

Sanef addresses recent bombardment of journalists, *that P-word incident*

The South African National Editors' Forum (Sanef) has responded to the recent incidents affecting the journalism community of South Africa.



Image credit: Duong Tr?n Qu?c on Unsplash.

In one of the incidents, three journalists were verbally attacked and threatened by a witness in the Nicholas Ninow rape case. And in the other, a journalist was the one who came under fire for uttering an infamous Cape Town word – Peter Oliver eats sweets.



Freedom of expression under threat, new campaign warns

John Yeld 29 May 2019



Witness reproach

This week, journalists Alex Mitchley of News24; Hanti Otto of Netwerk24; and Pule Letshwiti from ETV were approached and threatened by a state witness in the Nicholas Ninow case. Ninow is the man who pleaded guilty to raping a seven-year-old at a Dros restaurant last year. He pleaded guilty to rape, possession of drugs and defeating the ends of justice — but pleaded not guilty to assault.

According to Mitchley, the witness approached the journalists outside the Gauteng High Court in Pretoria during a tea break, asking why media houses named him. It was explained that there was no court order not to name the witness as he testified in an open court.

He then looked at the journalists and said that he was going to slit their throats while making a throat-slitting gesture. “I told him to leave us alone and would inform the court of his threats. He tried following to apologise, but I told him to get away from me as he had just threatened our lives,” Mitchley said.

The witness came to court to confront journalists as he finished testifying on Monday.



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Leigh Andrews 27 May 2019



“The harassment of journalists, not just by authorities and politicians, but lately general members of the public in protest areas, is a phenomenon that has prompted growing concerns for Sanef in recent months,” said the editors’ forum in a statement.

Sanef adds that it “notes that while retaliation for the content of professional output is common to all journalists, female journalists face an additional burden in that they are also attacked purely based on their gender.”



The 'old boys club' and glass ceilings for women in the SA news media

Prof. Ylva Rodny-Gumede 31 Oct 2018



While concluding on the matter, Sanef said that it wished to caution against impunity for threats of any nature and crimes against the media because it fuels and perpetuates the cycle of violence and the resulting self-censorship deprives society of information and further affects press freedom.

Additionally noting that it also directly impacts the United Nations’ human rights-based efforts to promote peace, security and sustainable development.



Sanef's media credibility and ethics inquiry looks to review editorial systems, practices

13 Aug 2019



Malema and a certain P-word

Sanef also addressed the debate on the matter of 702 journalist Barry Bateman, and his utterance of an unsavoury word in public, allegedly, aimed at EFF leader Julius Malema. The editors’ forum had noted the concerns raised by the supporters of the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF).

Consequently, it also acknowledged that Bateman’s employer, [Primedia](#), has apologised and has launched an investigation into the matter.

“ BATEMAN vs MALEMA ”

Let's see what happens to Barry Bateman.

Never a dull moment is South Africa #POES pic.twitter.com/l3A9EuRQit — Thabang Mantule (@ThabangMantule) [September 11, 2019](#) ”

“Sanef does not condone the unprofessional behaviour on the part of any journalist. However, we believe this should not be used as an excuse to trigger an all-out attack on the media and journalists as a collective. Rather than a verdict being debated on social media, we ask that this matter be dealt with via the media house concerned,” the forum advised.

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