

Joint editorial to mark World Press Freedom Day

Free press is a public good that must be protected. The highlight of the World Press Freedom Day 2026 will be a global conference on May 4-5 May in Lusaka, Zambia. Under the theme 'Shaping a Future at Peace, the conference will offer a critical moment to reaffirm the critical role of a free press in society.'

For the Ugandan media, the day should be a collective reflection and a shared recommitment to speak with one voice to affirm a simple but profound truth: a free, independent and responsible press is indispensable to Uganda's future.

This day is a reminder that press freedom must be defended and practised with courage, professionalism and humility. In a rapidly changing media and social environment, the responsibility on journalists, editors, publishers, owners, regulators, advertisers, audiences and institutions has never been greater.

The issue:

World Press Freedom Day.

Our view:

Today, Uganda's media houses jointly commit to uphold the highest standards of professional and ethical journalism.

At its core, journalism exists to serve public interest. It informs citizens so they can make decisions about their lives, their communities and their country. It provides a platform for diverse voices. It documents history as it unfolds. It scrutinises power, highlights injustice, celebrates achievements and gives visibility to those often unseen.

In Uganda, the media sits at the intersection of competing pressures: political, economic, technological and social. Navigating these pressures while remaining faithful to truth and fairness is not easy. But this difficulty does not diminish our duty.

A society that values development, stability and dignity must also value the free exchange of information and ideas. When journalism is weakened through fear, misinformation, self-censorship, or economic strangulation, the public is the ultimate loser.

Media is operating in a time of profound change. Digital platforms have expanded access to information and lowered barriers to publication. Social media has amplified voices that were previously excluded. At the same time, these changes have blurred the line between journalism and unverified content, between editorial judgment and algorithmic amplification.

Disinformation, hate speech and coordinated manipulation thrive in environments where trust in credible journalism is undermined. This makes professional media more necessary than ever.

Accuracy, verification, context and accountability are values that distinguish journalism from noise. Yet professional journalism does not exist in a vacuum. It requires supportive conditions: legal protections, economic viability, access to information, physical safety and public trust. World Press Freedom Day is, therefore, also about examining whether these conditions are being strengthened or eroded.

Journalism carries risks. Reporters face intimidation, harassment, online abuse, arbitrary arrest and physical violence. Editors are pressured. Media houses are threatened economi-

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