

PRESS STATEMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MCK CONDEMNS ASSAULT AND EXCLUSION OF JOURNALISTS AT STATE EVENTS

NAIROBI- Today, 1 June 2025, Kenya commemorates Madaraka Day. The national celebration took place at Raila Odinga Stadium in Homa Bay County. Regrettably, many media professionals covering the event faced significant challenges, including physical injuries and mental distress. In a separate incident on 31 May 2025, the Media Council of Kenya (MCK) expressed concern over Standard Group journalists being denied access to a state event at State House.

At Raila Odinga Stadium, Royal Media Services (RMS) journalist Ephantus Maina, Nation Media Group (NMG) producer Mable Achieng', TV47 camera operator Francis Kakai, and journalist Elizabeth Mutuku were reportedly assaulted by security officers at the entrance, despite displaying valid media identification badges. Some journalists required medical attention from Red Cross staff for various injuries. Additionally, several journalists lost equipment and personal items, such as phones and laptops, to opportunists during the event. Media personnel were forced to plead for entry to the stadium and were not guaranteed a safe exit after the event concluded.

On 31 May 2025 at State House, KTN journalists Rashid Iddi and Okumu Madocha were barred from covering a Kenya–Slovenia media briefing, where President William Ruto and visiting Slovenian President Nataša Pirc Musar held a joint press event. Their names were absent from the accredited reporters' list, and attempts to contact the Director of Media Relations at State House went unanswered.

These incidents highlight a concerning trend of deliberate targeting of media professionals, undermining their vital role. Such actions violate Article 34 of the Kenyan Constitution, which guarantees press freedom. The MCK insists that state events must be accessible to registered media organisations in Kenya and that journalists' safety should be ensured, not left to unchecked individuals. It is unacceptable that accredited journalists must beg for access to cover state events. Such gatekeeping and intimidation not only instil fear but also constitute economic sabotage in an era of competitive media content creation. Furthermore, these actions restrict the diversity of opinions and perspectives on critical issues.

The MCK strongly condemns this behaviour and urges those responsible to adopt reconciliatory measures. Above all, event organisers must prioritise and guarantee journalists' safety.

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For and on behalf of the Media Council of Kenya

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Promoting Press Freedom and Responsible Journalism