

Journalist assaulted for his work in Namibia

WINDHOEK: The Committee to Protect Journalists has called on Namibian authorities to thoroughly investigate an alleged attack by four assailants against freelance journalist John Grobler on 8 January 2010.

Grobler told CPJ that four men attacked him at a bar Friday evening in the capital, Windhoek, cutting his face with a broken glass and kicking him repeatedly in the head. Grobler was taken to MediCity Emergency Clinic, where he was treated and released.

Grobler was able to identify three out of four of his assailants as prominent businessmen with close ties to the ruling party, South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO), he said. Desmond Amunyela, David Imbili, Kiplat Kamanya and one unidentified man accused Grobler of writing derogatorily about SWAPO and Amunyela before attacking him, according to the police report. Imbili is the son-in-law of former President Sam Nujoma. The freelance reporter has filed a complaint against the four men.

Grobler, a 1996 Alfred Friendly Fellowship recipient, wrote a September 2009 article for the independent daily, *The Namibian*, that implicated Amunyela in the illegal acquisition of several state-owned resort properties, he told CPJ. Local journalists said they believed the attack may be linked to Grobler's December 2009 article printed in the South African independent weekly, *Mail and Guardian* that accused the ruling party of widespread vote-rigging during the November presidential and parliamentary elections.

"We condemn this vicious assault on John Grobler," said CPJ's Africa program coordinator Tom Rhodes. "We call on the Namibian authorities to thoroughly investigate this attack and bring those responsible, regardless of their political influence, to justice."

Imbili filed a counterclaim with the police on 12 January saying it was Grobler who had attacked the four men, according to local news reports. Police spokesman Hophni Hamufungu told CPJ they are currently investigating both claims.

Alleged political interference by the SWAPO led to the resignation on 11 January of the acting director general of the Namibian Broadcasting Corporation, Mathew Gowaseb, according to news reports. Gowaseb's decision to resign makes him the third director general to vacate this position within the last year, the Media Institute of Southern Africa reported.

Source: [Committee to Protect Journalists \(CPJ\)](#)

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