



## Unwanted Witness

Human Rights Network for Journalists - Uganda

# Press Freedom Index Report

April 2011

With support from Open Society for East Africa (OSIEA)

**Human Rights Network for Journalists-Uganda  
(HRNJ-Uganda)**

**Press Freedom Index Report**

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## List of abbreviations

BC	Broadcasting Council
CBOs	Community Based Organizations
CBS	Central Broadcasting Services
CMI	Chieftaincy of Military Intelligence
DemGroup	Democracy Monitoring Group
DISO	District Security Officers
DP	Democratic Party
DPC	District Police Commander
DPP	Directorate of Public Prosecution
EC	Electoral Commission
FDC	Forum for Democratic Change
GISO	Ggombolola Security Officer
IPC	Inter Party Cooperation
ISO	Internal Security Organization
JATT	Joint Anti Terrorism Task Force
LC	Local Council
LG	Local Government
MP	Member of Parliament
NBS	Nile Broadcasting Service
NGOs	Non Governmental Organization(s)
NRMO	National Resistance Movement Organization
NTV	Nation Television
PGB	Presidential Guard Brigade
PPP	People's Progressive Party
RDCs	Resident District Commissioners
RRU	Rapid Response Unit
SFG	Special Forces Group
SIU	Special Investigations Unit
SMS	Short Message Service
UHRC	Uganda Human Rights Commission
UPC	Uganda People's Congress
UPDF	Uganda People's Defence Forces
UPF	Uganda Police Force
VOK	Voice of Kigezi
VOL	Voice of Lango
VOT	Voice of Tooro
WBS	Wavah Broadcasting Services

## **Preface**

Human Rights Network for Journalists-Uganda (HRNJ-Uganda) is an independent media advocacy network for human rights journalists in Uganda whose mission is to build a strong and credible human rights-based media group that responds to critical aspects of human rights violations.

Under the strategic direction of HRNJ-Uganda, efforts and resources are devoted to; (i) advocacy and networking, (ii) Documentation and Research, (iii) Litigation, (IV) Capacity building and Outreach, and (v) institutional development.

## **The Index**

This index is developed under the research and documentation aspect. The index is aimed at bringing to the fore the plight of journalists and other media practitioners and recommending future actions for the protection of media practitioners and promotion of freedom of speech, media and related freedoms in Uganda.

This index is part of a series of indices produced by HRNJ-Uganda since the year 2009. The index discusses the key challenges, threats and violations faced by journalists and media practitioners in Uganda.

In this issue, focus was put on media freedom and political participation mainly because Uganda was undergoing national elections which were held from February to March 2011.

We are hopeful that the information in this report and recommendations made thereafter will go a long way in influencing the legal and policy regimes as well as the general practice to protect media practitioners in Uganda generally.

# **Part 1: Background**

## **Press Freedom Index Report**

## **Part I: Background**

### **Introduction**

The Press freedom Index Report 2011 covers a period of six months– it runs from November 2010 to April 2011. It is one of a series of reports HRNJ-Uganda has released since 2009. The reports focus on media freedom in Uganda with special emphasis on the rights of media practitioners as guaranteed under the constitution of Uganda, 1995 and regional and international human rights instruments ratified by Uganda.

These rights including freedom of speech, freedom of expression, right of access to information and other rights associated with media freedom such as the right to education, the right to participate in decision making, the right to health, life, and freedom from torture, e.t.c.

In this issue, HRNJ-Uganda focused mainly on rights of media practitioners with emphasis on elections which were held from February 2011 onwards. Focus was also put on freedoms such as of association, movement, assembly and the right to work – all of which are important for free and fair elections in any democracy. This report therefore highlights the threats faced by media practitioners and the role of the media during this period.

### **Elections and Media**

Because most governments in Africa thrive on people's ignorance, most elections tend to be hostile on the side of the media. Throughout the election periods in Africa, while politicians fight to monopolize/ control people's thinking, the media wants citizens to be free and able to exercise their fundamental rights namely; the right to be sensitized, the right to choice, knowledge and information.

This has brought a big conflict between the two giants (government and the media) resulting into chaotic elections, like the case in Uganda since the 1980 elections. Although this is the ripe time for the citizens to audit the performance of their out-going leaders, most vital information remain censored by governments during elections. The media receives interferences either through regulatory bodies or individual beneficiaries of a sitting government and at the end of such a process the media has been a major casualty of administrative sanctions, direct threats, arbitrary arrest and detention of journalists, torture and misuse of the Penal Code Act as well as other laws.

While fundamental human rights and freedoms of the media have been provided for in the constitution of the Republic of Uganda, their abuse continues to be widespread.

For the three years HRNJ-Uganda has been monitoring attacks on media freedom, freedom of expression and access to information in Uganda, we have

observed that the environment under which media operated towards and during the recently concluded 2011 elections did not contribute towards achieving the media's overall objective of empowering the citizens to make more informed decisions.

Because it is only with a free media that public affairs can be scrutinized, robust public debate can occur and corruption and other forms of malfeasance exposed, the 2011 elections fell short of this. So, were the elections free and fair?

### **Research Objective**

The objective of this report is to investigate, document and analyze information on all cases that have occurred between November 2010 and April 2011 which undermine the enjoyment of the right to freedom of expression, media freedom and information in Uganda. The report gives an assessment on these rights and freedoms.

To use the findings towards formulating better policies which advance the fulfillment of Uganda's human rights obligations, for 'end impunity' campaigns and human rights awareness in Uganda

It is also the purpose of this report to include complaints filed against the media houses and journalists by regulatory bodies and Independent Media Council of Uganda, interventions from different prayers and voices of the victims as well as voices from institutions whose personnel have been accused of involvement in the abuse and attacks on the media.

### **Methodology**

Data for this report was collected through interviews conducted by HRNJ-Uganda through their day-to-day work. Respondents were journalists and other media practitioners who have faced threats and other forms of intimidation. Interviews were also conducted with employers mainly those implicated in threatening or dismissing their workers. Representatives from state agencies such as the Broadcasting Council (BC), Uganda Communications Commission (UCC) and the Media Council were also interviewed.

The other data was collected through the HRNJ-Uganda toll free line which was set up to receive complaints in relation to media freedom violations. The complaints received would be analyzed and followed up. Where complaints were genuine, HRNJ-Uganda organized meetings with all the parties involved, so data was gathered and documented.

### **Quality check**

Quality control was done at three levels namely; before field visits, during field visits and after the visits. Before the field visits, HRNJ-Uganda staff would crosscheck the information received with other sources to ensure that it is



genuine and needs response. Meetings were held with HRNJ-Uganda staff to assess the credibility of the information received and thereafter checkups with other sources such as feeders at regional level were carried out.

During the field, HRNJ-Uganda staff conducted interviews with the respondents and held face-to-face meetings with all parties involved. In all interviews, HRNJ-Uganda checked for consistency of the matter presented. Meetings with the parties involved also provided HRNJ-Uganda with insights into facts and as such help check inconsistencies and falsehoods which might have arisen.

