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Los Angeles, CA

Press Release

Stay Off the Press -JSI To Military Juntas in Africa

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

The justification put forward by the coups leaders is that the civilian governments have ignored the welfare of the people by engaging in acts of corruption, injustices, and bad governance. It is evident that that rhetoric resonates with the masses if one take into account the support these coup leaders have so far received in their respective countries.

For now, the rank and file of the population or revellers who celebrated on the streets of Ouagadougou, Bamako, Niamey, and Libreville, see these soldiers as their liberators and heroes. If the juntas are sincere about their claims and the justification, they've put forward for ousting civilian governments, they must demonstrate that by being the vanguard for the principles of rule of law and good governance.

In a statement issued from its Los Angeles office Thursday, August 31st, 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 human liberties.

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 abuses and defiance to the principles of democracy and the rule of law. Just as they've empowered themselves with M4 cabins, 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.

SGD
Latif Iddrisu
Founder/President