

n
3

C

COMMISSION TO NEGOTIATING COUNCIL

-y 2EVSPECT ~F RECINT ~ICLINT ATTACHES % B4

SOURNALI

H

Â¥}

n
()
n

MR M.J MAHLANGU
SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE UNITED EVCPLES FRONT

STATEMENT

When a British member of parliament pointed to the Press Gallery
and declared : " Yonder sits the Fourth Estate, more important

* 9 "

-than them all ", none was hardly exaggerating.

particularly in South Africa today, the Media are probably the

most valuable single vehicle for a successful transition to

democracy and this for several reasons :

1) It is mainly via the Media that the
complexities of the negotiation

process can be conveyed to the public.

â\200\2300

2) The Media play a major role in
shaping and determining the mood of
the people, in promoting the
reconciliation so essential to this

nation.

3) The Media provide the information and
insight necessary for that most important

of all qualities : WISDOM.

Py -

I~

-5 emphasize 2 Tragic

tendency in this country = While
politicians and political Parties
find it impossible to operate in
certain areas, hold political
meetings, do door to door
canvassing, because of disruptions,
hostility, violence - it is mainly
via the Media that many people can
be informed about significant
developments - -his maintaining atc

least a semblance of democratic norms.

There are many " kill " slogans being bandied about today 2Y foolish
though dangerous people.

=

few of them are as foolhardy as the one that proclaims the

" KILLING OF THE MESSENGER ".

As we've seen newsmen are being killed, crippled and wounded in this
country.

The question of what can be done to stop these despicable acts, is a
complex one.

Here are a few suggestions emanating from discussions held with
journalists and other concerned people :

1) Politicians must not only continue to publicly condemn such attacks in the strongest possible terms, but must spread the message on the ground so that every township dweller becomes a protector of newsmen visiting their areas. It must be made clear to those who attack reporters and cameramen, that communities will assist vigorously in hunting down the attackers and handing

them over to the authorities.

' The ANC set an excellent example of this recently, when they hunted down some of those who had attacked two SABC Newsmen.)

2) It is advisable for newsmen not to simply barge into a potentially dangerous area - although often this is like trying to persuade a dog not to bark. Nevertheless, it would be a good thing for them to first consult the police and political parties in the area and inform them of their intended presence.

It is also advisable not to send into the township those who are not " township wise ". Specialisation in township reporting is

essential.

soot

15

T AL

N

e : % |
However, as <toie surorlise =.lemenc is: Eae

attackers main weapon, attention should
also be given to more drastic measures.
like the Red Cross, ZIew newsmen are
prepared to carry weapons.

For obvious reasons, direct protection Dby
the police is not advised, but there can be
no objections to private security companies
providing protection to journalists in

dangerous areas.

Agaln as with the Red Cross, ournalists and
rheir vehicles should carry identification
insignia.

The word " PRESS " should be prominently
displayed on the vehicles and on the

clothing of journallsts.

This should be a UNIFORM sign available to
211 â\200\230ournallists, operating In dangerous areas
It should not indicate for what organization

the journalist works.

The above are just a few suggestions of what could be done.

It's highly likely that there are many more.