



BNPA
Botswana Newspaper
Publishers Association



BNPA REJECTS PRESIDENT BOKO'S BASELESS CLAIM DEFENDING PRESS INTEGRITY

The Botswana Newspaper Publishers Association (BNPA) represents the collective interests of registered newspaper publishers in Botswana, committed to upholding the highest standards of journalism. Our mission centers on delivering accurate, fair, and responsible news that informs the public, supports democratic values, and fosters transparency. Journalism, at its core, relies on principles of truth, accountability, and ethical reporting – these are the pillars that guide our work every day.

In light of recent remarks made by President Duma Boko, in which he asserted that 90% of what the private press writes is false and misleading, the BNPA wishes to unequivocally refute this claim. Such an allegation is not only unfounded but also dangerous to the health of a democratic society.

First, it is important to note that President Boko's claim lacks any empirical basis. No research, survey, or credible evidence has been presented to substantiate this sweeping accusation. Making such a serious charge without data undermines public trust in the media unnecessarily and unfairly maligns journalists who adhere to professional standards.

Moreover, it appears that the President conflated the work of mainstream, legally registered media houses—who operate under strict ethical guidelines and are accountable as tax-paying entities—with unregulated social media posts. The latter are often produced by individuals or groups with no commitment to journalistic ethics, and it is misleading to equate the two.

The BNPA and its members are deeply committed to the core tenets of journalism: to report facts truthfully, accurately, and responsibly, while respecting the public's right to know. Journalists, like all humans, may occasionally err, but to suggest that errors constitute 90% of all reporting is both unrealistic and dismissive of the rigorous editorial processes that govern our work.

We challenge President Boko to provide evidence supporting his allegations. In the absence of such proof, we call on him to retract these damaging statements and desist from public attacks on the press that serve only to intimidate and discredit journalists.

Finally, we urge the government, including the President, to focus on creating a legal and social environment that nurtures a free, independent media. Such an environment is vital for democracy to flourish in Botswana. The role of a free press is not adversarial but complementary to governance it holds power to account and ensures citizens remain informed.

The BNPA fully supports the establishment of a self-regulatory Press Council as a crucial step toward strengthening media accountability and public trust. Such a council would serve as an independent body tasked with overseeing the application and observance of journalistic ethics across all registered media outlets. By providing a fair and impartial platform to address complaints against the media, the Press Council would help ensure that journalists maintain high standards while protecting their independence. This initiative aligns perfectly with our commitment to ethical reporting and reinforces the vital role of the press in Botswana's democratic society.

The BNPA remains steadfast in its commitment to ethical journalism and to serving the people of Botswana with integrity and respect.

