

THE PRESIDENT'S NEWSLETTER

VOL. 5 NO. 1, 2026

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V FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA

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REFUGE & RUIN

HOW THE ECOWAS COURT INTEGRATED
NON-TRADITIONAL JOURNALISTS INTO
MAINSTREAM MEDIA WHILE EXPOSING
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From the Editor's Desk

This edition of The President's Newsletter focuses on the landmark ECOWAS Court decision in Isaac Olamikan & Anor v. Federal Republic of Nigeria, a judgment that reshapes how journalism is understood in Nigeria and across West Africa. The Court affirmed that journalism is no longer limited to traditional media professionals, recognising the growing role of bloggers, citizen journalists, and digital content creators in informing the public and shaping democratic discourse.

While the ruling expands freedom of expression and calls for reforms to restrictive provisions of the Nigerian Press Council Act, it also highlights ongoing concerns about the safety of journalists. The Court's refusal to award damages for the applicants' arrest underscores the continuing tension between state authority and the protection of press freedom.

This edition also examines the broader climate of press freedom across Africa, where many journalists continue to face arrest, detention, and intimidation for carrying out their work. These developments reinforce the urgent need for stronger legal safeguards and institutional support for media practitioners.

Beyond the case analysis, the newsletter features legal insights, research highlights, public interest content, and snapshots from our recent engagements. Strengthening protections for journalists remains essential to accountability, transparency, and democratic development.

President Aigbokhan, LLB, BL, LLM, FCAI

Editor-in-Chief



ISAAC OLAMIKAN & AMOR V FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA

FACT OF THE CASE

The applicants, Isaac Olamikan and Edoghogho Ugberease, are Nigerian journalists practicing as freelance online reporters and citizen journalists, respectively. Isaac Olamikan was formerly a staff member of Niger Delta Standards, Daily Independence Newspaper, and several online media publishing companies.

He lost his job with these companies and was deregistered as a journalist by the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ).

On the 2nd day of September 2008, while on an assignment at Otorogun Gas Plant to assess the state of gas flaring in the plant, he was arrested by officers attached to Shell Petroleum Development Company.

The officers claimed that Mr. Isaac had electronically recorded the operations of the oil facility without approval, with grave national security implications. They further alleged that he had no valid license to practice journalism, and therefore his activities could not fall under public interest.



Mrs. Edoghogho Ugberease visited the Edo State Environmental Task Force Mobile Court to rescue her friend, who had been arrested for selling on the walkway. She paid the fine and took a photograph of the receipt issued to her outside the courtroom.

She was arrested for making records of the receipt and was later arraigned for obstruction of the course of justice and breach of peace at the Magistrate's Court. After hearing the case, the court discharged her of the two-count charges on the ground that the offence was not proven.



Both Isaac Olamikan and Edoghogho Ugberease approached the ECOWAS Court of Justice, challenging specific provisions of the Nigerian Press Council Act of 1992, as well as their alleged unlawful arrest. Mr. President Aigbokhan and R.A. Otuakhena, Esq appeared for the Applicants, while Maimuna Lami Shiru (Mrs) and B.J. Oladipo appeared for the Respondent.

The court was composed of Hon. Justice Edward Amoaka Asante (presiding), and Hon. Justices Dupe Atoki and Mohammad Koroma as members. The judgment was delivered on the 24th day of November 2023.

He was arrested for recording the operations of an oil facility without approval, on the ground that he had no valid license to practice journalism.

SUMMARY OF THE ARGUMENT BY PARTIES

The case of the applicants is that the restrictive provisions of the Nigeria Press Council Act excluded the Applicants who are non-accredited reporters and citizen journalists, respectively, from practicing journalism freely. They also contended that the provisions of the Press Law violated their rights under the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), and other national and international legislations.

The applicants alleged they were arrested and detained unlawfully while performing their journalistic duties, further breaching their fundamental rights. The respondent, on their part, argued that regulation is necessary, seeing that journalism is a sensitive profession requiring clear regulations to maintain professional standards and ensure public trust.

The defendant argued further that while the media is an invaluable means of disseminating information to the public, if there is no monitoring, the negative effect of social media can be detrimental, not only to the teeming youth but can pose a serious threat to the security of the entire country



FINDINGS OF THE COURT

The Economic Community of West African States Court (ECOWAS), delivering the judgment, noted that sections 19 (1), 27, and 37 of the law, which impose minimum educational requirements, an age limit, and registration, were restrictive and interfered with the right to freedom of expression of the applicants. It held further that the provisions failed to recognize public interest media, including the rights of online and citizen journalists, and therefore violated the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.

The court also noted that a requirement that a person who wishes to engage in a journalistic activity must meet compulsory membership or have a university degree for the practice of journalism constitutes an unlawful restriction of freedom of expression.

The court reiterated that *“freedom of expression guarantees the rights of all persons to publish information and express their opinions, disseminating it or providing commentaries on such events*

The imposition of educational requirements, age limits, and compulsory registration interferes with the right to freedom of expression

for public consumption". And this cannot be the sole preserve of the 'traditional journalists.

The professional journalist has no greater rights than any other person who may decide to report on newsworthy events or provide commentary on such events through social media posts, blogs, podcasts, or other means.

The court also ruled against the Applicant for a declaration that the contested section of the Press Law is discriminatory. It reiterated that the main ingredient to succeed in an allegation of discrimination is proof of different treatment in an identical or similar case.

