

Campaign for Open Media²⁴

Office 8, 17th floor, Conlyn House, 156 President Street Johannesburg. P O Box 261096, Excom, 2023, South Africa
Telephone: (011) 29-6287/29-4355 Fax: (011) 29-4354

May 7, 1992

The Director-General
International Air Transport Association
Route de l'Aeroporte 33
PO Box 672
CH-GENEVA 15 Airport
Switzerland

Sir

The Campaign for Open Media is very disturbed by a recent incident at Jan Smuts Airport near Johannesburg in South Africa. We have accordingly decided to draw this incident to your attention.

It concerns allegations that South African security agents, or people associated with them, planted drugs in the luggage of a British television producer, Mr John Drury, while on a flight to London from Jan Smuts Airport. Enclosed is a report on the incident published in the "IPI Report", the monthly bulletin of the International Press Institute.

We are particularly concerned about the implication that the drugs were allegedly planted in Mr Drury's suitcase after it had been checked in at Jan Smuts Airport. The plot thickens in that Heathrow Airport was "tipped-off" about the drugs in Mr Drury's suitcase several hours before he boarded his flight at Jan Smuts airport.

As an organisation concerned with press freedom in South Africa we regard the allegations made in a very serious light. It points to the harassment and intimidation of journalists in an attempt to censor information.

But we are particularly disturbed at what appears to be a new tactic to discredit journalists -- namely the planting of drugs in luggage after it had been checked in at an airport.

We would appreciate it if you could pursue this matter with the authorities at Jan Smuts Airport. As an international association concerned with the good reputation of international air travel, we believe that it would be in both our interests if IATA indicated in the strongest terms its displeasure at such occurrences.

For your information, the Campaign for Open Media is a properly constituted organisation which brings together various media organisations in particular campaigns to promote a free, fair and open media in South Africa.

Our constituent organisations include the South African Union of Journalists (SAUJ), the Association of Democratic Journalists (ADJ), the Media Workers Association of South Africa (Mwasa), the Anti-Censorship Action Group (ACAG), the Film and Allied Workers Organisation (FAWO) and the Congress of South African Writers (COSAW).

Yours sincerely

p.p.

J. L. Louw

Raymond Louw
Chairperson