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## ITUC-AFRICA STATEMENT ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY TO END IMPUNITY FOR CRIMES AGAINST JOURNALISTS

### **Halt impunity against Journalists and Media workers: Investigate, Prosecute and Sanction perpetrators**

ITUC-Africa joins African Journalists, media workers and their counterparts all over the world, together with the global community to commemorate this year's International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists.

We hold it as true and inviolable that Information is critical and indispensable for people and their communities to make the best decisions in their lives on any issues, be they economic, social or political. Thus, access to reliable and quality information will continue to remain a cornerstone of democracy, effective governance and nation-building.

Nevertheless, journalists and media workers have rendered these services, sometimes at very high costs that we consider worrisome and unacceptable. For instance, it was recorded that in 2015, United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) denounced the killing of 115 journalists, media workers and practitioners of social media citizens' journalism. This is aside the fact that equally worrisome non-fatal attacks such as torture, enforced disappearances, arbitrary detention, intimidation and harassment in both conflict and non-conflict situations are not diminishing.

In Africa, journalism remains a dangerous profession and vocation. The free and independent press is still seldom tolerated. The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) noted that Africa still remains a dangerous place to practice journalism - Libya, Guinea and Somalia have recorded deaths of journalists and media workers this year.

Sadly, these killings are not successfully prosecuted. It is unacceptable that less than 10% convictions have been recorded on cases of attacks against journalists and media workers. No doubt, perpetrators are emboldened by this development, thus the reign of impunity persists.

This undermines the confidence of society in its own judicial system that is meant to protect everyone from attacks on their rights. This in turn leads to citizens' suspicion of official complicity and further loss of confidence, all of which threaten the rule of law.

ITUC-Africa condemns these attacks and violence against journalists and media workers. We call on African governments to take effective measures to prevent violence against journalists and media workers. Governments must provide and promote safe and enabling environment for journalists to perform their duties free from undue interferences.

ITUC-Africa equally urges governments to consciously pursue and ensure accountability by bringing to justice perpetrators of crimes against journalists and media workers. Government must continue to demonstrate in words and deeds that equality before the law is immutable.

Accountability will also include an effective path to access to appropriate remedies for victims.

**Kwasi Adu-Amankwah – General Secretary**

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