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PRESS STATEMENT

The Namibia Media Trust (NMT) celebrates this 25th anniversary of World Press Freedom Day with a renewed appreciation for the need to promote free and independent journalism as a critical component of a thriving democracy. These are the principles articulated in the 1991 Windhoek Declaration which are more imperative than ever before.

Namibia's drop in the press freedom index proves that the struggle for press freedom requires active and continued commitment.

We look forward to the official celebration of this day in Windhoek on May 8. Local media will interrogate the issue of sustainability of the media.

The NMT this year became the first African media organisation to support Guillermo-Cano UNESCO World Press Freedom Prize. We call on other institutions to support the Prize which is awarded uniquely in the name of the international community.

Speaking at the prize ceremony in Accra, Ghana on the night of May 2, which this year awarded Egyptian photographer, Shawkan Zeid, who has been jailed since 2013, Lister said the NMT was concerned about a world where increasingly truth-telling is in danger, and its messengers killed, jailed and or accused of falsification.

On behalf of the NMT, Lister made a proposal for a separate set of indicators alongside the annual press freedom barometers, which could help showcase to the world "the difference that journalism can and does make by documenting unpopular realities and by helping to guide us the information quicksand".

The NMT welcomes the opportunity to collaborate with other organisations and feels that such an indicator will help ensure that the legacy of public service journalism would silence the critics by continuing to grow in stature and integrity.

Gwen Lister
Executive Chairperson

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