

## **PRESS STATEMENT**

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **HARASSMENT OF JOURNALISTS IN EMBU COUNTY**

On Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> May, 2020, the Media Council of Kenya (MCK) received reports that journalists were arrested by police in Embu County for covering a demonstration by residents of Makima area, who were protesting against the demarcation of land said to be owned by the Tana and Athi River Development Authority (TARDA).

Solomon Mwaniki (MCK No. 012153), Peter Mungai (MCK No. 010105) and Brian Musyoka (MCK No. 013975) of Nation Media Group Ltd., Royal Media Services Ltd. and County FM, respectively, were confronted by police in anti-riot gear who demanded that they erase the video footage they had taken of the protest. They declined and were subsequently arrested and later released with no charge proffered against them.

Upon the advice of the MCK, the said journalists sought to report the matter and make record a statement at Embu Police Station, but were referred to Kiritiri Police Station, which has jurisdiction over the area where the protests occurred. They successfully recorded a statement under OB 13/15/05/2020 at the said station.

This is the latest incident involving the police in a worrying trend that seems to be targeted at impeding journalists and media practitioners from carrying out their duty to inform the public at large, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The police are supposed to facilitate the work of journalists and guarantee their safety and security as they carry out this important function mandated and protected by the Constitution of Kenya under Article 34. The fact that they are increasingly turning against the media does not augur well for public interest and the transparency they expect.

Solomon Mwaniki, Peter Mungai and Brian Musyoka, duly identified themselves when asked to by the police and committed no offence other than to be present and document a matter of great public interest, for which they were met with harassment and intimidation by a police service that has turned its guns on the Fourth Estate.



We condemn these actions by the police in the strongest terms possible and call on them to respect the rights of journalists as protected in law and to defend and protect lawful actions by the media.

The MCK is taking this matter seriously, and has called on the Regional Police Commander to investigate this incident and ensure that the culpable officers face the full force of the law.

**Maina Muiruri**  
**Chairman of the Council**  
**Media Council of Kenya**

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