The court held further that "the conceptualization of journalism as a 'function'

within society instead of a 'profession' is significant.... journalism is a function shared by a wide range of actors, including professional full-time analysts as well as bloggers and others who engage in forms of self-publication print, on the internet, or elsewhere.

The media landscape has undergone a profound transformation in recent years, driven by the rapid evolution of new media and technology. This shift has altered the way news is disseminated and introduced new actors into news reporting and commentary on topical issues.

Beyond citizen journalists, there is also the new world of influencers and content creators. While they may not qualify as journalists in the traditional sense, these

Journalism is a function shared by a wide range of actors, not a status confined to traditional professionals.

personalities have become influential voices in shaping public opinion and discourse. This evolution of the media space warrants a reconceptualization of journalism, its practice, and practitioners.

The court also held that whilst the press law is acceptable, its aim should be for the betterment of the media profession rather than its control.

The court also held that contested sections of the Press Council Act do not present a demonstrable legitimate aim in mind, especially in the current media frontiers. It is also that a prescription of age to carry out this function creates a great disservice and rubs the up-and-coming youths who have the capacity and the opportunity to gather information and express an opinion for the general benefit of humanity.

The court mentioned that Malala Yousafzai, who at 17 years old was freely expressing her opinions through an open and unrestricted space, would have been a dream killed, buried, and unfulfilled if she lived in Nigeria. The court, in concluding its examination and findings, stresses that the law is a living and dynamic creation, adopted to regulate the affairs of a man who inherently is an embodiment of constant change. The Court finds that the media space has evolved into a vibrant, fast-evolving digital frontier, such that the Press Act of Nigeria, as currently constituted, is out of tune

with all the dynamic platforms for expression of opinion that presently exist. Conclusively, the Court ruled that the Nigeria Press Council Act violated the applicants' rights and directed the Nigerian government to amend some sections of the law.

The decision buttresses that freedom of expression, including the right to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas, either orally, in writing or print, in the form of art or through any other form of communication or medium, including across frontiers, is a fundamental and inalienable human right subject to permissible limitations under international law, provided they meet the criteria of legality, legitimacy, necessity, and proportionality. On the claim for unlawful arrest, the Court held that the arrest was lawful and reasonable and dismissed the applicants' claim for One Million

USD as compensation on the ground that the applicants had not substantiated the allegation of unlawful arrest. The court held that the arrest and detention of the Applicant while gathering and investigating information was lawful and did not violate the provisions of relevant international laws, and subsequently declined the award of pecuniary damages on the alleged Respondent's violation of Article 9 of the African Charter.

The court thought that for the arrest and detention to be unlawful, the 1st Applicant owes a duty to show that the arrest was carried out outside the purview of the law, that the arrest was by unauthorized persons, without proper reasons, without a warrant of arrest, and without following a prescribed procedure for a lawful arrest. In summary, the court highlights reasonableness as the test of validity or otherwise of an arrest.



IMPACT OF THE DECISION

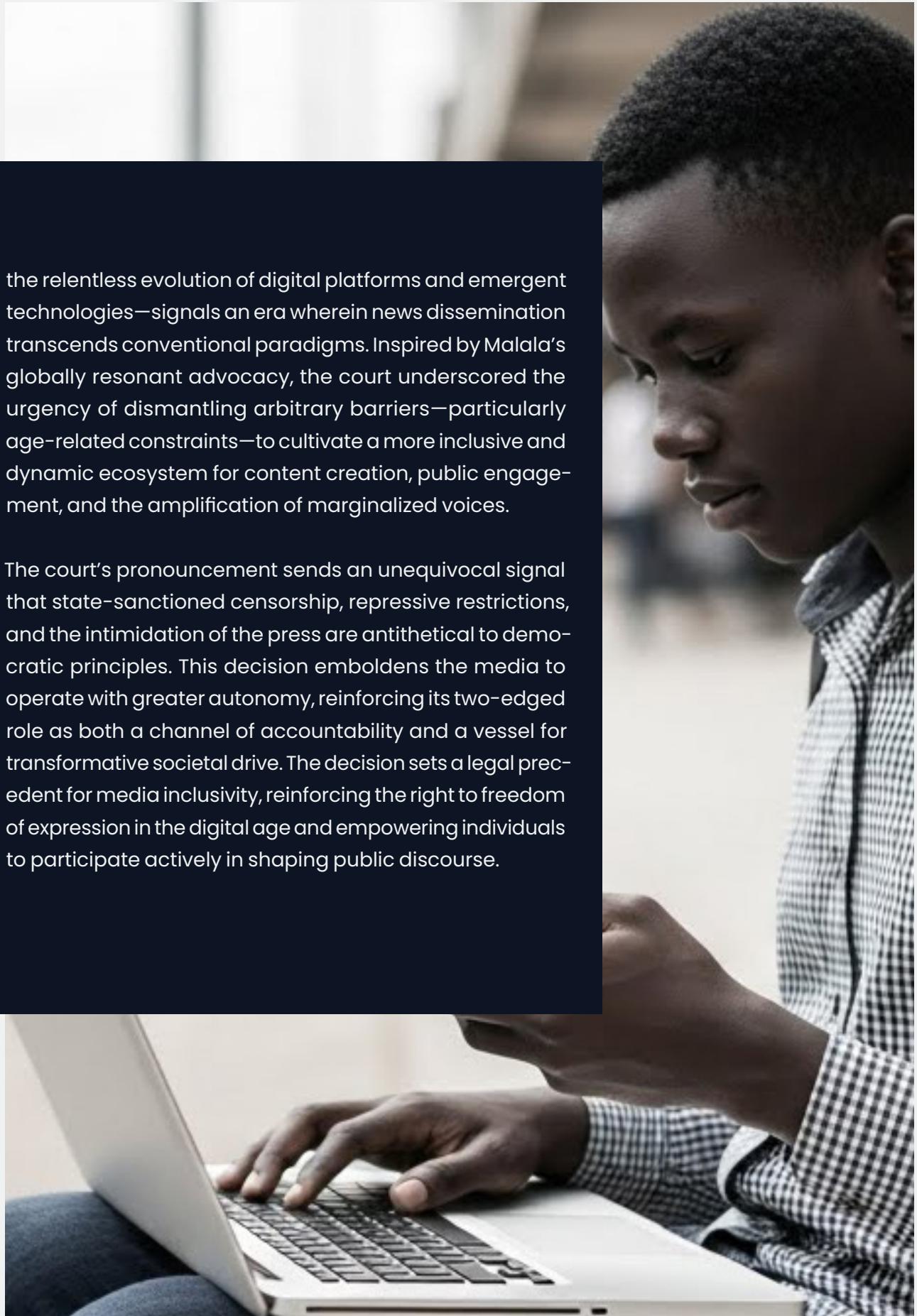
These emergent forms of information dissemination transcend antiquated conceptions of journalistic identity, necessitating a recalibrated legal framework that safeguards innovation, inclusivity, and accountability within the media sector.

