Global Online TV and Nikubuka Kayuni of Kayuni Online TV were summoned by Momba District Commissioner in Songwe region Mr. Juma Irando who warned the journalists not to report again on the issue of traders reallocated their businesses from Tunduma to Zambia following heavy tax imposed by Tanzania Government, according to him they were creating a bad image to Tanzanian Government.

On 9th September 2021 Rajab Authman of Mwananchi Newspaper summoned by the Tanga Regional Police Commander (RPC) after he reported a story of a woman who was unstitched by the doctor following her failure to pay for the medical bill amounted to ten thousand shillings. The incidence occurred in Korogwe district at Magunga Medical Centre.

A journalist was captured and taken to Tanga central police where he was detained for some hours before interrogation.

However, the Tanga Press Club chairperson and General Secretary made a close followup on the situation including contacting the Tanga Regional Crime Officer (RCO), eventually the journalist was released.

On 2nd October 2021 Harold Shemsanga reporting for Mgawe TV (a vice chairperson for Coast Region Press Club) was arrested by Kinondoni Police officers while gathering news information from CHADEMA jogging Women group in Kawe constituency.

The Coast Region Press Club leaders together with CHADEMA officials were following up the case to make sure the journalist was released.

On 22nd July 2021 Mr. Suleiman Shagata a journalist reporting for Daily News and Habari Leo in Mwanza region, was arrested and detained by the Police officers in Mwanza for a reason that he went to the police station too many times trying to balance a story following the abduction of CHADEMA Chairperson Mr. Freeman Mbowe

Mwanza Press Club leaders communicated with Officer Commanding Station (OCS) about the incidence before he was released.

On March 24th 2021, a journalist named James Lanka working for the Guardian Newspaper in Moshi, was detained by police in Moshi after questioning the municipal accountant as to why he is not providing receipts to the local traders who were at that time paying for their business licenses. The local traders were detained at Moshi local market for not paying their business licenses.

James Lanka was later taken to the police station and detained for 3 days with the charges that he interfered with the government operations and that he was denied on bail. He was later released on Monday 29th March without any charges.

2. Threats to life

On 18th June 2022 the Community development officer for Shinyanga region Mr. Tedson Ngwale raised a sanction against Huheso Blog and Shinyanga Press Blog after they published a story with the statistics of 4660 children reported to have faced violence in Shinyanga region. According to Mr. Ngwale the story was false and caused community to panic despite of the statistics been proven by the Regional Administrative Secretary (RAS) for Shinyanga region Mr. Boniface Chambi who provided the statistics during the commemoration of World Children's day in Shinyanga district. The coordinator for Shinyanga Press Club Mr. Estome Henry who is responsible for uploading the stories in SPC blog, received a short message from Mr. Tedson Ngwale directing him to delete the story from the Blog. However, The Shinyanga Press Club leaders provided to RPC the evidence of the published story.

In a similar circumstance, on 13th August 2022 Mr. Kadama Malunde a journalist and owner of Malunde1 Blog, received a threat message from an anonymous person ordered him to delete the story published on his Blog concerning a Lutheran priest in Shinyanga region who was arrested accused for rapping 8 children.

To amplify the actions against gender violence, Shinyanga Press Club leaders called upon other journalists to publish the same story in their platform advocating for actions against gender base violence in Shinyanga region.

3. Denial of access to information

On 10th February 2021, the journalist reporting for Uhuru Newspaper in Shinyanga region, Mr. Salvatory Ntandu, was denied his duty to collect news by Salawe's Ward Education Officer.

The journalist was interviewing students from Salawe Secondary School on the issues of violence against gender and children around Salawe Ward.

Shinyanga Press Club leaders contacted the Council Director Mr. Hoja Mahiba who also asked the Salawe Educational Officer to allow the journalist to proceed with his work.

On 4th November 2021 Kadama Malunde a journalist and owner of Malunde1 Blog received a phone call from Nancy Munisi a Shinyanga District Council Director asking him to remove the story he published on his Blog, the story was about the claim made by the Shinyanga council chairperson that he is not receiving corporation from the District Council Director and also denied the transport service.

On 13th July 2021 Benchine Bago, a Journalist reporting for Daily News denied by Dodoma City Council officers the rights to exercise his duty as a journalist when he tried to take pictures at Chako street where the Officers were closing local traders shops following tax payment delays.

