

Rwanda Domestic Media Report (December 21st-31st, 2010)

By Paula Cook-Dinan, MIGS Monitor for Rwanda

State-Owned Media Sources

No relevant articles were found from state-owned sources

Privately-Owned Media Sources

The New Times website—21 December 2010: Rwandan ministry terms as misinformation Dutch aid cut reports

- The Rwandan Ministry of Finance has denied the recent announcement that the Dutch government has decided to cut off development aid to Rwanda, calling the report “misinformation”.
- While the Ministry’s Permanent Secretary to the Ministry Kampeta Sayinzoga, concedes that the topic of planned budget support was discussed in the Dutch parliament, he made clear that “Rwanda has never received this particular type of support from the Netherlands.”
- According to Kampeta, “The Dutch Parliament approved support to the justice sector and there has been no other change in development aid we are currently receiving through Sector Budget Support and Project Support.”
- The Netherlands has provided a total of \$190 million for the period 2008-2011 in the areas of justice and good governance, private sector development, education, and the energy sector.

The New Times website—22 December 2010: Rwandan journalists urge Senate to review clause on defamation in penal code

- The Rwandan Journalist Association (ARJ) has petitioned the Rwandan Senate to review several articles in the Penal Code in order to help facilitate journalistic freedom in the country.
- Specifically, the ARJ would like to see the decriminalization of several articles dealing with defamation, which it believes could be obstacles to practitioners. The letter written to Senate President Dr. Vincent Biruta recommends a softening of the penalty for the offense, “in the form of reasonable fines.”
- Such changes, according to the ARJ, would help to promote the media’s role as a watchdog and help “fight corruption and other social vices...which the media is required to do.”
- The Senate is expected to hear the ARJ’s case before the end of December.

RNA (Rwanda News Agency)—24 December 2010: UN Security Council sets up body to complete work of tribunal for Rwanda

- The UN Security Council has established a new body that will act as an extension of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda in order to complete investigations and trial activities regarding the actions surrounding

the 1994 Genocide. Under the original “completion strategy,” the original tribunals were supposed to complete all work by 2010.

- Working under the title of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, the new body has a branch for Rwanda (ICTR)—which will commence activities on 1 July 2012—as well as for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), which will commence on 1 July 2013.
- Both branches of the new mechanism are expected to finish investigations by the end of 2014.
- Russia, the only UNSC member to abstain from the vote, showed fierce opposition to the establishment of the mechanism, believing that the original tribunals had “every opportunity” to complete their work by the dates that had been previously set.

The New Times website—28 December 2010: Rwandan official denies labeling journalist “enemy of the state”

- Brig-Gen Dr Richard Rutatina, presidential advisor on security matters, has defended himself against accusations that he called journalist Nelson Gatsimbazi an “enemy of the state.” Rutatina insists that he was quoted out of context, and that he never said that Gatsimbazi worked with “negative forces.”
- The allegations originated from comments made by Rutatina at the Civil Society Public Dialogue on Political Space and Human Rights, held in Kigali on 14 December, during which Rutatina accused Gatsimbazi of receiving funds from “foreign agents.” Gatsimbazi, the editor of the local tabloid, Umusingi, claims to be an independent news source, and denies receiving funding that would challenge the integrity of the magazine.
- Rutatina’s comments were a response to Gatsimbazi’s accusations toward the government of trampling on political and human rights by detaining politicians and of frustrating press freedom.

The New Times website—28 December 2010: Rwanda’s public broadcaster said to go digital in 2011

- The Rwanda Information Office (ORINFOR) has announced it is preparing to start broadcasting digital content in one year’s time, according to an announcement made by the director general of ORINFOR, Will Rukundo.
- ORINFOR will have the capacity to run eight digital channels once the conversion from analogue is complete (the pre-existing broadcasting system); however, many people will not be able to receive the signal in their homes unless they buy digital TV sets. Rukundo has, as a result, petitioned the government to subsidize the cost of buying digital TV sets to make them affordable for households.

RNA (Rwanda News Agency)—28 December 2010: Rwandan opposition party leaves coalition of green parties in Africa

- The not-yet-registered Green Party of Rwanda has left the country’s block of opposition parties—the Permanent Consultative Council of Opposition

Parties in Rwanda (the PCC)—after intense pressure put on the group by the African Green Federation (AGF), the coalition of green parties on the continent.

- In November the AGF publicly ordered the Green party to opt out of the PCC, stating that the criminal allegations against other two parties' leaders has tainted the alliance and implicated the Rwandan Green Party by proxy.
- The AGF's concern over the matter comes after leader of the Rwandan Green Party, Frank Habineza, was recently elected President of the AGF. The two remaining parties in the coalition are the FDU Inkingi and a faction of PS Imberakuri. Both Victoire Ingabir—leader of the FDU Inkingi—and Bernard Ntaganda—of the PS Imberakuri—are in custody over charges ranging from terrorism, Genocide ideology and ethnic divisionism.