After the field assessments were done on the data collected to check out inconsistencies, follow up meetings and phone conversations were also held to seek clarity of matters.

With the above quality control, HRNJ-Uganda believes the information provided is a true representation of the state of affairs relating to the operating environment of media practitioners in Uganda.

### **Limitations**

Like most qualitative data collection and analysis methods have inherent gaps that may affect the data, we would like to acknowledge these gaps as having a potential to affect the data.

We would like to acknowledge that despite the fact that we reached all media practitioners who reported threats or intimidation (directly, through the hotline, through our feeders or through the toll free line), we cannot claim to have reached all the practitioners in Uganda who faced threats since not all of them reported their cases. We therefore would like to acknowledge the fact that the data presented in this report does not reflect views and threats faced by those who did not report to our stations.

**Part II:**  
**Media Freedom During national  
Elections in Uganda**

**Press Freedom Index Report**

## Part II: Media freedom during national elections in Uganda

### Media as a campaign tool

The Media all over the world is an important tool to inform and educate the world. In democratic societies the media is often used to promote views and ideas of individuals or political parties in the world. However, the media should never be used to promote propaganda, hate campaign, war and genocide. Much as the media in Uganda was never used to promote hate propaganda, there were incidences of hate campaign which are dangerous to the development of the industry.

The period under review witnessed more than two fresh news papers from major political parties hit the market in addition to the revival of 'The Message' news paper which had collapsed. The news papers namely; the 'Citizen' which came from the Democratic Party and the 'Movement times' from the ruling party National Resistance Movement –Organization (NRM-O) worked as a propaganda tool for both parties. Whereas HRNJ-Uganda welcomes the idea of political parties starting their own media outlets, we are concerned that the said news papers were never natural and often times misreported issues concerning the rival parties. Such misreporting is intended to mislead the public and is not good for the industry as it may degenerate into hate campaigns and possibly genocide.

Nearly all radio stations owned by politicians were used in de-campaigning their opponents and sometimes spreading malicious or false information. Key among these outlets include Super FM which campaigned for NRMO candidates Museveni and Peter Ssematimba, Radio Kitara and Kings Radio which campaigned for Hon. Kabakumba Masiko, the government spokesperson, Metro FM which campaigned Capt. Edward Francis Babu, Busiro FM which campaigned for Prof. Gilbert Bukenya, among others. These radios were key mouth pieces of these candidates and provided an unfair advantage to their opponents.

Media ownership factored immensely in the just concluded 2011 general elections on who should access the airwaves especially the radios. Uganda has more than 200 radio stations according to the Uganda Communication Commission. Majority of the radios are owned by ministers and people inclined to the ruling NRMO. During the reporting period, Uganda witnesses increased denial of access to media by media owners for opposition politicians<sup>1</sup>.

The media became competitive during the 2011 general elections because it focused on issues unlike in the past where candidates used to attack their rivals.

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<sup>1</sup> For example see Uganda Media Profile; A comprehensive profile of major TV and radio stations, newspapers, magazines, and ISPs in Uganda

This is attributed to civic education by the civil society, spearheaded by the Citizens Coalition for Electoral Democracy in Uganda (CCEDU).

A number of radio stations blocked the opposition candidates from accessing the platform. This was witnessed in Bunyoro Kitara region where the Inter party cooperation (IPC) candidate Dr. Kiiza Besigye was denied access even when he had paid for the space. The five privately-owned radio stations in the Bunyoro-Kitara region all blocked Dr. Besigye from appearing on them. He was scheduled to appear on Bunyoro Broadcasting Service one evening but its owner, Mr. Ernest Kiiza, is said to have ordered for the cancellation of the programme.

He was also turned away from different radio stations, namely; Radio Kitara, owned by President Museveni's pilot Brig. Ali Kiiza, Spice FM owned by PPDA Executive Director Edgar Agaba and Kings Radio owned by the Information Minister Kabakumba Masiko. According to sources, Mr. Kiiza said Dr Besigye was no longer welcome to his radio station and his money was rejected. He dismissed allegations that the radio received money and later rejected to host Dr. Besigye.

*“Dr Besigye has never booked for airtime on my radio station. He is a liar. Maybe his agents conned him of his money. We do not have any record of such a booking.”* Kiiza Earnest

In Hoima, Dr Besigye was scheduled to appear on Radio Hoima one evening but an apparent visit by Hoima RDC Martha Asimwe to the station prompted its owner Canaan Kyanku to reject Besigye and his team.

In Kampala, private owned radios like Dembe FM owned by businessman Patrick Bitature saw its management turn away advertising business from FDC/IPC. Some private and public media houses including television and radio stations were paid to advertise opposition political parties' manifestos but refused to air them and never returned the money.

### **Role of regulatory bodies**

Ugandan laws provide for different regulatory bodies for the media, these include; the Media Council, the Broadcasting Council and the Uganda Communications Commission. The Media Council is charged with regulating majorly print media to ensure their work is within the established ethical standards. On the other hand, the Broadcasting Council is charged with regulating electronic broadcasts such as radio and TV, and the Uganda Communications Commission is a licensing body allocating frequencies and other technical issues relating to radio, internet, TV and telephone operations in Uganda.

It should be noted that though the law provides for separate bodies, the minister of ICT, in 2010 merged the BC and the UCC. The BC since 2009 has taken

over the roles of regulating journalists as opposed to regulating radio and TV broadcasts as provided by the law<sup>2</sup>. Since 2009, the BC has acted strongly to limit the enjoyment to media freedom and airing of issues considered critical to government.

Following the closure of 5 privately owned radio stations in Uganda in 2009 and their re-opening later, there has been a great self censorship by the media for fear of reparation from the Broadcasting Council.

Through the election period, the BC used its powers to influence broadcasters on what content to broadcast, for example in April 2010, the BC ordered privately-owned radio Voice of Lango to suspend two presenters for hosting the opposition group Uganda People's Congress (UPC) leader Dr. Olara Otunnu.

Similarly, on 17th December 2010, the BC instructed Voice of Kigezi to dismiss a radio presenter; Ms. Prosy Nyeteitera for participating in what it called partisan politics. In a letter to the management of the radio station, the BC blamed the presenter for airing views that support the opposition. Such threats and suspensions resulted in self censorship by many reporters who had to choose between reporting and losing their jobs. The end result has been reporting only what is acceptable by the state.

On 31st December, 2010, the BC blocked CBS radio -a Buganda Kingdom owned radio and other radio stations from broadcasting live an annual conference (Ttabamiruka) organized by Kingdom to address Buganda issues. The BC equated the live broadcast to the public debates which were banned by the same body following riots in Buganda in 2009. The effect of such curtailing of broadcasts is to ensure no public debate and sharing of information is carried out and this negatively affects freedom of speech and association in Uganda.

On 16th February 2011, the BC ordered telecommunication service providers to block citizen election monitoring SMS services, claiming that such services were likely to promote hatred and create discomfort among the public. The BC met with telecommunication service providers including Airtel, Orange and WARID and ordered them to stop relaying information to data centers owned by DemGroup -an election observer organization and the opposition FDC/IPC tally centre. In the same communication, the EC ordered all internet service providers not allow relaying of such information to the tally centers set up by CSOs and Opposition groups. This did not only curtail the enjoyment of freedom of speech but also limited participation of independent observers in the electoral process.

