



British
Consulate General
Juba

Press Release

British Consul General supports World Press Freedom day

3 May 2011

World Press Freedom day is celebrated annually on 3 May to commemorate the fundamental principles of media freedom, to highlight long-standing and emerging threats to that freedom and to pay tribute to journalists and activists who have risked their safety to advance the public's access to news and information.

The United Kingdom firmly believes in and supports these principles. As highlighted in the Foreign & Commonwealth Office's 2010 Human Rights Report, our Embassies, High Commissions and Consulates General regularly highlight the need to tackle impunity for attacks on journalists. Where we are concerned about harassment, intimidation and assassination of journalists, we raise individual cases, call for prompt and full investigations and support criminal justice mechanisms and judicial reform to deal with attacks.

The Consul General in Juba, Dr Alastair McPhail, commemorated the day, saying:

"Freedom of expression is fundamental to building a strong and stable democracy. All citizens, including journalists, must be allowed to discuss and debate issues, to challenge their governments and make informed decisions. Journalists, bloggers, media organisations and individuals must be allowed to operate and to express themselves freely and safely and within international standards.

I call on the Government of Southern Sudan, as we are calling on governments around the world, to uphold these principles, and to respond to legitimate aspirations with reform not repression. By encouraging an open and effective press the Government can significantly improve the environment for long-term social, political and economic stability which is what we are all working to achieve."

Background for editors:

The United Kingdom supports Southern Sudan with a range political and development activity. We provide substantial contributions to the UN mission in Sudan; and UKAid, from the Department for International Development (DFID), is providing over USD 130 million annually across a range of sectors, including health, education, water and sanitation, justice, security sector reform and humanitarian aid.