



Sierra Leone Association of Journalists

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Press Release

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SLAJ Condemns Arrest of AYV Media Guest

The **Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ)** has received a complaint from the **Africa Young Voices Media Empire (AYV Media)** relating to the arrest of a guest who took part in their **Wake Up Sierra Leone** morning television program on 26th April 2022.

According to AYV Media, the guest by the name of **Mohamed Khan**- who is described as the Interim Chairman of **Teachers Solidarity**, was arrested by the **Sierra Leone Police (SLP)** just outside its premises on his way out after the program, and that may not be unconnected to Khan's utterances on the concerns of teachers during the program.

According to the SLP, Mohamed Khan *'has been inciting teachers to withhold their services from the State using an illegal platform called 'Teachers Solidarity' while the Government of Sierra Leone and the Sierra Leone Teachers Union are engaged in negotiations'*. Police further said that Khan was brought to the **Criminal Investigation Department (CID)** for questioning, and later released on the same day after also meeting with the **Minister of Basic and Senior Secondary Education**.

While SLAJ is not interfering with the work of the Police in maintaining law and order, the Association is concerned that such an act of arrest by the SLP has the potential to scare off potential critical guests that AYV Media and other media houses may want to invite to their programs.

“The media provide the platform for access to all shades of opinion even if such opinions are critical of the State or Government and its numerous agencies. That is the bedrock of democracy, and any attempt to clamp down on dissenting views is usually counterproductive. The Police could have waited for another day to



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peacefully invite Khan for questioning rather than arresting him on his way out of a media program,” said President of SLAJ, **Ahmed Sahid Nasralla**.

SLAJ is therefore calling on the SLP to respect people’s right to free expression at all times, and to adopt less hostile ways of holding citizens accused of incitement other than arresting them.

Furthermore, SLAJ urges the SLP to be pro-active with information on reason(s) for the arrest of citizens by respecting not only the rights of the accused to know, but also the public’s right to know.

Signed:

Alhaji Manika Kamara

Acting National Secretary General