We are concerned that the BC has assumed powers way beyond its legal mandate and has continued to violate and undermine media freedom and

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<sup>2</sup> For example see Uganda Media Profile; A comprehensive profile of major TV and radio stations, newspapers, magazines, and ISPs in Uganda

freedom of speech in Uganda. The BC has removed itself from being a neutral body charged with regulating the industry to being a body acting to promote particular party interests.

### **Media self censorship**

The actions of the BC and other government agencies resulted into self censorship of the media; the self censorship mainly was through internal editorial policies and employment policies. Whereas some media houses especially radios could not allow broadcasts considered to be promoting ideas of the opposition in form of news, some media houses refused to air adverts and any other issues relating to the opposition. Cases in this line can be seen in Nakaseke where a community radio closed out the opposition IPC/FDC even after the IPC had paid and received a receipt for the airtime. Similarly on the Mid Western Uganda, the IPC flag bearer was denied access to several other radios including Bunyoro Broadcasting Services, King's Broadcasting Services, Kitara FM, Spice FM, Radio Hoima and Liberty Broadcasting Services even when some of these radios had received payment for the programmes.

Self censorship also focused on suspending programmes or presenters considered critical of government, the presenters and journalists suspended include; James Kasirivu a presenter at Mbarara based Endigito Radio, suspension of 9 reporters from Freedom FM in Kabale, sacking of Top Radio Masaka journalist one Ssekimpi on grounds of challenging the Returning Officer, suspension of journalists from covering political rallies on Tropix FM in Masaka, among others. The suspensions and dismissals had an effect of threatening journalists, presenters and other media practitioners from publishing issues critical of government or covering the opposition.

### **Censorship of social media**

Social media space has increasingly become narrow in Uganda. The social media is often viewed by the state as a platform through which the opposition and those against the government channel their views to the public. The state views the social media as a means to making people rebel as opposed to sharing information and social networking. As a result there has been increased clampdown of the social media space including both the informal and formal social media.

In as early as 2002, the government was involved in endless moves to clampdown on social media specifically the open talk shows and debates some of which were aired live on different FM stations in the country. The first move to ban such media came with the regulating of outside broadcasts where the Media Council and the BC threatened to close down radio stations airing such programmes (Ebimeeza) on ground that the radio stations were only licensed to

broadcast from “indoor”, rather than from “outdoor” studios. Despite the ban, radios came up with means of airing the Ebimeeza through pre-recorded debates.

Following the riots in Buganda In 2009, the BC put a total ban on the Bimeeza; it was around the same time that open air debates such as the Twerwaneho<sup>3</sup> in Fort Portal were “banned” by the RDC. The only social space remaining at the time was the state Baraza at sub counties and electronic spaces such as Facebook and Twitter. Since 2009, the state has been weary of social media branding it as a threat to national security. For this reason, the UCC and the BC have been on the look out to control the social media.

During and after elections, the UCC has been under pressure from security apparatus to block social media platforms. Following the Walk-to-Work protests, the UCC moved fast to ban social networks specifically Facebook and Twitter. According to the April 14<sup>th</sup> letter obtained by HRNJ-Uganda, the UCC directed the Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to shut down facebook and twitter platforms for 24 hours.

The Uganda Communications Commission was merged late 2010 with the Broadcasting Council into one regulatory body that will oversee both communication and broadcasting matters in the country. It is under the ministry of Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

In the same letter, signed by Mr. Quinto Ojok, the Acting Executive Director, addressed to major providers of internet, namely; Broad Band Company, Foris Telecom Company and Infocom Limited, among others, stated that UCC was requested by security agencies to minimize the use of such platforms.

“ We have received a request from security agencies that there is need to minimize the media that may escalate violence to the public in respect of the ongoing situation due to the demonstrations relating to ‘Walk-to-Work’ mainly by the opposition in the country. As a stakeholder that has communication infrastructures that host media such as facebook and twitter, the commission wishes to request for your indulgence in this matter” the letter reads in part.

The letter added that ISPs were required to block the use of facebook and twitter for 24 hours as of now, that is: 14<sup>th</sup> April 2011 at 3:30pm to eliminate the connection and sharing of information that incite the public.

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<sup>3</sup> Unlike Ekimeza, Twerwaneho debates were not aired on radio, but was banned mainly due to it being critical of government and being popular among the youth.

The Daily Monitor quoted the UCC interim boss Eng. Godfrey Mutabazi as saying that there was a miscommunication and that the letter was not necessary. He nonetheless did not deny his office had sent out the letter.

In the run up to the February 2011 general elections, the Uganda Communication Commission implemented a draft policy which is not a law to gag telecommunication sector.

Mr. Godfrey Mutabazi accompanied by a team from the regulatory body met industry players on 16<sup>th</sup>/Feb/2011 and issued specific warnings against sending messages that he said could instigate hatred, violence and unrest during the electioneering period.

He warned that any provider who breaches guidelines that have been set for this service, which is mainly operated through cell phones, risks losing their operation licenses and would face instant closure.

On the Election Day, the 18<sup>th</sup>/Feb/2011, telecommunication service providers blocked to DemGroup (an election monitoring group) and the opposition IPC text message relaying election related reports to their data centre established at Muyenga, a Kampala suburb in Makindye division and to the FDC tall centre respectively.

The sector players told HRNJ-Uganda during that time that there had been no consultation carried out with them.

“We doubt whether the actions of the regulators are under their mandate since there’s no law governing the merged institutions. We condemn in the strongest terms possible the use of illegal means to gag both the telecommunication and internet sectors. Such actions must be challenged in courts of law” said HRNJ-Uganda Programmes Coordinator Geoffrey Wokulira Ssebaggala.

He said that the policy was not drafted to stop incitement but to abuse the right to freedom of expression because it was very clear that the DemGroup messages were neither inciting violence nor threatening anyone. Some regulators denied having played any role in blocking the messages and all shifted the unlawful actions to regulators.

HRNJ-Uganda has also documented instances where telecommunication companies passed on bio data of their clients to the NRMO which the party used for campaign purposes. This also saw a number of intercepted.



## **Role of security agencies**

Uganda has a host of security groups including official government groups, paramilitary groups and groups suspected to be belonging to individual politicians and key public figures. Whereas the constitution mandates the UPDF and the UPF to be the only security groups and the laws establishing the two institutions give them powers to initiate other paramilitary groups, similar paramilitary groups have existed outside the mandate of the law. Such groups pay allegiance to personalities within the UPDF, the UPF or private individuals. During the reporting period, Uganda saw an increase of these groups and formation of new ones. For example; in February 2011, the Uganda police listed individual groups including Kikankane, Mwoyo gwa ggwanga, Black Cobra, Red Brigade, Black Mamba, Kiboko Squad, Bamboo Brigade, 3k, Beyi Kali, Hakuna Kulala and Hakuna Kuliya as paramilitary groups belonging to individuals. The Uganda Police itself trained paramilitary groups including the Election Constables and Crime Preventers. All the groups were deployed to work during polling days.