By embracing these reforms, Nigeria stands at the precipice of a transformative epoch—one that will not only fortify the integrity and credibility of its journalistic institutions but also ensure that all media actors, whether within the traditional or digital spectrum, are afforded the requisite protections and empowerment to shape public discourse and fortify democratic tenets.

The case is expected to inspire similar challenges against restrictive media laws in Africa and promote broader reforms across the globe. Also, the proposed revision of the Press Council Act must consider the rise of new forms of journalism, such as digital journalism, citizen reporting, and independent online media.

The decision serves as a cornerstone in fortifying press freedom within the regional sphere while catalyzing a broader continental awakening towards the imperative of safeguarding pluralistic media on a global scale.

This shift has altered the way news is disseminated and introduced new actors into news reporting and commentary on topical issues. The court's recognition of the seismic transformation in the media landscape—driven by



the relentless evolution of digital platforms and emergent technologies—signals an era wherein news dissemination transcends conventional paradigms. Inspired by Malala's globally resonant advocacy, the court underscored the urgency of dismantling arbitrary barriers—particularly age-related constraints—to cultivate a more inclusive and dynamic ecosystem for content creation, public engagement, and the amplification of marginalized voices.

The court's pronouncement sends an unequivocal signal that state-sanctioned censorship, repressive restrictions, and the intimidation of the press are antithetical to democratic principles. This decision emboldens the media to operate with greater autonomy, reinforcing its two-edged role as both a channel of accountability and a vessel for transformative societal drive. The decision sets a legal precedent for media inclusivity, reinforcing the right to freedom of expression in the digital age and empowering individuals to participate actively in shaping public discourse.

HOW THE ECOWAS COURT INTEGRATED NON-TRADITIONAL JOURNALISTS INTO MAIN STREAM MEDIA

The Olamikan's case has precipitated a paradigmatic shift in the regulatory architecture governing journalism as well as exposing journalists to the perils of arrest and detention. The judgment postulates that a person was arrested, detained, and discharged by order of court yet the victim has not proven that the detention occurred. The epistemic contradiction is in the premise that the court agrees that the applicants were detained but the conclusion is that the applicants are undeserving of remedy. The first leg of the paradox is an undeniable event lacking legal recognition. A situation where a bureaucratic process acknowledges and denies an event at the same time creates a paradox. Indisputably, the assertion that someone was arrested and detained is a positive claim that the event occurred.

The court proceedings attached to the application prove the fact of detention. The contradiction lies in the acknowledgment of the detention coupled with the conclusion that undermines the certainty by suggesting a lack of proof. The ruling creates an internal contradiction by expanding press freedom, yet it de facto declines to protect the same journalists from rights violations. The second leg of the paradox is the recognition of non-traditional journalists while simultaneously failing to protect citizen journalists from unlawful detention. The court

The ruling expands press freedom, yet simultaneously declines to protect the journalists it recognizes.

fosters a two-tiered system of press freedom. If citizen journalists are recognized as part of the media, by not safeguarding them, the court implicitly derives the legitimacy it previously granted.

The judgment promotes press freedom and simultaneously strengthens state control. The absence of authorization does not justify arbitrary arrest and detention under human rights law. Approval before investigation contradicts the very essence of press freedom. If citizens' journalists are encouraged, investigators should not be punished for conducting inquiries- especially on matters of public interest such as national assets.

The chilling effect of the Paradox is that fewer people will report on critical issues, effectively undermining the very media landscape the court claims to broaden in the judgment.

CRITICISM OF THE DECISION

The burden for arrest and detention of journalists was tied across the neck of journalists, and this burden was discharged but never shifted. The media applicants were at a standstill to prove the legitimacy of press freedom in Nigeria. The court's pronouncement underscores a jurisprudential rationale wherein the investigative pursuit of national assets is rendered contingent upon the procurement of prior authorization—failing which the resultant apprehension of a journalist is deemed legally tenable.

