

30 August 2011

## **MEDIA STATEMENT**

### **VIOLENCE AGAINST JOURNALISTS TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE – NATIONAL PRESS CLUB**

The National Press Club has strongly condemned today's aggression and incidents of violence against journalists in central Johannesburg in the strongest possible terms.

Chairman Yusuf Abramjee said this behaviour, by supporters of ANC Youth League leader Julius Malema, who appeared before a disciplinary hearing today, is "totally unacceptable."

"It is a direct attack on South Africa's hard earned freedom of speech and of the media – indeed, on our entire democracy and our constitution. The press club – and, I am sure, the entire media fraternity – finds this extremely disconcerting. It is disrespectful to every South African who values the principles contained in our constitution.

"Unfortunately, Malema's call this afternoon, for restraint, is too late. The damage has been done. He should have thought about the consequences when calling a news conference about the disciplinary hearing yesterday, and making inflammatory statements.

"What is more, this sends out a very negative message about South Africa to the rest of the world – a country that is supposed to be a model for democratic values and human freedom.

"The press club calls on ANC leaders to take control of this unfortunate situation and to stand up for freedom of speech in South Africa."

(Ends)

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