

Kenya Domestic Media, March 22nd (covering March 15th – March 21st 2010)

By Alex Williams, MIGS Reporter for Kenya

State owned media

Kenya State House governmental website, Nairobi, in English 18 Mar 10

- President Kibaki, speaking to the Pan-Africa Media Conference, has re-iterated Kenya's support for media freedom. Kibaki stated that under his presidency Kenyan media has enjoyed more freedom than at any time in the country's history and that this freedom has led to an explosion of independent media outlets in the country. He then urged the media to promote tolerance and objectivity.

State-owned Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) Online text website, Nairobi, in English 20 Mar 10

- Missing Nyanza Provincial Commissioner (PC) was on official vacation. Deputy PC Mr Oku Kaunya had been reported missing for three days after the family was unable to reach him. However, Mr Kaunya has resurfaced saying he was staying at an acquaintances house. He also confirmed receiving death threats by unknown people and had reported the matter to police.

Privately owned media

Kenyan privately-owned newspaper Daily Nation website, Nairobi, in English 18 Mar 10

- Rwanda's foreign Minister Louise Mushikiwabo has confirmed that she believes the Kenyan government's assertion that fugitive Felicien Kabuga is not in Kenya. Speaking to the Daily Nation newspaper Ms Mushikiwabo said, "Felicien Kabuga is the man who financed the genocide. We have no idea where he is. It has been said he has been living in Kenya but the administration has assured he is not around."
- However, the Kenyan government vehemently denies charges by the US government and International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) that Kabuga is hiding in Kenya.

Kenyan privately-owned newspaper Daily Nation website, Nairobi, in English 20 Mar 10

- The Pan Africa Media Conference in Nairobi debated the role the news media plays in promoting and thwarting conflict. Joseph Odindo, Nation Media Group editorial director, suggested the media did not do enough to help avert the post election violence in 2007-2008. In particular, he argued the media should have spoken up when security forces seemed to take sides. He suggested the media must consider it “our job to spot and stop disasters.”
- Mr. Odindo also suggested the poor coverage of those inciting violence helped foster a sense of impunity. He recommended journalists pay critical attention to the actions of rival media outlets.
- Mr. Odindo believes the media could have helped prevent the violence if it had held Kibaki accountable for not observing the 1997 Inter-Parties Parliamentary Group agreement. The Agreement mandated an Electoral Commission of commissioners drawn from all political parties. Kibaki’s failure to observe this prevented the Electoral Commission from acting as a neutral arbiter following the 2007 election.
- Former Nation Media Group's editorial director Wangethi Mwangi suggested government and journalists suppressed information during the violence. Mwangi noted that “journalists were drawn into the fray emotionally and intellectually.”

Kenyan privately-owned daily newspaper The Standard website, Nairobi, in English 20 Mar 10

- Deputy Provincial Commissioner (PC) of Nyanza Mr Oku Kaunya missing after receiving death threats. Mrs Millicent Kaunya [Mr Kaunya’s wife] recorded a statement with the police after failed attempts to contact him through his cell phone for about three days. Speaking to reporters Mrs Kaunya said, “I have not seen my husband for the last three days. His phones are off and nobody can tell his whereabouts. I have not received any communication from the Government and decided to report his disappearance to the police.”
- Kaunya’s Lawyer Mr Aja Olubayi said that his client has had to stay in undisclosed locations “because he was constantly being trailed by people he suspected were on a mission to kill him.” The lawyer confirmed that Mr Kaunya had received several death threats.
- Mr Kaunya is a major witness for the ICC Chief prosecutor’s case.