The court reasserted the principle that the burden of proof rested squarely on the applicants to demonstrate that the 1st Applicant had the requisite authorization to access the facility in question, the absence of which vitiated any claim that the ensuing arrest and detention were unlawful or egregiously prolonged. A genuine retrospect into the safety of journalists in Nigeria is completely uninspiring, and the result is the present chaos.

At its core, the court has a role to assign rights issues with the significance it requires to match the respondent's core mandate of protection of lives and property. Also, the consistency with which such infringement occurs in recent times should have swayed the court in granting damages in favor of the applicants as a bulwark against abuse of human rights. In a broader sense, the ruling reflects a disconcerting judicial acquiescence to an emergent climate of hostility towards press freedom in Nigeria.

A candid retrospection into the security of journalists within the national landscape yields an unpalatable indictment—one characterized by systemic vulnerabilities and institutional inertia. The decision intrinsically deposited press freedom with the state, thereby tuning the freedom to a privilege granted at the discretion of those in power.



RECOMMENDATIONS

The impending revision of the Press Council Act must, with unequivocal clarity, delineate the scope of citizen journalism, digital reportage, and general independent media practice within the evolving contours of press freedom. The legislative framework must expressly proscribe the arbitrary arrest or detention of journalists or any form of coercive state actions for engaging in investigative reporting, especially on matters of public interest. Furthermore, the revised enactment must incorporate stringent penal provisions to sanction wrongful detention, harassment, and arrest of journalists and must create an independent body that oversees media freedom violations. It is also imperative that the independent regulatory entity be empowered to monitor, investigate, and adjudicate media freedom infractions, thereby safeguarding the press from undue state encroachment. This is not without creating a defense fund dedicated to providing pro bono legal services to support journalists facing state repression and allied rights violations.

A State must make full reparation for any injury caused by an illegal act for which it is internationally responsible.

The judiciary, as the vanguard of constitutionalism, bears an incontrovertible duty to confer upon fundamental rights the degree of sanctity necessary to counterbalance the state's ostensible mandate of safeguarding lives and property. Given the alarming regularity with which such infringements recur, the court ought to have demonstrated a more resolute disposition by granting substantial damages to the applicants. There is no denying that the 2nd Applicant was arrested, detained, and arraigned before a court of law. The breach of the 2nd applicant's rights was concise and accompanied by the decision of a court exonerating the applicant on the ground that the charge was unproven.

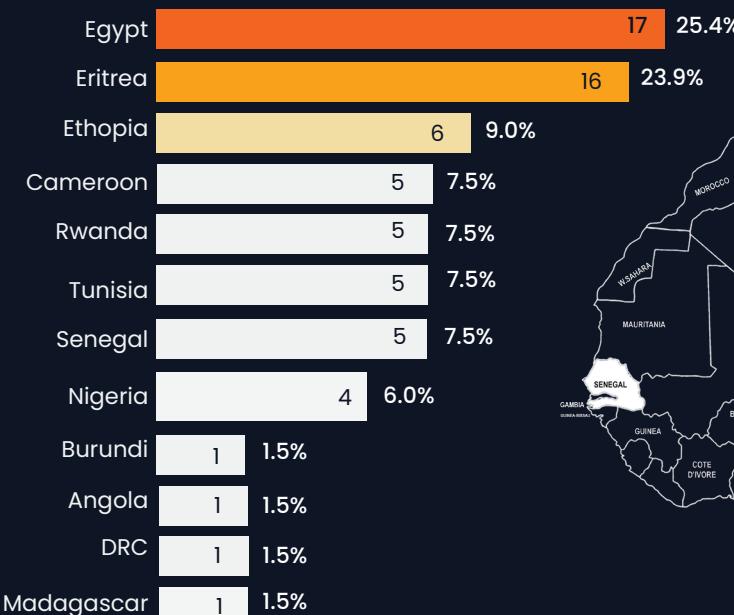
Agree they were not detained for more than a day, but the arrest being frivolous, particularly for the 2nd Applicant, deserves compensation. What more will a court require in compensating a party? Both applicants' arrest was unlawful and violated Article 9 of the African Charter. A State must make full reparation for any injury caused by an illegal act for which it is internationally responsible.

The primary object of an award of damages is to compensate the applicants for the harm done. In this case, the allegation of arrest was pleaded, and evidence was adduced. The court has concluded that the applicants' activities were right and were unjustly restricted, and could have been compensated for the distraction of arrest and discomfort of detention, as incarceration suffices as material for the benefit. Reparation for a wrongful act is an important principle of international law, which requires a State that has been found liable for a human rights violation to restore the victim to the status he/she would have been had his/her rights not been violated.

JOURNALISTS IMPRISONED IN AFRICA (2023–2025)

Across Africa, journalism is increasingly met with repression rather than protection. Between 2023 and 2025, dozens of journalists have been imprisoned for carrying out their professional duty—investigating, questioning power, and informing the public. These detentions, often justified under vague national security or public order laws, reflect a shrinking civic space and a growing hostility toward press freedom. The infographic below highlights the scale, distribution, and concentration of journalist imprisonment across the continent, revealing the countries where press repression is most severe and underscoring the urgent need for accountability, legal reform, and stronger protections for media practitioners. The chart and map below reveal the countries where journalist imprisonment is most prevalent, showing the geographic concentration of press repression across Africa.

