



Association of Caribbean Mediaworkers

Unit 1, Upper Level, Elan Place, 137 Eastern Main Rd,

St. Augustine, Trinidad & Tobago

T: 1 (868) 296-8009

E: acmmail@gmail.com

W: www.acmediaworkers.com

ACM CALLS ON GUYANA GOVERNMENT TO ENSURE SAFETY OF MEDIA WORKERS

August 29, 2005 - The Association of Caribbean MediaWorkers (ACM) notes with growing concern the attacks on media workers in Guyana. In recent days journalists have been assaulted in the field, gunfire was directed at a vehicle transporting media workers and others were assaulted and robbed at their jobsite in the capital Georgetown.

The guarantee of free expression places a strong obligation on States to secure the safety of all media workers within their jurisdiction, as well as providing an environment conducive to the unhindered conduct of their work.

States are under a general duty to protect all of their citizens but the special duty in relation to journalists is due to the fact that violence is sometimes used as a tactic to silence critical voices.

In 2000, the United Nations, the Organisation of American States and the Organisation on Security and Cooperation in Europe adopted a Joint Declaration stating:

"Attacks such as the murder, kidnapping, harassment of and/or threats to journalists and others exercising their right to freedom of expression, as well as the material destruction of communications facilities, pose a very significant threat to independent and investigative journalism, to freedom of expression and to the free flow of information to the public."

States are under an obligation to take adequate measures to end the climate of impunity and such measures should include devoting sufficient resources and attention to preventing attacks on journalists and others exercising their right to freedom of expression, investigating such attacks when they do occur, bringing those responsible to justice and compensating victims."

States are under three distinct duties:

- (1) Never to take part in, or to sanction or condone attacks against the media or media facilities.
- (2) To take effective action to prevent violent attacks from taking place.
- (3) Where violations have taken place, to investigate the attack, to bring the guilty parties to justice and to provide an effective remedy to the victim.

In an era when Caribbean media workers are coming under increasing pressure, we urge regional governments to continue to demonstrate their unwavering commitment to democratic traditions and the rule of law.

Flagrant attacks on the media undermine the very freedoms we have earned and now enjoy. They must be stopped.



Association of Caribbean Mediaworkers

Unit 1, Upper Level, Elan Place, 137 Eastern Main Rd,

St. Augustine, Trinidad & Tobago

T: 1 (868) 296-8009

E: acmmail@gmail.com

W: www.acmediaworkers.com

The ACM encourages the media community to continue to report aggressively, accurately and fairly on the major issues of the day including crime and corruption. We call on the government of Guyana to do all in its power to protect media workers from acts of aggression and violent retribution from individuals or groups implicated in their reports.

Wesley Gibbings

President

Association of Caribbean MediaWorkers