

As media outlets that regularly report on newsworthy events, we, the undersigned, vigorously condemn the recent arrests of journalists Don Lemon and Georgia Fort.

Lemon and Fort were arrested after covering a January 18 protest at a church in Minneapolis. They were conducting the constitutionally protected activities of a working journalist: observing, recording and documenting a newsworthy event and attempting to obtain quotes from participants.

Their arrest on charges of allegedly obstructing a place of worship, and even worse, under federal conspiracy law, alarm all of us who believe in the First Amendment and seek to do our jobs without fear of obstruction by law enforcement or retaliation by agents of the government.

The principle of a free press animated the founding of the United States of America 250 years ago, and countless Americans have fought valiantly for it. We cannot allow colleagues to be subjected to spurious and unwarranted arrest for committing acts of journalism.

We call on federal authorities to drop all charges against Lemon and Fort and to publicly affirm their unqualified support for the work of professional journalists in this critical time.

Signatories:

THE CITY  
Grist  
The 19th  
New York magazine, part of Vox Media LLC  
The Cityside Journalism Initiative  
CalMatters  
NY Focus  
Epicenter  
Documented  
The Intercept  
Dallas Free Press  
Florida Trident  
The Jersey Vindicator  
Cardinal News  
El Paso Matters  
Wasau Pilot and Review  
Arizona Center for Investigative Reporting  
InDepthNH.org  
Lookout News  
The Xylom  
The Lens  
ecoRI News  
The Providence Eye  
San Francisco Public Press  
Block Club Chicago  
Injustice Watch  
South Side Weekly  
Invisible Institute  
The TRiiBE  
La Voz Chicago  
New Bedford Light  
Vox Populi  
The Trace  
Center for Investigative Reporting  
The Jersey Bee  
Capital B  
Wisconsin Watch  
Milwaukee Neighborhood News Service  
San Francisco Public Press  
Philadelphia Hall Monitor  
The Guardian US  
The Journal of Olympia, Lacey and Tumwater  
The Marshall Project

Boston Institute for Nonprofit Journalism  
FaVS News  
East Lansing News