



Nation Media Group

Media of Africa for Africa

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Nation Media Group (NMG) Statement condemning attack by Cabinet Secretary Moses Kuria

The Nation Media Group strongly condemns the unprovoked verbal attack by Moses Kuria, the Cabinet Secretary for Ministry of Investments, Trade and Industrialisation, for undisclosed grievances.

The Trade CS, in a public address on Sunday, vowed that he would not allow any government agency to advertise in the *Nation*, essentially declaring a commercial war on the media house.

Later on, CS Kuria posted on his official Twitter handle, in unbelievably derogatory language, a statement that insulted *Nation* staff as well as the principal shareholder of the Group, His Highness the Aga Khan who has invested immensely in the development of Kenya and Africa at large.

CS Kuria has so far not disclosed his gripes against the *Nation*, but they seem to be related to publication by the *Sunday Nation* newspaper of an expose detailing taxpayer losses from a dubious, duty-free edible oils import scheme undertaken by the Kenya National Trading Corporation (KNTC), which falls under his Trade ministry docket.

It is not the first time that CS Kuria is pouring vitriol against *Nation*, and the media in general. At the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, he urged the public to shun buying newspapers as a way of keeping the virus at bay. He is also on record as having used an expletive on a Nation journalist on live television during his tenure as Gatundu South MP.

The verbal attack using foul and crude language against NMG is shocking, primitive and inexcusable in the eyes of level-headed Kenyans who expect cabinet secretaries to conduct themselves with decorum befitting their high offices. It constitutes a serious violation of Chapter Four bill of rights, particularly the freedom of the press. We note that the attacks on media have been sustained since the Kenya Kwanza government took office.

NMG was founded six decades ago on the bedrock of a set of core values to espouse independent voices, diversity and freedom of expression. Central to these values and the purpose for our establishment, was a mission to be a trusted partner to African democracies, a champion for the ordinary person in their interaction with the government of the day, a voice for the rule of law and respect for human rights, and a strong advocate for free market economies. This mission, underpinned in our editorial policy, remains unchanged to this day.

We would like to believe that Moses Kuria's statement seeking to intimidate government agencies from placing advertisement with NMG does not represent government policy. We also wish to remind CS Kuria that he has no legal powers to make such a sweeping declaration. Such statements amount to pressure on civil servants that erodes the integrity of public debate, placing at risk, unfairly and directly, the media freedoms guaranteed in the Constitution. No government should weaponise taxpayer's funds at its disposal to punish media for exposing public ills in a bid to influence editorial integrity.

There are already established complaint mechanisms within NMG and in law, including filing complaints with *Nation's* Public Editor or the Media Council of Kenya's Media Complaints Commission respectively.

Moses Kuria should publicly disclose his specific grievances against NMG's journalism and go ahead to officially file his complaints with any of the established institutions. The Trade CS also has the option of prosecuting his case in a competent court of law instead of maligning a law-abiding media house in public rallies and social media posts.

We at NMG wish to reaffirm our commitment to relentlessly uphold media freedoms and fiercely guard our role as the public watchdog. We demand an immediate apology and a retraction from CS Kuria. We call upon the courts, the general public, media organisations and the international community to reject, condemn and take stern, appropriate action against these attempts to abrogate the rights of Kenyans. President William Ruto should equally publicly state his commitment to media freedom and disassociate himself from the statements by Kuria and his ilk, which serve to tarnish his government's image.

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About Nation Media Group

Nation Media Group (NMG) was founded by His Highness the Aga Khan in 1959. It was publicly-listed in the Nairobi Stock Exchange since the early 1970s and is the most successful media company in East and Central Africa. It has operations in digital, print and broadcast media, which attract and serve unparalleled audiences in Africa and globally. The Group has recently launched its new digital brand *Nation.Africa* with a mission to transform Africa through leveraging its largest digital footprint, reaching more than 50 million unique visitors monthly. NMG publishes the *Daily Nation*, *Business Daily* and *Taiifa Leo* newspaper brands in Kenya, *The EastAfrican* regional newspaper; the *Daily Monitor* and *Ennyanda* in Uganda, and *Mwananchi*, *The Citizen* and *Mwanaspoti* newspapers in Tanzania and a raft of e-papers. Also, its stable are *NTV Kenya*, and *NTV Uganda* and *Spark* television stations as well as *KFM* and *Dembe* radios in Uganda. It also owns the *Nation FM* radio in Kenya.