

Rwanda Domestic Media Report (October 20-26, 2010)
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State-Owned Media Sources

*Rwandan Radio – 22 October 2010: **Rwandan journalists “denounce” report on country’s media freedom***

- Reporters in Rwanda have publicly denounced the recently released report by Reporters without Borders condemning the lack of media freedom in the country.
- In a Rwanda Radio broadcast, several journalists interviewed maintained that they are “able to do their work and nobody intimidates them or manipulates them.” Enock Bahati, a writer for Radio Dix in Kigali, stated, “I have enough freedom to do my job...no one intimidates us or tries to influence what I do.” He added, “we also believe that a true journalist should first ensure their stories are accurate and **not meant to injure the Rwandan population**” (emphasis added).
- A similar message was iterated in a New Times website article (24 October) entitled “Rwandans urged to speak out against campaign to demonize the media”, which calls upon Rwandan journalists to vocalize their discontent with the falsities of the report.

Radio France Internationale –24 October 2010: “Burundi, Rwanda, DR Congo agree common strategy to fight “negative forces.”

- The heads of the secret intelligence services of Burundi, Rwanda, and the DR Congo met for the first time in Bujumbura to discuss the increasingly worrisome security situation in the Great Lakes region.
- For the DR Congo, the most persistent violence and threats are concentrated in the eastern region; for Burundi, the largest concern is the FNL (National Liberation Forces) and its former leader, Agathon Rwasa, who authorities believe to be the main sponsor of new violence in the country. Rwanda, for its part, is hoping to stem violence generated by the FDLR.
- The three parties have allegedly agreed to a common strategy and joint operations to tackle each country’s most pressing concerns.

*Xinhua (New China News Agency) – 22 October 2010: “**Chinese, Rwandan defense ministers hold talks on military cooperation**”*

- Defense ministers Liang Guanglie and James Kabarebe met in Beijing on Friday to discuss the enhancement of military cooperation and bilateral ties between China and Rwanda.
- Rwanda hailed China for its development support, and reiterated its adherence to the one-China policy.

Privately-Owned Media Sources

*RNA (Rwanda News Agency) – 20 October 2010: **Rwanda among the “most media repressive countries in the world”***

- Rwanda is among the 10 most media repressive countries in the world, the third most in Africa behind Sudan and Eritrea; according to a report released by the media watchdog group Reporters Without Borders.
- The organization cites several factors that contributed to the ranking, including the six-month suspension of several daily publications, the murder of the deputy-editor of Umuvugizi (one of the suspended publications), and the “climate of terror surrounding the presidential election” (citation from RNA article).
- Rwandan authorities have, for their part, criticized Reporters Without Borders in the past, accusing the watchdog of peddling false information.

*Committee to Protect Journalists (New York) – 20 October 2010: **“Rwanda: Censored at Home, Editors Work from Exile”** (by Tom Rhodes)*

- The exiled editors of the once-leading independent Rwandan weekly paper, Umuseso, have launched a new independent weekly, The Newline, since the publication was banned by the Rwandan Media High Council. So far, the most successful method of smuggling the English publication into the country has been through the distribution of electronic copies; it is also popular outside the country, selling around 1,700 copies in Uganda per week.
- The Newline has a more national, analytical focus as opposed to its predecessor, which was more news-oriented. Chief Editor, Charles Kabonero maintains that the publication is the “only one that provides coverage for the opposition politicians, since 60% of the Rwandan media is state-controlled.” Kabonero admitted that he is constantly concerned, however, over the safety of his reporters and is challenged to obtain factual information amidst intimidation and bribery from the Rwandan government.
- The Rwandan Media High Council recently lifted the six-month suspension of Umuseso, but according to Deputy Editor Didas Gasana, it is hardly a safe time for the exiled journalists to return to the country.

*The New Times website – 21 October 2010: **“Rwanda dismisses critique of media”***

- According to Protais Musoni, the Rwandan minister of cabinet affairs, the Reporters Without Borders report published this week “completely mischaracterizes the situation of the media in Rwanda...(they) have chosen once again to issue biased and irresponsible information that distorts the reality in Rwanda, based on unverified and grossly distorted perceptions of the political situation.”
- In particular, Musoni condemned the report’s assertion that the August election period was shrouded by a “climate of terror”; the elections, he stated, were hailed by the Commonwealth Observer Group as peaceful and in keeping with the mandate for campaign freedom.

- Musoni stressed that “the government of Rwanda remains committed to facilitating the emergence of a vibrant and responsible media...we welcome partners in media development to visit Rwanda to see for themselves the reality of the media environment and work with us on important parts of our socioeconomic transformation.”

*The New Times website – 21 October 2010: **Rwanda, Uganda border officials meet over crime***

- A one-day meeting of 40 officials from the Ugandan-Rwandan border district on Tuesday resulted in a commitment to fight cross-border crimes and post bilateral trade.
- In particular, the delegation cited cattle rustling, illegal immigration, and illicit brewing of alcohol as the most important issues to be tackled jointly by authorities.