Other groups associated with the UPDF and the UPF include the Rapid Response Unit (RRU), the Joint Anti Terrorism Task Force (JATT), the Chieftaincy of Military Intelligence (CMI), the Presidential Guard Brigade (PGB), and Special Forces Group (SFG) among others. The UPF has also formed specialized organs for the press.

There are also other spy and counter spy agencies such as the Internal Security Organization (ISO), the Resident District Commissioners (RDCs), District Security Officers (DISO), Gombolola Security Officers (GISO) among others. All these groups have had an impact on media freedom and its operation in Uganda.

During the election period, different groups played different roles in relation to the media, whereas the formal groups such as UPF and UPDF concentrated more on fighting crime, paramilitary groups and individuals such as RDCs, GISOs, RRU, SFG and groups associated with individuals gravely violated the rights of journalists and reporters during their work. It should be noted that there were cases where these individuals worked with the UPF and sometimes ordered the UPF to arrest, intimidate and sometimes beat up journalists. This greatly undermined the independence of the UPF and its ability to deal with crimes. There were also cases where the UPF never acted to arrest or bring charges against those suspected to have violated the rights of individuals.

**These cases include;**

***Threats to arrest and arresting of journalists without charge***

Threats to arrest reporters because of their work or what is suspected to be reported, for example on 18th December 2010, the District Police Commander (DPC) for Iganga threatened to arrest the Daily Monitor journalist, Yazid Yolisigira on suspicion that he had important audio recordings. This was during a meeting at Iganga Municipal Council.

Similarly, on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2010, police threatened to arrest and charge two journalists of Voice of Lango over a community radio programme that discussed the role of the police in violation of human rights. Police threatened to charge the journalists with inciting the public on grounds that the debate was making the police unpopular. The debate was instigated by the fact that one of the police officers had been arrested and charged with defilement of a minor. The decision to arrest the journalists did not come as a surprise given the fact that the Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC) has over the years ranked UPF among the leading violators of human rights in the country.

Several journalists and reporters have been arrested and detained over their work in the reporting period, the cases include;

The arrest and detention of the Editor of the Business Summit Magazine, Mustafa Mugisa on grounds that he published a cartoon that demeans the president on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2011<sup>4</sup>;

The arrest and removal of cameras from the Masaka based NTV correspondent Issa Aliga by Special Forces Group (SFG), after he had filmed a scuffle between NRM party members in Sembabule on 10th February 2011. The scuffle resulted from rival groups within NRM who were preparing for President Museveni's visit to the area. The correspondent was later forced to record a statement at police, when he refused, he was banned (by the SFG) from covering NRM campaign rallies in Sembabule and Masaka;

The arrest and detention of the Daily Monitor correspondent in Gulu who was investigating cases of illegal ballot stuffing at Bar-Olum polling station on 23th Feb. 2011;

The arrest of Daily Monitor Journalist on 28th February 2011 by the Special Investigations Unit (SIU)<sup>5</sup> on grounds that he published a story in which the IPC/FDC candidate told journalists that he could not rule out war in Uganda after what he (Dr. Besigye) considered a rigged election;

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<sup>4</sup> The cartoon had been published in the October issue of the magazine and it was thus a surprise to conduct arrests months after the said offence had been committed.

<sup>5</sup> The cartoon had been published in the October issue of the magazine and it was thus a surprise to conduct arrests months after the said offence had been committed.

The arrest and detention of Top Radio correspondent in Masaka on 28th February 2011 following the reporters' investigations into alleged election malpractices committed by the present speaker of parliament Hon. Edward Ssekandi;

The kidnap of a radio Simba Journalist Arafat Nzito by plain clothed security officers on 3rd November 2010 and detained him incommunicado for 8 days, among others.

These and many more arrests were carried out in the reporting period (on duty) and have resulted into the violation of rights of journalists. The arrests and detention also had negative effect on the work of journalists who do not only feel intimidated but also lose the morale of reporting on wrongs committed by public officials. This undermines freedom of speech and holding leaders accountable to the public.

### **Direct attacks on journalists**

The direct attacks on journalists included attacks and beating up of journalists and confiscating their tools of trade by force. This was also done mainly by members of UPF, UPDF, RDCs, PGB and paramilitary groups mainly associated with individual politicians.

Individual politicians also threatened to beat up journalists or order their gangs to descend on them. This was seen in Kibale district where a politician threatened to beat up the news editor for Kibale Community radio blaming him of bias, the two had a scuffle that resulted into switching off the radio for about 2 hours;

The beating up of a Kamunye newspaper reporter in Masaka by the Anglican Bishop of Western Buganda Diocese on 6th December 2010, on grounds that he had photographed the Bishop without his consent;

The assault of Ink Media journalists by Mawokota North outgoing MP, Peter Claver Mutuluza on 20th December 2010;

The beating up of four journalists covering incidences of voter bribery in Aleptong district involving NRM and FDC supporters on 19th January 2011, among others cases.

In many of these violations, journalists were injured in the ensuing scuffle and police did nothing to protect them.

Paramilitary groups and individuals like RDCs have been at the core of abuse of rights of journalists through confiscating their cameras and assaulting them. The

most notable ones include the attack on journalists who had gone to cover NRM's Kampala City Mayoral Candidate Peter Ssematimba, where a group of men armed with sticks emerged from around the candidate's radio station – Super FM and attacked journalists outside the gate of the station. Six journalists were injured in the scuffle with some getting hospitalized. The gang is said to have blamed journalists for publicizing the wide spread ballot stuffing that characterized the mayoral elections in Kampala.

Another incident happened on 18th February 2011 during presidential polls in Sironko where armed men shot and injured a journalist who was moving with one of the candidates. The men were suspected to be body guards of the Minister for the Presidency Hon. Beatrice Wabudeya who was contesting against FDC/IPC's Nandala Mafabi.

Other incidences involving gangs and security forces included the beating up of a Red Pepper photo journalist by Kampala central division Chairperson, Mr. Nyakana Amooti who was moving with a gang of 5 men on 23rd Feb. 2011;

The beating of a WBS reporter based in Mbale by a gang allegedly belonging to State Minister for housing Hon. Michael Werikhe on 18th Feb. 2011, among others.

On 17th January 2011, members of the UPF in Fort Portal assaulted a reporter for Voice of Tooro (VOT) radio after they suspected him to be carrying a camera and photographing the police as they were dispersing striking students of Fort Portal School of Clinical Officers in western Uganda. The police threatened to confiscate his camera and ordered him to delete all the photos he had taken.

Confiscation of cameras and other tools of trade were common during the reporting period as seen during Mayoral Elections in Kampala on the 23rd/Feb/2011 where hooligans destroyed a camera of a Channel 44 reporter. In the same scuffle, a recorder belonging to a Metro FM reporter was confiscated.

