



The Wole Soyinka Centre for Investigative Journalism

17th

Wole Soyinka Centre Media Lecture Series

T h e m e :

Surveillance, safety and the silencing of truth

Date: Sunday 13 July 2025

Time: 5:00pm (WAT)

zoom 

   @WSoyinkaCentre
 www.wscij.org

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Order of events

Opening

Jimeh Saleh – Compere

National Anthem

Instrumentals

Introduction

Compere

Welcome remarks

Dapo Olorunyomi, Founder/CEO, Centre for Journalism Innovation and Development (CJID)

Goodwill message

Anneloes Hoff, Political Secretary, Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

Keynote address

Angela Quintal

Brief introduction of the discussion

Compere

Panel discussion

Quinn McKew

Fisayo Soyombo

Sonja Smith

Questions & answers

Compere/Audience/Panellists

Vote of thanks

Motunrayo Alaka, Executive Director/CEO, WSCIJ

Telling the truth in the shadow of surveillance



Every July 13 since the second edition in 2009, we gather to honour Professor Wole Soyinka's birthday and reflect on issues that shape our democracy and affect the work of journalists across Africa and beyond through the Wole Soyinka Media Lecture Series. This year and for the 17th edition, our focus is sharp and urgent: "Surveillance, safety and the silencing of truth".

We are seeing how globally the threats posed by surveillance that journalists face are escalating, whether in democratically elected governments or authoritarian regimes. For instance, elections, the foundational pillar of any democracy, have become dangerous for Nigerian journalists. WSCIJ's 2023 Nigeria Journalism and Civic Space Status report showed that 46% of the attacks suffered by journalists happened either at voting polling units on election day or political campaign grounds while reporters are on duty.

Globally, the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) 2024 report reveals a surge in violence and digital threats, with 124 journalists and media workers killed, the highest toll ever recorded. Reporters Without Borders (RSF) 2025 Press Freedom Index adds to the alarm, with nearly 90% of countries facing severe media funding crises and one-third experiencing newsroom closures. Whether physical, digital or economic, these pressures are squeezing civic space, jeopardising the safety of journalists and threatening the one crucial role the media plays – speaking truth to power.

Surveillance is no longer an act that only happens in secret. In too many countries, journalists are being tracked, monitored and harassed simply for doing their jobs. Some are intimidated by laws and technology or by targeted pressure from powerful individuals and institutions. When journalists are forced to look over their shoulders, the public loses access to vital information. Investigations slow down or stop, sources go silent and fear takes root.

This lecture brings together voices that understand these realities from the frontlines, and for us at the Wole Soyinka Centre for Investigative Journalism, this conversation is part of a longer journey.

Thank you for showing up and for believing that telling the truth should never be a crime.

Motunrayo Alaka

Executive Director/CEO, Wole Soyinka Centre for Investigative Journalism.

Keynote Speaker



Angela Quintal

Regional Director for Africa
Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ)

Angela Quintal, Regional Director, Africa, Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ). In this role, she merges her passions of journalism and human rights in the CPJ's fight to promote press freedom worldwide, defending the right of journalists to report the news safely and without fear of reprisal. Angela previously worked as a journalist for more than two decades in South Africa, including as editor of The Mail and Guardian.

She is a former Secretary-General of the South African National Editors' Forum and previously edited The Witness and The Mercury. She also served as served as presidential correspondent during Nelson Mandela's presidency.

P a n e l i s t s



Quinn McKew

Executive Director
ARTICLE 19

Quinn McKew is the Executive Director of ARTICLE 19, an international organisation defending freedom of expression. She brings over a decade of experience in human rights, digital policy and civic space protection. A graduate of Stanford and Georgetown University, McKew has worked across the public, private and non-profit sectors. Since joining ARTICLE 19 in 2011, she has helped shape a globally respected programme focused on digital infrastructure, media rights and inclusion. She also serves on the boards of The Equal Rights Trust and MEEDAN and is a member of the Advisory Council for the Bonavero Institute of Human Rights at Oxford University.



Fisayo Soyombo

Founder
Foundation for
Investigative Journalism

Fisayo Soyombo is the founder and editor-in-chief of the Foundation for Investigative Journalism (FIJ), a media organisation committed to exposing injustice and holding power to account. With over a decade of newsroom experience, he has served in senior editorial roles across some of the country's most prominent newsrooms, including The Cable, International Centre for Investigative Reporting, and Sahara Reporters.

Fisayo is a 3-time recipient of the Wole Soyinka Award for Investigative Reporting, among other honours.



Sonja Smith

Correspondent
Associated Press

Sonja Smith is a multi-award-winning journalist with over 10 years of experience in journalism based in Windhoek, Namibia. She has a proven track record of producing high-quality investigative stories that informs and engages audiences. Smith is currently pursuing a master's degree in journalism at Stellenbosch University, with the aim to expand further knowledge and skills in the field. She writes for the Center for Collaborative Investigative Journalism (CCIJ), member, correspondent for the Associated Press and Namibian Sun newspaper. Prior to this, she has worked for various Namibian media publications including Confidante, Windhoek Observer, and The Namibian.



Jimeh Saleh

Former Editor
BBC/MacArthur
Foundation Series

Jimeh Saleh is a veteran journalist, investigative reporter and media leader with over 17 years of experience working at the British Broadcasting Corporation. Former editor and coordinator of the BBC/MacArthur investigative journalism series, Jimeh blends editorial excellence with sharp moderation skills.

Known for his editorial leadership, Jimeh was one of the first journalists to report from Boko Haram's Sambisa Forest hideout in 2015.

About the Wole Soyinka Centre Media Lecture Series and its host

The Wole Soyinka Centre Media Lecture Series is designed to examine varying topical issues that bear salience on the performance of the Nigerian media, the health of the country, and its democracy in keeping with the fact that only a media that constantly engages in deep reflection will be able to realise its full potentials as a guardian of democracy and tribune of popular cause. The lecture started 2008 and has since 2009 been held on 13 July which is Professor Wole Soyinka's birthday.

The Wole Soyinka Centre for Investigative Journalism (WSCIJ) is a non-governmental organisation envisioning a just, inclusive, transparent and accountable Nigeria stimulated by an ethical and sustainable media using the tools of investigative and accountability journalism for exposing corruption, regulatory failures and human right violation. WSCIJ is the pioneer organisation focused on promoting investigative reporting in Nigeria. It has trained over 1200 journalists from more than 140 media organisations across different sectors, such as Education, Health, Politics/Governance, Investigative reporting, Electricity, Gender, Extractives (including oil and gas), and continue to seek opportunities to expand.

MEDIA PARTNERS



Call for applications: 3 – 24 October 2025
Award presentation ceremony:
Tuesday 9 December 2025

For sponsorship enquiries please reach:
0908 251 5179 or wscij@wscij.org

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Investigative reporting is the vital force for the restoration of human dignity. – Wole Soyinka