



FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION INSTITUTE PRESS STATEMENT

Free speech under threat in South Africa

30 June 2017

The Freedom of Expression Institute (FXI) has reacted with concern threats and acts of intimidation against the media. The right to freedom of expression is enshrined in section 16 of the South African Constitution, and this right extends to “freedom of the press and other media.” The media plays an important role on society, serving a watchdog function and being relied upon to report fairly and objectively without bias. Should any member of society feel that the media is not living up to its role, then they are welcome to report the matter to the Press Ombudsman for example.

The past month has been a difficult one for the media with calls for a boycott of certain media houses and threats of withdrawal of government advertising. The most recent manifestation of the threats against media freedom occurred yesterday when an editor was intimidated and harassed outside his home for an opinion piece he wrote. The FXI is part of a global campaign to end impunity against journalists in an effort to ensure that journalists and South Africans can express themselves on any topic without fear.

The FXI calls on all South Africans to promote and protect the right of freedom of expression and media freedom by allowing the space for dissenting voices and opinions without resorting to intimidation and threats.

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