Indeed many journalists have been assaulted and their tools of trade confiscated in an attempt to destroy evidence of human rights violations generally.

### **Increased security Surveillance on media work by the Uganda security apparatus**

In 2008, the Uganda Police Force (UPF) under the leadership of Gen. Kale Kaihura established a Media Offences Department (MOD) with the Criminal Investigations Department to monitor media output on daily basis. The overall goal of MOD is to investigate and charge individual journalists and media houses

who commit crimes. However the work of the MOD has resulted into more intimidation and threats to media practitioners. In 2009, the department rolled out up to district police administrative units and was structured as an autonomous department which should recruit, train personnel and receive public resources direct from state coffers. From that time, dozens of critical journalists have been interrogation and charges preferred against them although many of these charges have remained at this department without graduating to court. In this case, many journalists are perpetually kept reporting on police bond.

The security apparatus has also infiltrated into news rooms where journalists have been recruited and have been put on the payroll of security to spy on fellow journalists and operations of newsroom. Raids on the news media, in 2008 the raid on the Independent Magazine offices at Kanjokya Street-Kamwokya, a Kampala suburb occurred while journalists at the independent were interviewing a soldier who claimed had participated in torturing Ugandans in safe houses.

In 2010, another unit –the Special Investigations Unit was established to handle corruption and fraud cases. However the unit has progressively focused on journalists, arresting and charging them with professional related acts as opposed to corruption and fraud for which it was set up.

On 9th March 2011, the Daily Monitor journalist Tabu Butagira was arrested over Dr. Kiiza Besigye's story published by the paper - The Daily Monitor under tagline 'Uganda decides', published Dr. Besigye's story on 28th/Feb/2011 with the headline "Besigye; I can't rule out war" During the interrogation, police tried to pushed Butagira to divulge information that will pin the opposition leader.

**An issue of security personnel penetrating media houses can be seen in the reactions to recent activities.**

On 14th/April/2011, the Uganda Police Force boss and his juniors called different news rooms pleading not to air police brutal attacks on the protestors. A news manager who spoke on condition anonymity told HRNJ-Uganda that these directives were ignored because they were not legally binding and media houses went ahead to relay live pictures whose actions did not please some journalists in the news room. Spy journalists called back police about the noncompliance. Information obtained by HRNJ-Uganda indicated that the police leadership was puzzled about the media refusal and called State house for intervention. Sources told HRNJ-Uganda that the state house team directed the Uganda Communication Commission (UCC) to stop media houses from live coverage of the 'Walk-to-Work' protests. The directives were also reported in the daily monitor of April 20th.

### **Threats to the journalists and media houses;**

Since the opposition supporters and activists launched the walk-to-work protests over the high fuel and other commodities prices, a number of journalists and media houses have received indirectly and direct threats from both individuals in security apparatus and security institutions.

A journalist working with one of the radio stations in Kampala was withdrawn from field (Kasangati) where she was reporting live due to increasing concerns on her security. This followed numerous threatening calls to her bosses and verbal threats from police officers, Chieftaincy of Military Intelligence (CMI) and state house. Kasangati is the residential area for opposition political party Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) leader Dr. Kiiza Besigye. It's along Gayaza road ten kilometers north of Kampala. This is the area where Dr. Besigye would start his walk-to-work protest and police as well as other security agents would restrict his movements. Majority media houses would send their journalists early in advance to report live the unfolding events.

The security had blacklisted this journalist as Dr. Besigye's press aide and on several occasions, the journalist received confrontations from police officials on accusation of negative reporting.

On 14th/April/2011, five journalists dressed in labeled uniforms were beaten up by military police and Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) soldiers over their coverage on brutal attacks on unarmed civilians. These include; WBS TV cameraman Francis Mukasa, Ronald Muyinda a Radio one journalist, Stuart Iga of the Red pepper, NTV Masaka correspondents Issa Aliga, Ali Mabule a journalist with the New Vision, Norman Kabugu a journalist with a daily tabloid Kamunye and Dismus Buregyeya a New Vision journalist. These soldiers confiscated the journalists' tools and erased both the photos and video clips.

### **Direct attacks on foreign press;**

Sources have told HRNJ-Uganda research team that security apparatus has also been forging ways on how to deal with individual journalists working with the foreign media following what is alleged to be negative publicity.

One of the methods resolved was to dismantle journalists' tools of trade especially video cameras. On 21st/April/2011, while covering the arrest of Dr. Besigye at Wandegeya, a suburb of Kampala, several video cameras were damaged by security at the spot where Dr. Besigye was being arrested. One of the victims was Reuters' correspondent Justine Dralaze whose camera was destroyed.

*“It’s very difficult to explain how my camera was attacked because a security guy used the elbow to hit the LCD which affected other parts of the camera. I can say it happened when Dr. Besigye was being pushed into the police car. That’s where I stopped filming.” Said Dralaze.*

Days before his camera was destroyed, he had reported being confronted by officials when he had gone to cover a press conference at the Media Center. He said the Media Center boss Mr. Opoloti blamed him for sending negative pictures to Aljazeera television. Dralaze quoted Opoloti saying they had downloaded all video clips from Aljazeera. He said the second time was when he went to Rwakitura to cover President Museveni’s press conference.

*“I was confronted by Presidential Guard Brigade (PGB) personnel who asked me whether I was Dralaze. When I replied yes, one official told me that they were watching me on line which left me confused because I don’t know what they meant,” Dralaze narrated.*

BBC journalist Joshua Mmali reports to HRNJ-Uganda that security apparatus has been tracing and interested in knowing where my residence is located. He told HRNJ-Uganda researcher that one of the drivers he has been using to cover the ‘Walk-to-Work protests called him panicking and told him that some individuals confronted him asking to know where I stay. Mmali says the driver had told them in response that he did not know me because he had only taken me to Kasangati and that’s all but the security accused him of lying and they cited even the time the driver drove him (Mmali) to Rwakitura.

*“I was so surprised to hear that because I left the driver out of president Museveni’s residence. Whoever confronted this driver must have been at Rwakitura because nobody saw me leaving my home which I left as early as 5am. I tried to call the police leadership and informed them that I was watching whatever they were doing,” said Joshua Mmali.*

### **Access to justice for media**

Generally, access to justice for media practitioners remains a major challenge in Uganda. During the reporting period, none of the media practitioners whose rights were affected got redress from those responsible. In some cases those responsible to protect the media were part of the violators while in other cases, they watched on as the rights were being violated. Several journalists reported the cases to police and to courts of law but none of the cases have been investigated to any logical conclusion or even make any arrests.

In some incidences such as in Rubaga, during the aborted mayoral elections, at Super FM the police watched as men armed with clubs and sticks beat up journalists and injured several. The police never made any arrests to date.

We are therefore concerned that the state has not made attempts to ensure victims of rights violations get justice.

### **Role of CSOs and other stakeholders in mitigating threats to the media**

Towards the 2011 elections, HRNJ-Uganda with partners carried out a number of activities as a way of mitigating the deteriorating situation on the safety and security of journalists as well as the shrinking space under which journalists, human rights activists and opposition political party supporters were operating - especially towards elections.

