

SANEF outraged over photographer's manhandling

The SA National Editors' Forum (SANEF) has issued a statement expressing its outrage at reports that a Home Affairs official, who was photographed outside a police station where immigrants had been detained, had manhandled and deleted pictures taken by Cape Argus photojournalist David Ritchie.



"The incident took place outside the Cape Town police station on Tuesday. Ritchie and reporter Yolisa Tswana were covering a story about the arrest and detention of immigrants at the police station when they were accosted by the official," says the SANEF statement.

"According to Cape Argus Executive Editor Gasant Abarder, the officer pulled Ritchie from outside the police station, grabbed his camera and proceeded to delete the images - without identifying himself. Abarder said: "He thought he had deleted all the images but imagine our surprise when this picture of him (see image) was left on the card".

"Instead of helping, a police officer, who witnessed Ritchie's harassment, ordered Ritchie off the police premises. The officer's name tag identified him only as October.

Legal action in the offing

"Abarder said that he had already informed the newspaper's lawyers to look into the matter with a view to instituting civil and or criminal cases against the official.

"SANEF supports the action taken by the paper and is also concerned that it appears that wayward officials have taken to deleting images.



"A recent example was the detention of reporters working for the Sowetan and The Star by Correctional Services officials, stationed at Groenpunt Maximum Prison, a few months ago. They manhandled the reporters and deleted some of the images on their cameras.

In its statement SANEF asks "Why would government officials go through the trouble of manhandling journalists and delete their pictures if they (officials) knew that they had not broken the law and thus had nothing to hide?" It goes on to say that the deletion of images is illegal and should not be tolerated in a democracy.

"SANEF encourages the Cape Argus to pursue the matter to its logical end and to ensure the official faces the full wrath of the law."

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>