

Libel conviction could keep journalist imprisoned for life

On 21 August 2013, Rodney Sieh, founder, publisher and editor-in-chief of the award-winning daily print and online newspaper FrontPageAfrica, was jailed after Liberia's Supreme Court upheld a decision ordering him to pay a former government minister US\$1.5 million in libel damages.



Image source: PEN
International via IFEX

The judge ordered the newspaper's closure and Sieh's detention pending payment on 20 August. Unable to pay the fine, which reportedly amounts to more than 30 times the newspaper's annual operating budget, Sieh was incarcerated in Monrovia Central Prison the next day.

Given the size of the fine, Sieh faces effective life imprisonment.

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