

Sanef calls for investigation after shooting of photographer

The South African National Editors Forum is to request a meeting with Police Commissioner General Riah Phiyega to voice its concerns about police officers allegedly shooting and killing freelance photographer Michael Tshele during a service delivery protest in Mothutlung in the North West last week.



Sanef has asked for an urgent investigation into the Tshele's death, as well as an allegation by the Daily Sun that one of its journalists, Ricky Dire, was assaulted by police after taking pictures of them allegedly accepting a bribe from Chinese shop owners in Rustenburg, North West, on Saturday.

City Press reported on Sunday that Tshele was allegedly shot dead "in cold blood" by police officers because he had a camera in his hands. He was taking pictures of a water protest that turned violent. An eyewitness told the newspaper Tshele did not have any weapon in his hands. "The only threat he posed was that his camera was recording evidence of what the police were doing," City Press reported.

Assault on Dire

The Daily Sun reported that its deputy editor Reggy Moalusi claimed that Dire had been called by the shop owners who had alleged that the police were harassing them and asking for bribes.

The police insulted and assaulted him, he said, adding that the police confiscated his cellphone and deleted the pictures from his camera. They threatened to keep him in police custody until Monday but the paper called its lawyers and he was released five hours later.

The paper reported police spokesperson Sergeant Kealeboga Molale as saying that the arresting officers laid charges of intimidation, crimen injuria and resisting arrest against Dire, who they said was drunk. Dire denied the charges and that he was drunk.

Sanef is concerned at the growing number of allegations of police obstructing journalists while carrying out their duties and calls for a speedy outcome to the investigations it has requested.