

Journalists should avoid ‘armchair journalism’

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South African award-winning veteran journalist Milton Nkosi has urged media practitioners to avoid practicing ‘armchair journalism’.

The veteran journalist who has covered major stories across the African continent said this while giving a public lecture on media ethics and press freedom last Thursday at the Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST).

Nkosi reiterated that despite the changing landscape, rise of false news, and lack of ethics and fragmentation, the media must maintain their practices of integrity, reliability, and legitimacy.

“It is important that we acknowledge the challenges that we face because of fragmentation and unethical journalism, however, adhere to those values and hold on to those high journalism ethics and guard them with your life if you must,” he said.

He also stressed the importance of humanity, explaining that it is a core principle of journalism and all journalists should be aware of the impact of their words and images on the lives of others.

The former BBC reporter further applauded Namibia for taking a lead in ethical journalism in Africa, saying freedom of the press remains an uphill climb in other countries.

“Be proud Namibia that you are not in that situation. Keep your guard up at all times and never take advantage of where you are,” he urged. The international non-profit and non-governmental organisation Reporters Without Borders ranked Namibia as the first in Africa, and 23 out of 180 countries worldwide in its 2020 media freedom rankings. Senior lecturer in journalism at NUST Hugh Ellis said the long-awaited Access to Information Bill that was this year tabled in the National Assembly will go a long way in assuring journalists, activists, and members of the public the right of access to certain public information held by government.

The event, which was hosted by the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology in partnership with the Editors’ Forum of Namibia, was convened as part of a series of events to be held in preparation for the World Press Freedom Day and the 30th anniversary of the Windhoek Declaration that will be held in Namibia in May 2021.

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