



April 1, 2026

Bola Ahmed Tinubu
President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria

Office of the President of Nigeria
Email: info@statehouse.gov.ng

CC:

Kashim Shettima Mustapha
Vice President of Nigeria

Lateef Olasunkanmi Fagbemi
Attorney General and Minister of Justice
Federal Ministry of Justice
Email: info@justice.gov.ng

Sent via email

Dear President Bola Ahmed Tinubu,

We, the undersigned Nigerian and international press freedom organizations, write to express alarm over Vice President Kashim Shettima Mustapha's recent remarks suggesting that no journalists have been harassed in Nigeria since you took office. This mischaracterization conveys a grave indifference to the [numerous and well-documented](#) attacks on the press while you have been president, including violent abuses and arrests by Nigerian security forces.

We call for you to hold accountable those responsible for abuses against the media that have taken place during and before your tenure, and to take further action to reform Nigerian laws to ensure journalism is not criminalized. General elections are scheduled for early 2027 and your action to protect the press and Nigerian democracy is essential.

On February 27, a State House press release quoted Vice President Shettima [saying](#) to members of the Nigerian Press Council, “For the past three years, have you heard of any harassment of journalists?” He added that your “tolerance threshold is so high.” The press release also said your administration had promoted “an environment that is conducive for journalists to carry out their duties without harassment.”

Since you assumed office as Nigeria’s president in 2023, the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) has [documented](#) Nigerian [authorities detaining](#) journalists without warning and [mistreating](#) them in custody. Numerous journalists have been [arrested](#) and prosecuted over their reporting, including on [defamation](#) and [cybercrime](#) charges. In August 2024, CPJ [documented](#) at least 56 journalists assaulted or harassed by Nigerian security forces or citizens while covering the #EndBadGovernance demonstrations. Masked security forces even fired bullets and tear gas in the direction of 18 working journalists.

Additionally, in 2024, the International Press Centre (IPC) [documented](#) 65 cases of attacks on journalists. These attacks varied from physical assault, harassment, threats to life, intimidation, murder, and unlawful and prolonged detentions.

Media Rights Agenda’s [2025 annual report](#) similarly tracked 86 incidents of attacks on press freedom across Nigeria and the International Press Institute Nigeria has [identified](#) a pattern of impunity for such incidents in the country.

The Centre for Journalism Innovation and Development (CJID), which [tracks](#) media freedom violations, has verified at least 231 attacks on the press since you took office, and in 2024 [wrote](#) to your office urging decisive action to stop such incidents.

Since 1992, CPJ has [documented](#) the killing of at least 23 journalists in Nigeria, as well as two others who are missing and presumed dead. At least 13 of these journalists are confirmed to have been killed in connection with their work. One of those journalists is [Onifade Emmanuel Pelumi](#), who was found dead in a mortuary days after he was seen in police custody after being shot while reporting in Ikeja, the Lagos State Capital, in 2020. Over five years later, despite [repeated pleadings](#), Pelumi’s body has yet to be returned to his family.

We have not seen meaningful efforts to end impunity when journalists are targeted, and your government even [sought to appeal](#) a court judgment ordering government actions to improve press freedom and the investigation of attacks against the press. Media Rights Agenda filed the case.

Nigeria has elections scheduled for early 2027, and we have documented how such moments of political tension often correspond with [spikes](#) in [attacks on journalists](#). This is a pattern that should be addressed with informed government actions, but the Vice President’s recent statements demonstrate a clear failure to recognize and respond to the dangers Nigerian journalists face, including from law enforcement tasked with protecting the public. The remarks are also reminiscent of Nigerian officials’ previous [false claims and mischaracterizations](#) about press freedom conditions.

Vice President Shettima [referred](#) to your administration as “a friend of the media.” It is time to match those words with action by holding those responsible for attacks to account, returning Pelumi’s body to

his family, and ensuring the periods before, during, and after the coming elections are safe for those who report the news.

Sincerely,

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