

Sanef joins international call for media freedom in run up to Zimbabwe elections

The global community of journalists, media organisations, and civil society groups, have expressed their deep concern over the infringements on media freedom and the repeated harassment faced by Zimbabwean journalists and civil society observers in the run-up to the elections in Zimbabwe.



Source: © African Development Bank Group [African Development Bank Group](#) Harare, Zimbabwe. Sanef has joined the global media community of journalists, expressing their concern on media freedom in the run-up to the Zimbabwe elections

The South African National Editors' Forum (Sanef) has joined the call, issuing the following statement:

"We call upon the Zimbabwean government and authorities to uphold the principles of democracy, transparency, and human rights by granting journalists from South Africa, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region, Africa, and around the world, the necessary accreditation to enter Zimbabwe and cover the forthcoming elections.

"As part of the global community of journalists and media freedom advocates, we stand united in our commitment to defending media freedom and ensuring that accurate and impartial information reaches citizens around the world.

"We urge the Zimbabwean government to recognise the importance of an unfettered media in a democracy and to take immediate action to create an atmosphere that respects the rights of both local and foreign journalists, leading to a fair and credible electoral process.

“The role of the media in a democratic society is paramount. A free, diverse, and independent media plays an essential role in providing accurate and unbiased information to citizens not just in Zimbabwe, but also Zimbabweans in the diaspora around the world, enabling them to make informed decisions during elections.



Zimbabwe elections: Journalists barred and democracy activists deported

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Media freedom is the cornerstone of democracy

“Sanef believes that media freedom is the cornerstone of any vibrant democracy, and Zimbabwe should strive to adhere to international standards in this regard, including the UNESCO media freedom protocol and international laws governing media freedom.

“The upcoming elections in Zimbabwe hold immense significance not only for the country but also for the broader African and global community. It is imperative that the elections be conducted in an environment that is free, fair, and transparent. Media must be allowed to operate without fear of intimidation, harassment, or censorship, ensuring that citizens have access to diverse perspectives and comprehensive information.

“We condemn the reports of harassment faced by Zimbabwean journalists and civil society organisations who are in the country to observe the elections and ensure their fairness. Freedom of the press and the ability of civil society to operate unhindered are fundamental rights that should be protected and respected by all governments. Any attempts to suppress these rights undermine the credibility and legitimacy of the electoral process.

“Sanef urges the Zim government to grant swift and unbiased accreditation to journalists from South Africa, the SADC region, Africa, and the world, allowing them to cover the elections and report without undue hindrance.

Work without fear

“Further, Zimbabwe security agencies must cease all forms of unjustified deportation of persons in Zimbabwe to observe elections and the harassment against Zimbabwean journalists and civil society organisations, enabling them to carry out their vital work without fear.

“We call upon the government to ensure a transparent electoral process that adheres to international standards, thereby instilling confidence in the results and upholding the democratic values of the nation.

“The state must uphold the right to media freedom as enshrined in international protocols and conventions, fostering an environment that encourages diverse and open discourse.

“The Zimbabwean authorities and the electoral agencies must collaborate with regional and international bodies to guarantee that the upcoming elections are conducted in a manner that respects human rights and democratic principles.

“Sanef encourages all media houses with capacity to send journalists to Zimbabwe to raise awareness about the importance of media freedom and the need for transparent and fair elections in that country.”