

The Media Association Jamaica Limited (MAJ) condemns recently reported threats, including death threats, made against journalists in relation to the cover of high profile court cases, and other publications.

"Our journalists work very hard in search of truth and must be allowed to carry out their work on behalf of Jamaican citizens without threats or acts of violence against them", said MAJ Chairman, Christopher Barnes, "Media plays a critical role in disseminating information in the public's interest and, we must as a nation embrace and support an environment of press freedom."

The MAJ Chairman noted that Jamaica ranks 17th on the 2014 World Press Freedom Index, slipping three places since 2013, and stressed that threats against the institution of journalism and the work done by journalists will further erode the ranking. "Journalists in this country need even greater freedom to responsibly report on issues which curtail growth and development of the country," said Barnes.

World Press Freedom Day, proclaimed by UNESCO in 1993, will be celebrated globally on May 3, 2014. It is a day to celebrate the fundamental principles of press freedom; assess the state of press freedom throughout the world; defend the media from attacks on their independence and pay tribute to journalists who have lost their lives in the line of duty.

The MAJ joins the PAJ in wholly condemning these threats which will serve to mar Jamaica's upcoming World Press Freedom Day celebration, and, if continued or carried out, will have a lasting negative effect on the Jamaican media landscape.