In November 2010, HRNJ-Uganda launched a safety and security campaign for journalists in Uganda. It was launched by the out-going High Court Principal Judge His Lordship James Ogoola. The campaign had a protection package for journalists namely; a 'Toll free helpline' 0800144155, a list of seven (7) legal chambers which were established in different parts of the country to represent journalists and IEC materials. The campaign goal was to engage different stakeholders to play their role in guaranteeing the security of journalists towards, during and after elections.

The toll free helpline has been effective in that majority of the cases covered in this report were reported through the line.

Human Rights Network for Journalists-Uganda together with International Freedom of Expression (IFEX) with the funding from Open Society Initiative for East Africa (OSIEA) trained 12 feeders who were trained in monitoring, documenting and reporting freedom of expression violations in all regions in Uganda.

The period witnessed three petitions from the international community (members of the International Freedom of Expression-IFEX) to President Yoweri Museveni urging the government to respect press freedom. The petitions were initiated by the Freedom House and the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ). Both international organizations are based in United States of America (USA), while HRNJ-Uganda is based in a Uganda. *See appendix III for the petition.*

### **Conclusion**

Generally, much as the elections were considered to be peaceful in Uganda, the same period was characterized by some of the highest attacks on media practitioners and the freedom of expression and other media freedoms. Self censorship by the media and increased control by the regulatory authorities made it difficult for the media to play its role of informing and educating the public. The media was also at the fore front of misleading the public through outlets owned by politicians who used them to campaign and promote their agenda at the expense of media freedom in Uganda.



### List of journalists attacked during the period under review

Date	Name of the victim	Nature of Attack	Media House	Source of Attack
3 <sup>rd</sup> /Nov/2010	Arafat Nzito	Was kidnapped by plain-cloth armed men from the radio premises. He was detained incommunicado for eight days.	Radio Simba	Chieftaincy of Military Intelligence
03 <sup>rd</sup> /12/2010	Isaac Ssejjoba	Was beaten, and his camera stolen on his way to Kati Kati Restaurant.	The New Vision	Attackers not yet known
5 <sup>th</sup> /Nov/2011	Kits Mabonga	Was arrested and beaten up by Presidential Guards Brigade for photographing their car which was involved in an accident	The Red Pepper	Presidential guards Brigade
06 <sup>th</sup> /Dec/2011	Brian Luwaga	He survives being strangled up by the Anglican Bishop for Western Buganda Diocese, The Rt. Rev. Kefa Kanya Ssemakula for taking his photo in the court room without his permission	Kamunye New Paper	Bp. Kefa Kanya Ssemakula
Dec/2010	James Kasirivu	He was sacked over an opinion poll that gave Inter-Party Cooperation and Forum for Democratic Change candidate Dr. Kiiza Besigye a clear win. It had been published in the Daily Monitor	Radio Endigito	Radio management
08 <sup>th</sup> /12/2010	Yazid Yolisigira	The Iganga District Police commander	The Daily Monitor	DPC Iganga

		Dan Kamugisha threatened to arrest the journalist for refusing to surrender audio recordings to him		
09 <sup>th</sup> /12/2010	Munira Suwed	Police in Barr sub-county in Lira district threatened to arrest her over community radio debate that discussed police involvement in committing human rights abuse against people they are supposed to protect.	Voice of Lango	Police in Lira
09 <sup>th</sup> /12/2010	Omara James Elem	Police in Barr sub-county in Lira district threatened to arrest him over community radio debate that discussed police involvement in committing human rights abuse.	Voice of Lango	Police in Lira
20 <sup>th</sup> /12/2010	Drake Kizito	Supporters of Mawokota North aspiring Member of Parliament Peter Claver Mutuluza have roughed-up and beaten a journalist Drake Kizito at a campaigning rally	Ink Media Agency	Supporters of Mawokota Members of parliament
13 <sup>th</sup> /Jan/2011	Mustapha Mugisa	Security operatives arrested the Managing Editor of the Summit Business Review magazine, Mustapha Mugisa and detained at CPS Kampala over running	Summit Business Review	Police

		a cartoon of President Museveni on front page of the magazine		
13 <sup>th</sup> /Jan/2011	Dr. Samuel Ssejjaaka	Police in Kampala arrested the director of Summit Business Review magazine, who had followed up on his colleague Mustapha Mugisa at police.	Summit Business Review	Police
17 <sup>th</sup> /Jan/2011	Mutegeki Geoffrey	He suffered the police wrath when he went to cover an impending students' strike at Fort Portal School of Clinical Officers. The school is found in Western Uganda.	Voice of Tooro	Police
19 <sup>th</sup> /Jan/2011	Michael Kakumirizi	He and other journalists were roughed up by suspected NRM functionaries who accused them of taking their pictures while allegedly bribing voters at Aloi Police Post in Alebeatong district in an attempt to keep residents away from attending Dr. Kiiza Besigye's 19/Jan/2011 rally in the area.	Red Pepper	NRM supporters
20 <sup>th</sup> /Jan/2011	Issa Aliga	Was assaulted at Masaka Central Police Station where the Masaka woman MP Suda Namagwa had gone to record a	NTV	Masaka woman MP Suda Namagwa

		statement over a crash with her political opponent, Freda Mubanda		
20 <sup>th</sup> /Jan/2011	Ssozi Ssekimpi	Was assaulted at Masaka Central Police Station where the Masaka woman MP Sauda Namagwa had gone to record a statement over a crash with her political opponent, Freda Mubanda	Top radio Masaka	Masaka woman MP Sauda Namagwa
10 <sup>th</sup> /Feb/2011	Issa Aliga	Was arrested and detained by the Special Forces Group (SFG) for filming a scuffle involving Rwemiyaga area Member of Parliament Theodore Ssekikubo ahead of President Museveni's campaign rally.	NTV	Special Forces Group
Feb/2011	David Opio	Radio Veritas programme manager fired under unclear circumstances towards February 2011 elections	Radio Kyoga Veritas	Board of trustees
Feb/2011	Ismael Kasooha	He received threats to harm him from supporters of MP Ms Juliet Kabonesa	Kagadi Kibaale community radio	Supporters of Mp Kabonesa
18 <sup>th</sup> /Feb/2011	Gerald Mutembu	Was beaten up by a mob allegedly supporting the state minister for Housing Michael Werikhe while covering	WBS TV	Supporters of Hon. Werikhe

