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Los Angeles, CA

Press Release

JSI asks Military Juntas in Africa to Stay Off the Press in Wake of Recent Coups in Africa

Amidst the wave of successful military coups sweeping through the African continent, Journalists Sanctuary International calls on the military leaders - led governments to not disturb the freedom of the press in their respective countries.

The rhetoric by the coups leaders is one that attempts to make a case of corruption, injustices, and bad governance by the civilian governments they have deposed, and why the masses should view them differently and as liberators. If they are sincere about their claims and why they have seized power from democratically elected leaders, they must be the vanguard for the principles of the rule of law and good governance.

In a statement issued from its Los Angeles office on Thursday 31st August, 2023, the founder and president of JSI Latif Iddrisu underscored the need for the military governments to appreciate the need that the rights of citizens, democracy, and the principle of rule of law, go hand in hand and have cascading effect on each other, making them a conjoined pact that reinforces the core values and principles of the United Nations.

If the juntas are mindful about the welfare of their people, which has been the common and popular card they have played after taking power, the last thing we expect from them is a crackdown on independence and freedom of media organizations and journalists, and any move that could potentially impede their work. Most military governments all over the world started with some support from a section of their population as is currently unfolding in Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, and Gabon. However, history has also shown, that these same juntas turned unpopular because of human right abuse and defiance to the principles of democracy and the rule of law.

Just as they've empowered themselves with M4 cabinets, we at JSI wish to encourage the current crop of military rulers to make a difference by allowing journalists in their respective countries to also feel empowered with their pens and microphones. Though JSI does not support coups regardless of where it occurs, we urge the juntas to among other things channel their energies at building capacity of democratic institutions including the media, to strengthen the depth of rights, equality and accountability.

Finally, we wish to encourage the juntas to begin processes and give reasonable timeliness to return their respective countries to democratic rule.

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Latif Iddrisu (Founder/President)