

## PRESS RELEASE

### **PUBLISH WHAT YOU PAY NIGERIA**

#### **DEMANDS JUSTICE FOR ARRESTED FILM CREW**

April 16, 2008, Benin City, NIGERIA --- An American film crew, visiting the Niger Delta to complete the production of a documentary "Sweet Crude" were arrested in-transit between film locations on April 12. They were intercepted and apprehended by the Nigerian Joint Military Task Force led by Brigadier-General Rimtiip Wuyep for allegedly breaking security regulations and traveling without military clearance. The film crew – Director Sandy Cioffi, Producer Tammi Sims and photojournalists Cliff Worsham, were accompanied by Joel Bisina, a Nigerian who is also in custody. Bisina is the founder of a Warri-based NGO, Niger Delta Professionals for Development, and a Publish What You Pay Nigeria member.

Allegedly the men were interrogated for several hours in Warri, Delta State before being transferred to State Security in Abuja later the same day (April 12) where they remain under detention. Despite now being held for over 48 hours the men have not been charged with any crime. David Ugolor, Chairman of Publish What You Pay Nigeria, points out that under Nigerian law these men should be provided access to legal council and either charged or released.

"The circumstances surrounding the arrest of this group suggest they were not in contravention of any law and were merely apprehended in order to disrupt their legitimate activities" says Ugolor. "This type of heavy handed action undermines the international reputation of Nigeria."

PWYP member Uzezi Agbor, Programme coordinator of Afro Centre for Development, Peace & Justice, a former colleague of Bisina, said "the arrest is an infringement of Joel Bisina's human rights. These actions undermine all the good work and efforts now being undertaken in support of good governance and transparency in Nigeria."

Publish What You Pay Nigeria is attempting to make contact with their member Bisina and the American citizens in an effort to establish the circumstances of their detention and what the authorities intend to do. Ugolor said "We appeal to the authorities for a quick resolution to this issue".

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