

April 17, 2025

John Dramani Mahama  
President of Ghana

Cc:  
Ministry of Communication, Digital Technology and Innovations  
Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice

*Sent via email*

Dear President Mahama,

We at the Committee to Protect Journalists, an independent non-profit organization that promotes press freedom around the world, write to request that your administration take concrete steps to improve conditions for the press in Ghana.

With the passage of your first 100 days in office, we urge your government to conduct swift and conclusive investigations into cases of attacks against the press, to reform laws that criminalize journalism, and to ensure journalists' devices are not seized or searched in connection with their work.

For decades, CPJ has **documented** persistent **cases** of **attacks**, **murders**, **arrests** and other **threats** against journalists. Perpetrators of such attacks on press freedom include **security** forces, **politicians**, and their **supporters**.

The January 2019 murder of journalist **Ahmed Hussein-Suale Divela** sparked outcry from the Ghanaian media and government officials, but no one has been held accountable in **his case**. Over the four years following his killing, CPJ similarly found a broad pattern of impunity in the cases of **at least 30** Ghanaian journalists and media workers who faced abuses in connection with their work. Such attacks have **continued**, including during this first period of your tenure. Your intervention is needed to reverse these patterns.

In addition, Ghana's laws have been **used** to **criminalize** the press. For example, Section 208 of Ghana's **Criminal Offenses Act**, which relates to the publication of false news and carries a penalty of up to three years in prison, has been used to **charge** journalists in connection with their work. False news is also criminalized under Section 76 of Ghana's **Electronic Communications Act**, carrying a prison term of up to five years. Local press freedom advocates have **issued calls** to reform these laws.

Alongside the risk of arrest looms the prospect that journalists' devices will be seized and searched. CPJ has **documented** Ghanaian security forces

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Committee to Protect Journalists

acquisition of digital investigations tools designed to access and extract information from phones and computers, and authorities' **repeated seizing** of journalists' **devices**. This enhanced technical capacity and pattern of seizures has raised concern within the media community, presenting privacy concerns for journalists themselves, as well as the risk of revealing and endangering journalists' sources.

We call on your administration to prioritize urgent steps to improve the press freedom environment in Ghana by ensuring accountability for attacks on the press, reforming laws used to criminalize reporting, and protecting journalists' privacy. We stand prepared to provide assistance or further information that can advance the rights of journalists to work freely and safely.

Sincerely,

Angela Quintal  
Regional Director, Africa  
Committee to Protect Journalists  
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