Countries highlighted on the map correspond to the chart



Darker shades indicate Eritrea higher imprisonment figures



- 67 journalists jailed across Africa¹
- 3 countries account for nearly 60% of imprisonment²
- Egypt & Eritrea alone = ~49%³

Top Jailing Countries

Egypt	25.4%	
Eritrea	23.9%	
Ethiopia	9%	

Sources: Zambiareports

WHERE THE PEN BECOMES A PRISON

Journalists detained for exercising freedom of expression



Alaa Abd el-Fattah (Egypt)

Alaa Abd el-Fattah is a well-known British-Egyptian writer and activist who has long spoken out about human rights and freedom of expression. He was arrested in Egypt in 2019 after sharing a Facebook post that criticised official handling of prison conditions and government wrongdoing, and was later sentenced to five years in prison on charges widely viewed by rights groups as politically motivated and based on “spreading false information.” A UN working group has since determined that his detention lacks due process and violates international standards for freedom of expression. His case has become symbolic of severe restrictions on journalists and critics in Egypt⁴.



Meskerem Abara (Ethiopia)

Meskerem Abara is an Ethiopian journalist and activist, founder of Ethio Nikat Media, whose work has focused on political issues and holding power to account. In April 2023 she was arrested under charges including alleged terrorism, a charge often used in Ethiopia to detain journalists covering sensitive topics such as state abuses or conflict.

Although her sentence was later reduced, her case illustrates how anti-terrorism laws have been wielded to restrict journalistic activity – something press freedom groups say damages the right to information and free expression⁵.



Amanuel Asrat (Eritrea)

Amanuel Asrat is an Eritrean poet and journalist who served as editor-in-chief of Addis Zemen and was a leading voice for literary and journalistic expression in the country. In September 2001, he was arrested along with 16 other journalists during a sweeping government crackdown on independent media following the closure of all non-government press outlets. Asrat’s work and influence made him a target during a period when the Eritrean government moved to utterly silence dissenting voices, and he remains believed to be detained in a maximum-security prison with little information available about his condition.⁶



Law Nuggets

IWUOHA v. OKOROIKE (1996) 2 NWLR (Pt. 429) CA 231, P. 251, paras. F – G

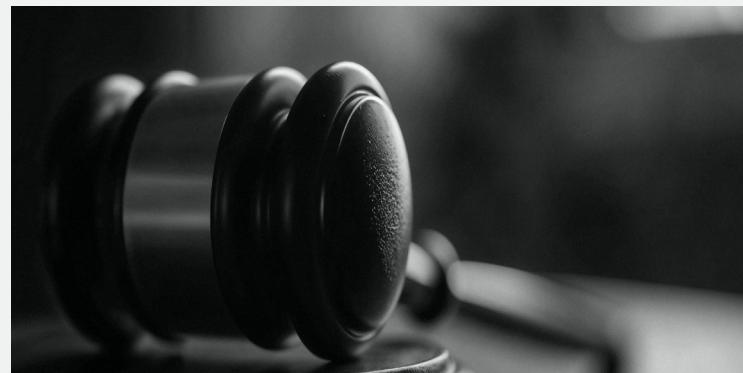
The mere fact that a case was specifically fixed or adjourned to a particular date for defence and address does not mean that the case must continue willy nilly, even where, circumstances exist to justify the grant of a further adjournment.

IWUOHA v. OKOROIKE (1996) 2 NWLR (Pt. 429) CA 231, P. 252, paras. B – C

Where in an action for defamation the defence raises a plea of justification; the procedure to follow is for the plaintiff first to tender the document complained of and then give formal evidence of the libel after which the defendant leads evidence in support of his plea of justification and the plaintiff may then give evidence in rebuttal.

U.B.A. Plc v. Omiyi (2010) 1 NWLR (Pt. 1176) CA 640, P. 663, paras. A – B, Per RHODES – VIVOUR, J.C.A.

Exhibit 5 contains grave allegations of criminal offences to wit: fraud, conspiracy to steal and stealing. In the absence of proof of all these alleged offences before a court of law, by a conviction of the respondent, the contents of exhibit 5 remain mere allegations that cannot sustain the defence of justification. The appellants failed to prove that the contents of exhibit 5 are true and so the learned trial Judge was right to damnify the appellants in damages for libel.



IWUOHA v. OKOROIKE (1996) 2 NWLR (Pt. 429) CA 231, P. 252, paras. B & D

A plea of justification means that all the words were true and the plea covers not only the bare statements of fact in the alleged libel, but also any imputation which the words in their context may be taken to convey. *[Pedro v. Oraofidiya (1975) 1 NMLR 336 referred to and applied]*

U.B.A. Plc v. Omiyi (2010) 1 NWLR (Pt. 1176) CA 640, P. 657, paras. G

If a publication is libelous, the law presumes the falsity and the maliciousness of the words alleged until the contrary is proved.

U.B.A. Plc v. Omiyi (2010) 1 NWLR (Pt. 1176) CA 640, P. 657 – 658, paras. H – C, Per DONGBAN – MENSEM, J.C.A

In my humble opinion, informed by precedent, malice exists if allegations of crimes, fraud or misconduct published are not supported with concrete and evidentially evaluated facts. The offensive material in this appeal is clear exhibition of malice and a deliberate attempt to malign and destroy the career of the respondent. A declaration that the respondent, a banker of senior ranking was "... *fraudulent to say the least...*" are profoundly damaging statements.

