

RORY PECK TRUST PARTNERS WITH MEDIA COUNCIL OF KENYA ON JOURNALIST DISTRESS HOTLINE



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As Kenya goes to the polls on Monday 4th March, the Rory Peck Trust has partnered with the Media Council of Kenya to provide a unique assistance service for local freelance journalists covering this year's presidential elections.

The period following the country's last presidential elections in 2007 was marred by widespread ethnic violence. Over a thousand people were killed. Kenya's journalists, especially those working independently, found themselves the targets of public anger, police intolerance and political fury. Many were threatened, injured, attacked and had equipment damaged or taken.

This year, the [Media Council of Kenya](#) has established a support hotline for journalists - a unique service for victims or witnesses of attacks on the press. The hotline will give on the spot advice, guidance and information, and - with support from the Rory Peck Trust - provide immediate assistance to freelance journalists needing urgent help, such as evacuation, a place of safety, or medical attention.

All Kenyan journalists with election accreditation have been issued with the hotline number. It is also being

advertised in local papers and on radio stations.

The hotline is being administered by Victor Bwire, Deputy Chief Executive Officer and Programmes Manager of the Media Council of Kenya and Tom Rhodes, East Africa Consultant of the Committee to Protect Journalists, together with a network of regional journalist organisations.

"Many journalists in Kenya work as freelancers", said Tina Carr, Director of the Rory Peck Trust. "During the election period, they provide crucial information and analysis, but they can also be exposed to incredible risks, often without the support of media organisations. This collaboration with the Media Council of Kenya will ensure that freelancers receive the emergency support they need, when they need it most."

Victor Bwire, of MCK added, "This partnership to support Kenya's independent journalists at such a critical time, is our acknowledgement of the important role that they play in the reporting of elections in Kenya, and our concern for the safety of those who do the reporting."