



RWANDA DOMESTIC MEDIA MONITOR REPORT FOR THE WEEK OF: JULY 12TH-18TH, 2011



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A. BRITISH PM VISIT CANCELLED OVER TABLOID SCANDAL

Rwanda News Source (RNA)—18 July: British PM cancels planned trip to Rwanda (privately-owned source)

British Prime Minister David Cameron has cancelled his trip to Rwanda, which was to be a stop on his five-day African tour. According to the PM's office, his visit has been cut short due to the scandal that broke in recent weeks regarding billionaire Rupert Murdoch's media company.

Mr. Cameron has a close relationship with President Kagame, one that began when the former's Conservative party was in opposition. Conservative activists have been working on aid projects in Rwanda for several years although Mr. Cameron has not been to Rwanda since coming into office last year.

Mr. Cameron will visit South Africa and Nigeria before returning to London on Wednesday.

The New Times website—17 July: The Fourth Estate isn't and shouldn't be a law unto itself (editorial in response to News of the World scandal by Sunny Ntayombya) (privately-owned, pro-government source)

"The demise of any newspaper is unfortunate because it means that the journalists, editors, proof readers, and hundreds of unknown people that depend on the publication have their bread swiped out of their hands. However, the News of the World surely deserved everything it got. People working for the newspaper went way beyond the realm of good taste and descended into the mire.

I can understand the desire to give their readers a scoop on Sienna Miller...while [it's] wrong, it can be justified by the 'public right to know'. But when these people illegally accessed the voicemail and erased the messages of Milly Dowler, a teenager that was kidnapped and then murdered, they totally lost me.

I look at the scandal as a challenge to the assertion that the media are always a force for good, a force that is untouchable and unquestionable. The classical Western liberal view of the media is that they are a bulwark of democracy. The 'Fourth Estate' as my fellow [journalists] call themselves, think they are as indispensable as the judiciary, legislature, and executive are to the running of an effective state and open society. Guess what? That's the kind of attitude that leads to the phone hacking scandal. Because...the media are responsible to no one but themselves.

Rwanda has attempted to find a way to make its media accountable to the people by enacting laws such as the Media Law and the laws against divisionism and genocide ideology. **The right to free speech and freedom of the media aren't absolute here. And that's why people like Agnes Nkusi, publisher of the**

Umurabyo newspaper, are in jail. She refused to realize that while free speech is encouraged here, when this free speech is abused and threatens the lives of innocent people, the media isn't untouchable.

And, by the way, if you think that 'poor' Rupert Murdoch didn't get calls from politicians asking that he do something about his paper then you are naïve. He listened. The very same people that nag us about our 'interventions' do exactly the same. But I guess it's too much to expect fair treatment."

Bold added for emphasis

B. UN ANTI-CORRUPTION EVALUATION

The New Times website—12 July: UN to evaluate anti-graft tools (privately-owned, pro-government source)

Delegates of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) are in Rwanda to assess the implementation of international anti-corruption instruments. As a party to UNCAC, Rwanda is obliged to implement a wide range of anti-corruption measures, which, according to Director in the Ombudsman's office Seraphin Ntagwabira, "aim to promote the prevention, criminalization and law enforcement to fight corruption." UNCAC delegates will interview and evaluate various government and private institutions including the national police, the central bank, media sources, and the private sector.

There are currently 140 state signatories to UNCAC.

The New Times website—13 July: Most corruption cases are administrative-ombudsman (privately-owned, pro-government source)

According to an annual 2009-2010 Ombudsman report, administrative corruption and mal-administration are the two highest forms of corruption registered in Rwanda last year. The report was presented to delegates from the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) and the UN Office of Drug Crimes (UNODC), representatives of which are in Rwanda to assess the implementation of international anti-corruption instruments. Covered under the umbrella term of administrative corruption includes unfair dismissal of employees, discrimination, and unfair promotions.

UNCAC is the first legally binding international anti-corruption tool adopted by the UN General Assembly, and was adopted in 2003. They are in Rwanda to evaluate two of its four major tools in the fight against corruption: criminalization and international cooperation.

According to deputy Ombudsman in charge of preventing and fighting corruption, Augustin Nzindukiyimana, the tools are only partially employed in Rwanda, noting that there are some laws that need to be introduced. UNCAC will issue a report on its findings to a national anti-corruption advisory council composed of the Office of the Ombudsman, the National Public Prosecution Authority, and the Ministry of Justice.

C. RWANDA TO HOST GENDER & MEDIA CONFERENCE NEXT MONTH

The New Times website—15 July: Rwanda to host global summit on media and gender (privately-owned, pro-government source)

The Rwanda Journalists Association has announced that the country will, in one month's time, host a three-day international conference on Media and Gender Empowerment. Organized by the International Federation of Journalists, the conference will focus on the progress African countries have made in mainstreaming gender in the media.

According to the president of the Rwanda Journalists Association (ARJ), Gaspard Safari, many countries

applied to host the conference, but Rwanda was nominated in absentia “because of the level Rwanda is at in empowering women.” He noted, however, that the country’s impressive record in gender equality does not hold true in the media sector. Participants in the conference aim to investigate the role of financial institutions in promoting gender within the media, as well as improving working conditions to facilitate the entrance of women.

Participants in the conference—including heads of the United Nations and the African Union—are expected to develop and adopt a three-year action plan, as well as establish a Pan African Gender Council with representatives from all five of Africa’s regions.

D. MISCELLANEOUS

Rwanda News Agency (RNA)—15 July: Dutch police arrive to investigate more than 20 genocide suspects (privately-owned source)

Dutch police have launched an investigation into Rwandan Genocide suspects living in The Netherlands. A team of five Dutch police officers arrived in the country on Thursday to hear witnesses and conduct their investigation independently of the Rwandan government. Kigali had sent a list of 20 Dutch-based suspects it accuses of involvement in the Genocide. According to Jean Bosco Siboyintore, the head of the Rwandan Genocide Tracking Unit, “we agreed [with the Dutch] that investigators would come to Rwanda to investigate themselves.”

Among the suspects is Yvonne Basebya, the wife of a former Rwandan parliamentarian; she has already been tried and found guilty in absentia of preparing a list of people to be killed in the Kigali neighborhood in which she lived.

Last week Joseph Mpambara was convicted by a Dutch appeals court for an attack he carried out against a Protestant church where Tutsi had fled.

Hirondelle—15 July: ICTR, ICC go for mid-year judicial recess (privately-owned, Swiss-based source)

Trials at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) and the International Criminal Court (ICC) have gone into recess and will resume in August. The recess follows on the heels of a hunger strike begun by detainees at the United Nations Detention Facility (UNDF), in support of Jean Uwinkindi, whose case was referred by the ICTR to the Rwandan government on June 28th. The detainees, 31 out of 36 of whom signed a communiqué announcing their intentions, decried the transfer on the grounds of the numerous reports denouncing judicial corruption and human rights violations committed by the Rwandan government recently.

*Please note: this week, RNA was unavailable from 12-15 July (although news content was posted for those days following the blackout), and access to state-owned news sites (i.e. Radio Rwanda) via ORINFOR was unavailable for the majority of the week.