DID YOU KNOW

Below is a compilation of some interesting facts selected for you

 Nigeria was the first African country to qualify for the FIFA World Cup knockout stage in their debut year (USA 1994)? The Super Eagles didn't just show up – they came in with impact, topping their group ahead of Argentina, Bulgaria, and Greece... and were even ranked 5th in the world by FIFA that same year, the highest ever for any African nation

 Nigeria is home to Nollywood – the second-largest film industry in the world by output? It produces over 2,500 movies every year, making it a global creative powerhouse.

 The oldest known boat in Africa – and one of the world's oldest – was discovered in Nigeria? The Dufuna canoe, found in Yobe State, is over 8,000 years old, older than Egypt's pyramids.

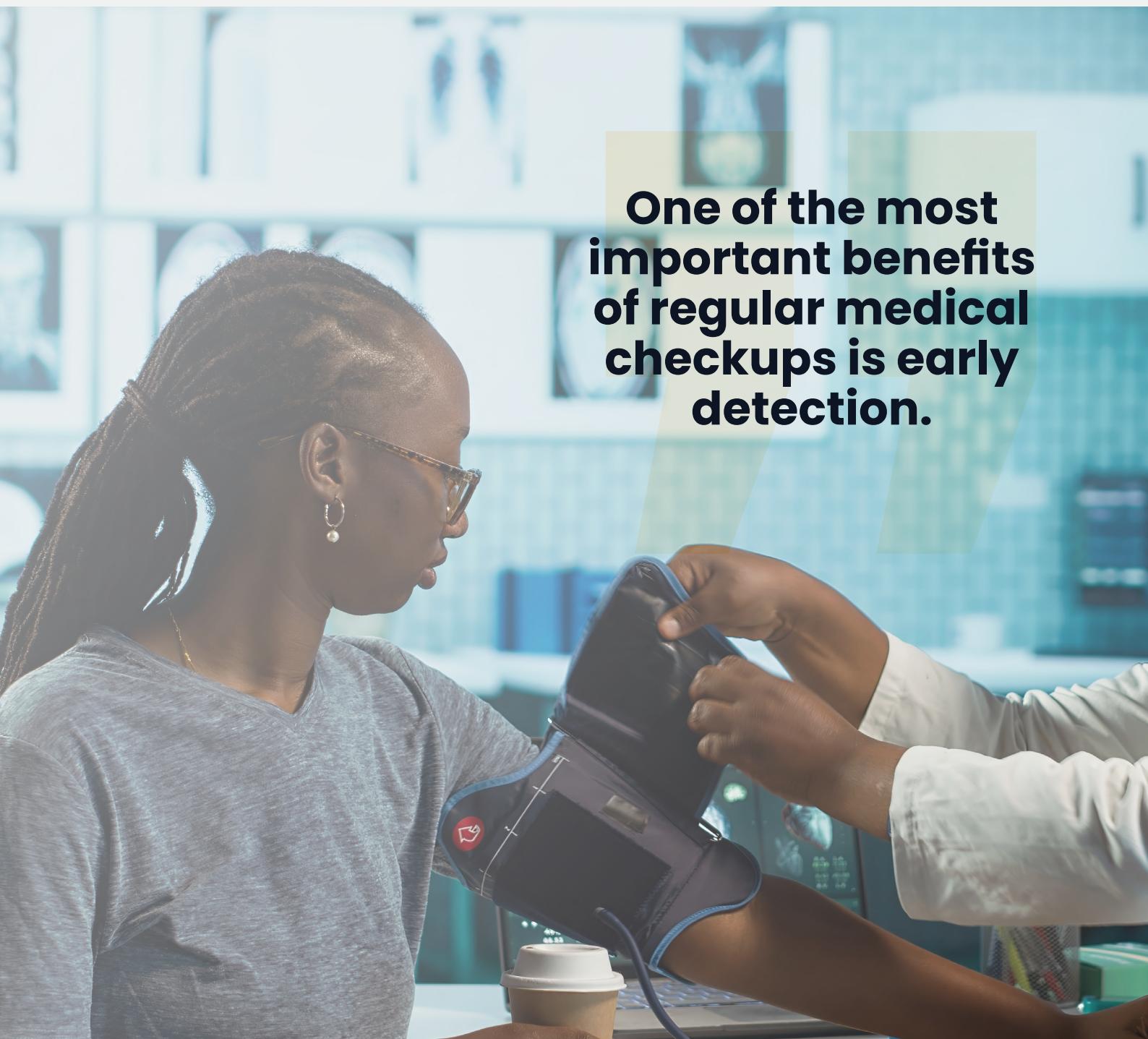
 The world's largest annual religious gathering takes place in Nigeria? The Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) Holy Ghost Congress has hosted millions of worshippers in a single event – one of the biggest in modern history.

 Nigeria's Murtala Mohammed Airport is one of West Africa's busiest international hubs? It connects millions of passengers yearly to Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and the Americas – making Nigeria a major gateway into Africa.

 Nigeria is one of the world's biggest contributors to global peacekeeping? Since 1960, Nigerian troops have served in over 40 UN peacekeeping missions, one of the highest from any country.