		February elections.		
23 <sup>rd</sup> /Feb/2011	George Fidel Arinaitwe	Was rounded up and assaulted for taking photos without their permission. He was covering local council elections.	Red Pepper	Godfrey Nyakana Amooti
23 <sup>rd</sup> /Feb/2011	Livingstone Okumu	Was arrested and detained at CPS Gulu on the orders of district councilor Phillip Olanya. He was covering local elections.	The Daily Monitor	Police and council Phillip Olanya
23 <sup>rd</sup> /Feb/11	Nabazziwa Lydia	She was beaten by stick-wielding hooligans while covering local council elections at Kakeeka polling station. She nearly lost her right ear. The election was suspended due to irregularities	Bukedde TV	Supporters of Kampala mayoral candidate Peter Ssematimba
23 <sup>rd</sup> /Feb/11	Namatumbwe Christine	She was beaten by stick-wielding hooligans while covering local council elections at Kakeeka polling station. She lost her cell phone, recorder and the hand bag.	Metro FM	Supporters of Kampala mayoral candidate Peter Ssematimba
23 <sup>rd</sup> /Feb/11	Nixon Bbaale	He survived with a big cut on his head while covering the scuffle at Kakeeka polling station in Lubaga division	CH 44 TV	Supporters of Kampala mayoral candidate Peter Ssematimba
23 <sup>rd</sup> /Feb/11	Florence	She was assaulted	Bukedde	Supporters

	Nabukeera	after violence sparked off when some supporters questioned the volume of ballots which were stuffed yet there was small number of voter who had turned up. She sustained bodily injuries.	TV	of Kampala mayoral candidate Peter Ssematimba
23 <sup>rd</sup> /Feb/11	Brian Nsimbe	Was assaulted and injured one of his arms while covering elections at Kakeeka polling station.	CH 44 TV	Supporters of Kampala mayoral candidate Peter Ssematimba
23 <sup>rd</sup> /Feb/11	Jane Anyango	She was violently assaulted at the Kakeeka polling station. Anyango was critically injured in the face, had blood ooze from the mouth, sustained injuries on the leg and has bruises on the buttocks and is in acute pain. She is undergoing treatment at Mayor Clinic.	UBC TV	Supporters of Kampala mayoral candidate Peter Ssematimba
23 <sup>rd</sup> /Feb/11	Steven Mbidde	He was rescued by police from stick-wielding hooligans	KFM	Supporters of Peter Ssematimba
23 <sup>rd</sup> /Feb/11	Michael Kigozi	He was rescued by police from stick-wielding hooligans	Radio One	Supporters of candidate Peter Ssematimba
28 <sup>th</sup> /Feb/2011	Ssozi Ssekimpi	He was sacked under duress over a talk-show which discussed electoral	Top radio Masaka	Managemen t of Top radio, Masaka

		malpractices witnessed during presidential and parliamentary elections.		
2 <sup>nd</sup> /Mar/2011	Sadab Kitatta Kaaya	He survives being knocked for filming students who were being ferried from different schools to vote	WBS TV	NRM chairman for Nyendo Masaka Sub County Reagan Ssentongo.
4 <sup>th</sup> /Mar/2011	Goodluck Musinguzi	He was threatened with a legal suit over stories in the media that the RDC for Kabale Cox Nyakairu pulled out a gun to shoot at a Umeme staff.	New Vision	RDC Kabale Cox Nyakairu
4 <sup>th</sup> /Mar/2011	Robert Muhereza	He was threatened with a legal suit over stories in the media that the RDC Kabale Cox Nyakairu pulled out a gun to shoot at a Umeme staff.	Daily Monitor	RDC Kabale Cox Nyakairu
9 <sup>th</sup> /Mar/2011	Tabu Butagira	He was arrested and interrogated over Dr. Kiiza Besigye's story published by the paper	Daily Monitor	Police
12 <sup>th</sup> /Mar/2011	Edward Bindhe	He was assaulted and his recorder damaged while covering a students demonstration at Mutesa I Royal University	Uganda Radio Network	Mutesa I Royal University students
12 <sup>th</sup> /Mar/2011	Brian Luwaga	He was assaulted and	Kamunye	Mutesa I

		his recorder damaged while covering a students demonstration at Mutesa I Royal University		Royal University students
12 <sup>th</sup> /Mar/2011	David Lukakama	Assaulted while covering a demonstration in Jinja town	Voice of Busoga	Police
12 <sup>th</sup> /Mar/2011	Hasfa Nakyanzi	She lost her two front tooth while covering a demonstration in Jinja town	Top TV	Police
18th/March/2011	Patson Baraire	He was assaulted in court premises for taking a photo without permission	New Vision	The councilor elect of Kanungu TC Emmy Magezi Byarugaba
21 <sup>st</sup> /Mar/2011	Yoweri Musisi	He was arrested and detained over a story which alleged increased lawlessness in the area.	CBS FM	Police
26 <sup>th</sup> /Mar/2011	Sadab Kitatta Kaaya	Assaulted while interviewing a suspect	WBS TV	Police
4 <sup>th</sup> /Apr/2011	Patson Baraire	Police preferred charges against him of fighting in a public place. Instead it was him who was assaulted.	New Vision	Police
7 <sup>th</sup> /Apr/2011	Yoweri Musisi	He was charged under a law (Publishing false new) which was declared	CBS FM	Police and Resident State Attorney



		unconstitutional		
11 <sup>th</sup> /Apr/2011	Ssemakula Bambilazabw e	Was beaten and arrested while covering a scuffle at Kampala University-Mutundwe branch and detained for 12 hours at Mutundwe police post	Bukedde TV	Police
14 <sup>th</sup> /Apr/2011	Paddy Nsobya	Assaulted for taking a photo	Bukedde News paper	Olga Atubo
14 <sup>th</sup> /Apr/2011	Francis Mukasa	He was assaulted while covering the walk-to-work protest	WBS TV	Police
14 <sup>th</sup> /Apr/2011	Ronald Muyinda	Was roughed up and assaulted by military personnel at Wampeewo from where he was relaying live scenes of gun fire during the walk-to-work protest.	Radio One	Military police
14 <sup>th</sup> /Apr/11	Stuart Iga	He sustained injuries on the arms, ribs and right jaw as he struggled to protect his still camera during the walk-to-work protest.	Red Pepper	Police
14 <sup>th</sup> /Apr/2011	Yunusu Ntale	He sustained a big cut on his left arm after being hit by a teargas canister during the walk-to-work protest.	CBS FM	Police
14 <sup>th</sup> /Apr/2011	Ali Mabule	Was beaten up by a UPDF soldier as he tried to take a photograph of a	New Vision	UPDF

		UPDF soldier beating up a protestor near New Vision offices in Masaka		
14 <sup>th</sup> /Apr/2011	Isa Aliga	He was clobbered and his video camera confiscated by UPDF soldiers during a protest in Masaka.	NTV	UPDF
14 <sup>th</sup> /Apr/2011	Norman Kabugu	He was beaten by UPDF soldiers for taking photographs of a fellow journalist Ali Mabule being beaten by UPDF	Kamunye News Paper	UPDF
14 <sup>th</sup> /Apr/2011	Dismus Buregyeya	He was beaten while covering a demonstration in Masaka	New Vision	UPDF
21 <sup>st</sup> /Apr/2011	Justine Dralaze	His camera was targeted and damaged while covering walk-to-work protest	Reuters	Police
21 <sup>st</sup> /Apr/2011	Joshua Mmali	He was under surveillance of security agencies	BBC	Police

The six month period report documented / recorded **55** journalists who faced numerous cases of violence. This is the highest figure since HRNJ-Uganda started releasing PFI reports.

