

Journalists attacked in Malawi, South Africa and Zambia

Journalists in Malawi, South Africa and Zambia came under attack in separate incidents this past week. All journalists affected practice as photojournalists.

On Thursday, 30 May 2013, Malawian photojournalist Thoko Chikondi was punched several times by the chief parliamentary security officer at the parliament building as she went about her duties. She had been photographing a consumer rights advocate, John Kapito, who had just presented a petition to the national assembly.

...In South Africa, on 29 May 2013, photojournalist Motshwari Mofokeng was wounded in the chest when a security guard shot a rubber bullet directly at him. According to the 30 May edition of The Star, the daily newspaper Mofokeng reports for, the incident occurred while he was "covering an eviction of illegal residents living in a building once used as a factory."

...On Saturday, 25 May, Zambia Army personnel roughed up two photojournalists as they tried to capture pictures of dignitaries laying wreaths at the Freedom Statue as part of Zambia's commemoration of Africa Day.

...MISA programme specialist for Media Freedom Monitoring & Research, Levi Kabwato, has described the journalists who came under fire this past week as "brave".

"They are all brave. The courage they displayed under fire is inspirational and for that we salute them. We are very relieved that none of them [were] seriously wounded or even lost their [lives]," Kabwato said.

"Our promise to them, and all the journalists we serve in this region, is that we will continue to work hard in ensuring that the operating environment is not hostile and that journalist's rights are respected across [the] SADC [The South African Development Community]," he said.

He added: "We also appeal to public officials and the wider public to familiarise themselves with the role of journalists in society. Some of these attacks wouldn't occur if there was sufficient understanding of the critical role played by journalists. We further ask all media houses to ensure that their staff have access to medical cover[age] and are equipped with tools and tactics that can enable them to prevent attacks when covering potentially dangerous beats."

Read the [full story](http://www.ifex.org) on www.ifex.org.