HEALTH

WHY REGULAR MEDICAL CHECKUPS MATTER

A woman with dark hair and glasses is getting her blood pressure checked by a medical professional. The medical professional is wearing a white coat and is holding a blood pressure cuff. The background is a medical office with various equipment and charts. A text overlay is positioned in the upper right corner of the image.

One of the most important benefits of regular medical checkups is early detection.

Why Regular Medical Checkups Matter

Regular medical checkups play a vital role in maintaining good health and improving quality of life. Many people only visit a doctor when they feel ill, but waiting until symptoms appear can allow underlying health problems to progress unnoticed. Routine checkups help detect potential health issues early, often before they become serious or life-threatening.



One of the most important benefits of regular medical checkups is early detection. Conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease, and certain cancers may not show obvious symptoms in their early stages. Through routine screenings, laboratory tests, and physical examinations, healthcare professionals can identify risk factors or early signs of disease. Early diagnosis usually means more treatment options, lower medical costs, and better health outcomes.

Regular checkups also help with disease prevention. During these visits, doctors assess lifestyle habits such as diet, physical activity, alcohol use, smoking, and stress levels. Based on this assessment, they provide personalized advice on how to reduce health risks. Preventive measures such as vaccinations, health education, and counseling are often part of routine checkups and play a key role in protecting individuals and communities from preventable diseases. Another important aspect of medical checkups is monitoring existing health conditions. For individuals living with chronic illnesses like asthma, hypertension,

or diabetes, regular doctor visits ensure that the condition is well managed. Medications can be adjusted, complications can be prevented, and progress can be tracked over time. This ongoing monitoring helps patients maintain stability and avoid emergencies. Regular medical checkups also support mental and emotional well-being.

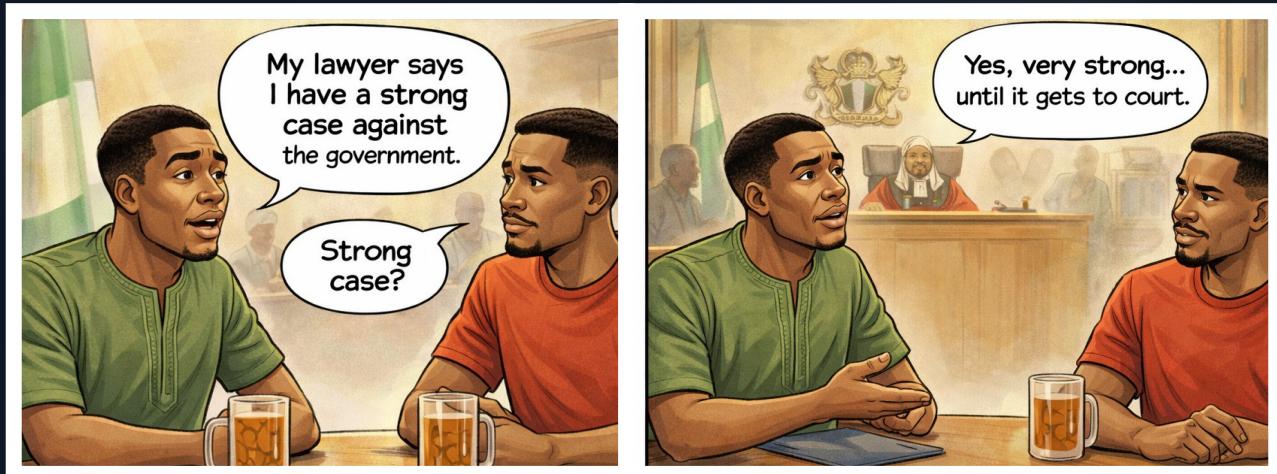
Stress, anxiety, depression, and other mental health challenges are common but often overlooked. Routine visits provide an opportunity to discuss mental health concerns openly and receive professional support or referrals when necessary. Addressing mental health early is just as important as managing physical health.

In addition, building a consistent relationship with a healthcare provider improves overall care. When doctors are familiar with a patient's medical history, family history, and lifestyle, they can make more accurate diagnoses and provide better guidance. This trust and continuity of care lead to more effective communication and improved patient satisfaction.

In conclusion, regular medical checkups are essential for early detection, disease prevention, effective management of chronic conditions, and overall well-being. They empower individuals to take control of their health, make informed decisions, and live healthier, longer lives. Making routine medical visits a priority is not a sign of illness, but a smart investment in long-term health.



LAW JOKES



Explanatory Note

This illustration humorously captures a hard truth about access to justice, particularly in cases involving the government. On the surface, many claims appear *"strong"* – grounded in law, supported by facts, and backed by competent legal advice. However, the real test of any case is not how persuasive it sounds in conversation, but how it survives the realities of the courtroom.

When disputes reach court, especially those pitched against the state, several systemic challenges often emerge: procedural delays, power imbalance, limited judicial independence, technical objections, and sometimes institutional bias. These factors can significantly weaken even the most well-founded cases. What begins as a confident assertion of rights can quickly turn into a prolonged legal struggle where outcomes are uncertain, costly, and exhausting for the ordinary citizen.