The Officers interrupted him from doing his job as a journalist despite of the fact he showed his press card identity. They forced him to delete all pictures taken in the scene. The journalist refused to delete the pictures instead he went to Central Press Club seeking for help as the officers were following him. The situation was later resolved, and the story was not published as the Council officers denied to provide further information as to why they were closing the shops.

On 9th April 2021, at Chato district in Geita region, two journalists from Geita Press Club, Elias Zephania working for Radio Kwizera and Paschal Mussa working for Radio Free Africa, were not allowed to gather news in a public meeting organized by Nyantimba Village Executive Officer Mr. Jehovanes Bayona. He threatened to seize their equipment if they remain in that meeting. The Executive Officer called-off the meeting when the journalists refused to leave the room. The journalists reported the issue to Geita Press Club (GPC) and later GPC officials gave instructions to their members on the proper way of reporting the events of that nature and assured the cooperation to the members who will face the same challenges while performing their duty.

On 4th January 2021 at Chato District in Geita, Paschal Mussa a reporter for Radio Free Africa received a threat from Chato District Council Director Mr. Eliud L. Mwaitete that is not allowed to exercise his duty as a journalist at Chato district for unknown reasons.

On 5th February of 2021 the journalists named Emmanuel Lengwa from ITV and Eliud Ngondo from Global publishers who also are the members of Mbeya Press club (MBPC) covered and published a story of unknown disease that claimed to kill a number of people at Chunya District, the story created unrest situation among the Government Officials despite that the journalist consulted District Medical Officer (DMO) Doctor Felista Kisadu who proved the existence of the unknown disease.

Following that situation, the Mbeya Regional Commissioner at that time Mr. Albert Chalamila denied the story on the presence of that disease, and he explained that the disease was not new to them, and it was there for long, and it did not kill so many people as it was reported.

However, he directed to those who were sick or having the similar symptoms to get the special hygiene from Zonal Referral Hospital in Mbeya and should be tested so as to know the kind of disease erupted. Nevertheless, Doctor Felista Kisadu was dismissed by the Minister of Health for providing unconfirmed information to the journalists concerning the unknown disease contrary to the principles of announcing such kind of diseases.

4. Conflict of interest

On 12th March 2021 Davis Minja a reporter from Moshi FM and Dar Mpya Blog was removed from a Journalists WhatsApp group by the Manager of Kilimanjaro Cooperative Bank LTD (KCBL) after the journalist challenged the Manager concerning the leading story during the commemoration of women's day in March 2021.

The story was written based on the Kilimanjaro Regional Commissioner's speech when he challenged the KCBL on the high interest rate charges. According to the Regional Commissioner the interest rate of 14% was too high and not helping businesswomen in Moshi.

Thereafter the conflict continued as the KCBL Manager demanded the journalist to re-write the story explaining that the 14% interest rate was fair contrary to the Kilimanjaro RC statement. However, the journalist denied to re-write the story.

5. Invasion of personal privacy and unprofessionalism

On 13th January 2021 Mohamed Zengwa from Global TV and a reporter for AFM Radio collaborated with his work mate from AFM Radio as they went to cover a story of a man who was accused of having love affair with another woman.

The journalists went to interview the man and they told him that they were sent by his wife to record him which is against ethics of journalism.

The accused man asked for their IDs but no one was having the ID. Later he reported the journalists to the police, and they were arrested and taken to Dodoma Central Police.

The General Secretary for Central Press Club (CPC) Ms. Naomi Godwin took the initiatives to bail-out the journalists and advised to meet with a man who reported them to the police for reconciliation for him to drop the case.

Within one week the case was cancelled and the journalists were released. However, the journalists violate journalism ethical code of conducts by invading somebody's privacy and following the story that had no impact to the society.

6. Conclusion

The incidences of press freedom violations occur not by accident but deliberately in order to compound the power of the great work that journalists do, in exposing those who violate the right to access information and freedom of expression.

The incidents in the past two years showed that the media still exists and working so hard to bring the news closer to the people.

However, UTPC believe that safety and security of journalists is very important, and there's a need to work together to make sure the safety of journalists is guaranteed. More engagement is need.

Lastly, we would like to appreciate the efforts made by our partners International Media Support (IMS) co-funded by European Union and Embassy of Switzerland in Tanzania by supporting this programme in Tanzania aiming at increasing engagement so as to promote Freedom of Expression, Access to Information and Media Freedom.



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