

## MEDIA STATEMENT

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Issued by the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities  
Attention: Journalists and News Editors  
Sunday: 03 May 2026

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### DWYPD URGES SAFEGUARDING OF FEMALE JOURNALISTS AS SOUTH AFRICA OBSERVES PRESS FREEDOM DAY

**Pretoria:** In observance of the global commemoration of World Press Freedom Day, the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities (DWYPD) emphasises the necessity for immediate and enhanced measures to protect female journalists, who remain exposed to escalated risks while performing their duties.

This year's observance occurs amidst escalating international concerns regarding the security of women in media. Female journalists are disproportionately subjected to harassment, intimidation, online abuse, and gender-based violence—threats that not only jeopardise their safety but also potentially undermine the principles of media freedom and democratic governance.

DWYPD underscores that a media environment that is free, independent, and secure is essential for the promotion of human rights, transparency, and accountability. Nevertheless, for numerous women in journalism, exercising these freedoms entails personal sacrifices. The Department expresses concern that gender-based violence within the media sector reflects broader societal issues, including those addressed in South Africa's initiatives against Gender-Based Violence and Femicide.

*"Female journalists are not merely reporters; they are custodians of truth and democracy. Their protection remains an uncompromisable priority," stated Minister Chikunga. "It is imperative that their voices are preserved from suppression caused by fear, violence, or discrimination, whether in newsrooms, on the field, or online."*

**Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities Urges:**

- Media outlets that they should bolster workplace safety regulations, including safeguards against harassment and digital abuse.
- Social media platforms should implement decisive measures against online harassment and gender-based hate speech.
- Society at large should endorse and honour the vital role of women in the media sector.

Furthermore, the Department reiterates the importance of adopting frameworks in accordance with international standards such as those advocated by UNESCO, which promote journalists' safety and combat impunity.

As South Africa continues to uphold its constitutional democracy, DWYPD calls upon all stakeholders to collaborate effectively to ensure that female journalists can operate freely and securely.

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