

AMDISS expresses deep dismay over the exclusion of journalists from covering the Judicial Reforms Validation activity in Juba

Juba—October 24, 2024—The Association for Media Development in South Sudan (AMDISS) learned with profound dismay the exclusion of independent journalists from covering the validation of the Judicial Reforms Committee report at a ceremony organized by the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs in Juba on Wednesday, October 23, 2024.

This event, attended by senior government officials including the First Vice-President for Governance Cluster Riek Machar Teny, Vice-President for Economic Cluster, James Wani Igga, and Vice-President for Service Cluster Abdelbagi Akol, provided a critical momentum in making a breakthrough in the judicial reforms processes.

It has come to our attention that members of the press, who were initially invited to cover this significant event, were later asked to leave due to purported space constraints.

Being invited only to be excluded at the last moment is also a kind of ironic injustice to both the members of the press and the general public who are the beneficiaries of the information.

The role of the media is pivotal in ensuring transparency, accountability, and checks and balances within governance processes in the country. By providing the public access to critical information, the press fosters informed citizenry and upholds democratic principles. This deliberate action undermines these principles and raises questions about the intentions behind such exclusion.

AMDISS firmly believes that if space was indeed a constraint, alternative arrangements could have been made to ensure that the media had access to cover this vital event. Limiting media presence not only hinders the dissemination of crucial information but also casts a shadow over the transparency of the judicial reform process.

Therefore, AMDISS calls upon the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, as well as other relevant authorities, to:

1. Acknowledge and address the Incident: Provide a genuine explanation to the public on what transpired which led to excluding journalists and what measures will be put in place to prevent similar reoccurrences.
2. Commit to prioritizing access to information to journalists by removing the constraints to promote transparency and public accountability.
3. Engage in open dialogue with media representatives to understand their needs and ensure their role in covering matters of public concerns without frontiers.

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