INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

JOINT STATEMENT

International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists

By H.E. Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security of the African Union Commission, and Mr Omar Faruk Osman, President of the Federation of African Journalists (FAJ)

2 November 2026: On this ***International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists,*** we stand in full solidarity with journalists and other media workers across Africa. We honour those who have been killed, injured, detained, threatened or forced into exile for their commitment to informing the public by upholding the principles of journalism. We remember their families and colleagues and reaffirm that attacks on journalists are attacks on the fundamental human rights of all peoples of Africa, especially, the right to freedom of expression and access to information.

This year's global focus, "**Threats evolve. Impunity endures"** draws attention to how new technologies and evolving weapons are changing the risks journalists face, particularly in conflict zones, while those responsible for crimes against them too often continue to evade accountability and justice. Across Africa, year in year out, journalists face persistent threats, including killings, physical attacks, arbitrary arrest and detention, enforced disappearance, intimidation, legal harassment and digital abuse.

Female journalists are particularly exposed to gender-based threats, harassment and online violence. Journalists reporting from conflict zones, covering elections or investigating corruption and human rights violations often work under severe pressure. When these crimes go unpunished, the perpetrators are emboldened, public-interest reporting is silenced, and communities are denied information they need to participate in public life and exercise their democratic rights.

The African Union Commission and the Federation of African Journalists (FAJ) recognise the essential contribution of independent media to peace, democracy, accountability and the people-centred development enshrined in Agenda 2063. The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights protects freedom of expression and access to information. The African Union Commission's Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security and the AU Peace and Security Council have consistently underscored the importance of media freedom, the safety of journalists and information integrity. They have called for stronger protection of journalists' rights and for Member States to ensure journalists' safety, investigate attacks, bring those responsible to justice, punish perpetrators and provide effective remedies to victims.

On this day, we call on African Union Member States to meet, or continue to meet, their obligations under African and international human rights law and to take concrete steps to prevent attacks and bring an end to impunity.

We also urge governments to establish or strengthen national mechanisms for the safety of journalists, ensure that law enforcement agencies understand and respect the role of journalists, and protect media workers covering protests, elections, emergencies and armed conflict. Laws must not be used to intimidate journalists, obstruct legitimate reporting or curtail the right to responsible freedom of expression. Government must also take effective measures to prevent and address digital

threats, including surveillance, harassment and technology-facilitated gender-based violence, while protecting human rights and freedom of expression.

The African Union Commission and the Federation of African Journalists call for strengthened cooperation among public authorities, regional and continental institutions, news media organisations, journalists' unions and civil society. Prevention, protection and accountability must guide this work. Journalists and their representative organisations must also be meaningfully involved in shaping and monitoring measures intended to keep them safe, including peer review to promote the responsible exercise of the right to freedom of expression.

Ending impunity is essential to protecting human rights, strengthening democratic governance and building peaceful societies in Africa. Every journalist must be able to report without fear of violence or reprisal. We reaffirm our commitment to building a continent where journalists can work freely and safely, where crimes against them are investigated and punished, and the rule prevail without exception.

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