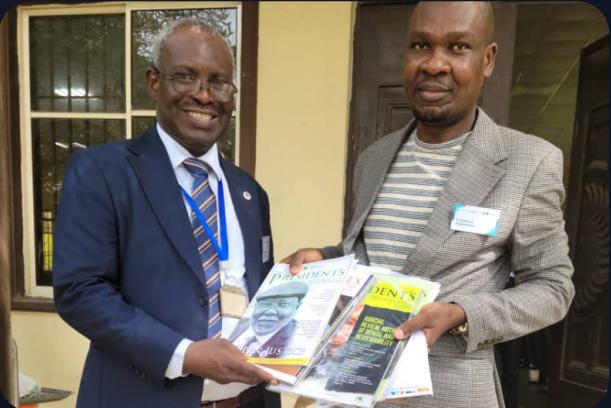
The joke therefore, reflects more than sarcasm—it highlights a lived experience. It questions the gap between theory and practice, between legal rights on paper and justice in reality. While the law promises equality before the law, the courtroom experience often tells a different story, particularly for marginalized individuals confronting powerful state actors. Ultimately, this piece invites reflection rather than cynicism. It underscores the urgent need for judicial reforms, stronger institutional accountability, and a justice system that truly protects citizens, not just in principle, but in practice. A *"strong case"* should remain strong all the way to judgment—not lose its strength at the courtroom door.

Photo Gallery

This gallery captures key moments and milestones from our engagements and activities. It features photographs of Barr. Present presenting official newsletters to top dignitaries, reflecting meaningful dialogue, collaboration, and institutional relationships.

Also included are images from the passing-out ceremony of our corps member, marking the completion of a significant period of service and contribution. The gallery further showcases group photographs of Barr. President with respected officials and stakeholders, highlighting partnerships, courtesy visits, and shared commitments to service and leadership. Together, these images tell a visual story of impact, professionalism, and enduring relationships.

Newsletters of FOI Counsel received by Prof. John Akintayo, Dean Faculty of Law, University of Ibadan.



President Aigbokhan presented with an award of excellence at the Leadership Awards 2025

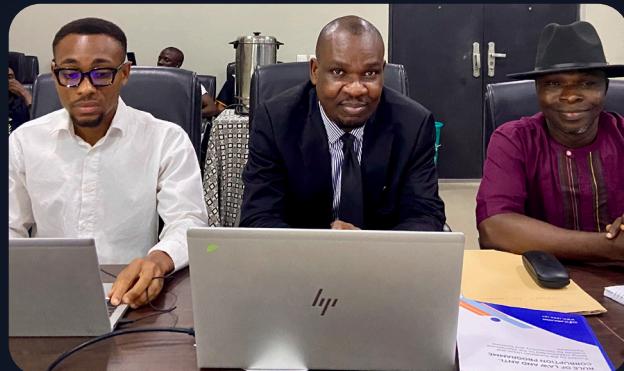


President Aigbokhan with other Participant at the ILO Stakeholders Event

President Aigbokhan with The Vice Chancellor
University of Africa



A group brain storming session, in preparation for their presentation at the FOI surgery workshop



President Aigbokhan, Mr. Blessed Jatto, Mr Chisom in a group photo at the FOI Surgery workshop



Group Photo of Barr. Ayo Robison and some of corp members during their POP/Sendforth



Barr. Ayodele Robinson Otuakhena With some participants at a conference organized by ROLAC (Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption)

Endnotes

ECW/CCJ/JUD/43/2023 available at <https://www.courtecowas.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/ECW-CCJ-JUD-43-23-ISAAC-OLAMIKAN-2.pdf> [last accessed on 10 December 2024]

References

Supra note 2 at 51

(Ibid) Page 15 @ para 55

(Ibid) Page 21 @ para 79

She is a Pakistani education activist with special interest in girls' education. At the age of 15, she was shot by the Taliban for advocating for the right of girls to receive an education in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa region. Despite surviving the attack, she continued to champion education for girls and women's rights on an international scale. In 2014, Malala became the youngest-ever recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize

at the age of 17. Her fight for human rights, especially her impact on pluralistic media was identified in the ruling of this case.

Justice Edward A Asante (Supra)

Page 35 @ 134 (Ibid)

Page 36 @ 136 (Ibid

ECOWAS Court has enriched regional, global jurisprudence, says ex-president" Peoples Gazette Nigeria 20 Feb 2025. See <https://gazettengr.com/ecowas-court-has-enriched-regional-global-jurisprudence-says-ex-president/>

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About Us

FOI Counsel is a law group established primarily to provide legal assistance to NGOs and the media seeking for information, under the Freedom of Information Act 2011. We are also, the first Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Litigation-specialized firm in Africa. As the demand for our services increased we billowed into four thematic areas of work and these are:



FOI Advocacy & Litigation

We focus on ensuring transparency and accountability in government processes. This includes challenging government agencies that have refused to disclose information and litigating on behalf of individuals and organizations seeking to obtain government-held information.



Human Rights Litigation

We protect the fundamental rights of individuals and groups who have been subjected to violations involving a wide range of issues such as discrimination, police brutality, and freedom of speech, among others, and seek to bring justice to those who have suffered harm through legal means.



Land reforms & rural development

We promote equitable access to land resources and support the sustainable growth of rural communities. This involves advising on land ownership and tenure, supporting land-based livelihoods, and advocating for policies and programs that support rural development and the rights of rural communities.



Research & Policy Advocacy

We empower change and justice through in-depth analysis of laws, precedents, and regulations, and effective advocacy strategies to shape policies and promote equitable outcomes in society.

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