

The Media Association Jamaica Limited is disturbed by the seeming callous and casual way in which some members of the government have responded to reports last week that the police had placed two media houses on a security alert because police intelligence indicated they are at risk of being attacked because of their reporting on a high profile extradition matter.

The Association was stunned by seeming scepticism shown publicly by two Ministers of government as they were questioning the source of the reports and may have been suggesting that there is doubt that there was a legitimate report of threats to the police and whether there was anything to take seriously.

In modern democracies, freedom of the media is guarded jealously as a fundamental right by all persons and more specifically by democratically elected governments. In the past week there has been much to concern our Association about the level of support we can expect at senior levels in government.

Choosing to question whether or not the police intelligence of the reports of a threat was real or not, rather than immediately repudiating any threat that may exist, was disturbing, surprising and anti-press freedom.

Failing to clearly and publicly stand in support of the media's right to operate freely and fairly and free from fear, is inconsistent with a country promoting Access to Information and promoting greater transparency through reformed defamation laws.

The MAJ calls on the authorities to make unambiguous statements to

- Clear the air
- Assure the public, journalists and media that their practice of responsible, informative and investigative journalism is encouraged and supported at all levels.
- Commit to supporting the police in ensuring that no effort will be spared to find and take necessary measures where credible threats against media exist.