## **The nature of cases committed vary, they include;**

1. Assault	<b>36 cases</b>
2. Kidnap and detention incommunicado	<b>1 case</b>
3. Journalists sacked under duress	<b>3 cases</b>
4. Arbitrary arrest and detention	<b>5 cases</b>
5. Threats to journalists	<b>7 cases</b>
6. Journalist taken to court	<b>1 case</b>
7. Preferred trumped up charges	<b>1 case</b>
8. Destroyed camera	<b>1 case</b>

## **Sources of attack**

9. Army committed	9 cases
10. Individuals both politicians and religious	7 cases
11. Supporters of different political parties	12 cases
12. Unknown	1 case
13. Police	19 cases
14. Media managers	3 cases
15. University students	2 cases
16. Resident District Commissioners	2 cases

## **Recommendations**

The government of Uganda and all its agencies should put in place measures to ensure protection of rights and freedoms guaranteed under the constitution.

### ***Specifically we recommend that;***

- i. Parliament repeals all laws inconsistent with media freedom and the practice of media freedom including sections in Anti Terrorism Act, the Interception of Communication Act, repeal of criminal libel, NGO Act and the regulations as well as repealing of promotion of sectarianism, repeal S. 33, 34, 35, 36, 38, 39, 40, 42, 43 and 44 of the Penal Code that deal with importation of publications and false news and all other sections of the PCA that undermine media freedom.
- ii. Parliament amends and provides for better media space and freedom of expression including amending the Press and Journalist Act to provide for clarity on the media code of conduct, to provide for media practitioners including non journalists, provide for protection of individual journalists from exploitative media house owners and the state.

- iii. Parliament drop all proposed bills undermining media freedom including the Press and Journalist amendment Bill, the Anti Homosexuality Bill, Public Order Management Bill among others.
- iv. The Directorate of Public Prosecution (DPP) drops all sedition charges and similar charges against individuals (including journalists) since the Constitutional Court ruled this offence and other offences unconstitutional. Similarly the UPF should stop forthwith from charging people from offences that were ruled out to be unconstitutional.
- v. The UPF, DPP and Courts of law should work expeditiously to ensure journalists facing trial are heard and fair decisions reached without undue delay. Similarly cases and complaints against government officials and individuals who violate journalists' rights should be heard expeditiously to ensure justice.
- vi. The BC and the UCC should work for the promotion of media freedom in what is acceptable in a free and democratic government by;
  - a. Stopping forthwith intimidating media owners and practitioners into blackmailing them and canceling their licenses whenever they broadcast what the BC or the UCC doesn't agree with
  - b. Stopping forthwith arbitrary punishment of media houses and practitioners which/who are considered to act outside their realm. The BC and UCC should ensure that whenever a practitioner has acted in contravention to the set standards, such a practitioner should be punished in accordance with the law established, given a chance to be heard and therefore have a fair trial
  - c. Ensure that whenever an action is to be taken, the BC and the UCC have powers to do so, granted to it by the laws in Uganda.
- vii. The Government of Uganda should disband military and paramilitary groups set for the purpose of monitoring media freedom who in many cases have violated media freedoms and have undermined freedom of speech. Such work should be left to the UPF who should act professional and transparent in their work with media practitioners.

### **Recommendations to other stakeholders**

- viii. All media practitioners in Uganda including media owners, journalists, reporters, DJs, presenters, among others should commit their efforts to protection and defence of media freedom. Media practitioners should form a sharing forum through which they can report cases of threats and attacks and a mechanism to respond to the appropriately.

- ix. Media owners and employers should incorporate protection of journalists and other practitioners in their day-to-day work. Specifically, set aside resources for legal defence for their employees, health schemes and rescue for employees under threat.
- x. CSOs should increase training for media practitioners specifically in personal safety and security and rights. All of these will help media practitioners protect themselves.
- xi. CSOs and the media should increase community awareness on the role of the media, human rights and respect for rule of law in Uganda so as to curb hooliganism, mob justice and targeted attacks on media practitioner.

## **Appendices**

### **Press Freedom Index Report**

## Appendices

### Appendix I: Testimonies

#### 1. The Daily Monitor Journalist Tabu Butagira saves life and laptop



The problem started with I got a copy of the report released by United States Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Ms. Hillary Clinton on Uganda preparation for 2011 general elections. It was a bit harsh on partisan conduct of Uganda police force and the force lacked impartiality.

I called police to get their side of the story, the minister of information and it would appear that the information circulated in government circles and interested the state home.

At around 9pm, our deputy news editor Chris Obore dropped me near Rwenzori Courts which was roughly five hundred meters from where I reside. As I was on foot passing near Faze II (a night spot), a vehicle land cruiser with strange number plate which I had seen at the gate of state house on the side of UNDP offices drove on Nakasero road and slowed down briefly in the middle of the road.

I thought this was stranger looking for a particular place in the neighborhood, I inquired from a man who was driving, he looked at me and asked if I could be of help; the person said nothing but looked at me again. Then he engaged the gear and drove away and I continued working.

Near Sudan Embassy as I was working, a man riding on a huge motor cycle, had bandaged his forehead and wearing dark glasses, he came from behind and grabbed my laptop bag, I held on it strongly, the inertia dragged both of us and I fell on temarch and the rider lost control and fell on the edge of the garage of KK travelers bus garage.

I tried to shout that “thief” the guards at Sudanese Embassy heard and came out. I couldn’t see the guy because he had fallen off the motorcycle, my laptop also fell on the road, I tried to shout where the thief was but I was barely audible.

Shortly, the man rose and fumbled with the motorcycle and as he was riding away towards GTZ offices, one of the policemen at Sudan Embassy jumped out on the road and tried to teas him to stop but the rider ignored the signal and fled.

Before the incident, there were several calls I received from the Media Centre, Uganda Police Force and a man said that he was calling from state house, all seeking to have a copy of a report from Hillary Clinton. In all instances, I declined to give a copy but advised them to contact the US government to get a certified copy.

Somebody from police whom I don't want to expose the name said, State house was looking for my number and they had passed it to them. "It appears that, they are interested in the report or a story you are working on" somebody from police said.

I was in great pain and called my managing editor (daily edition) who was the only person who had a copy of the same report. After words, I went for treatment at AAR at Kampala hospital.

The next day, while at hospital I got calls from the Deputy Executive Director of the Media Center Uganda Media Centre and others from some body who said he was from State house saying that they had failed to get it from either way. I replied, somebody tried to grab my laptop and I'm on treatment can you wait until I get better but I wondered, In the past there has never been any petty thieves because the place is heavily guarded.

As I was getting better I was told that the person who was calling my number was Tina Namara whom I know at the time to be working closely, if not aide, to the former Principal Private Secretary (PPS) of President Museveni, America Kyambadde. I'm not sure if or not it was the President himself who was interested in the report.

I got treatment for one week and. When I was discharged, I didn't report the matter to police because the motorcycle had no number plate; and the vehicle had a funny number. Even though I didn't seem to suggest that an objective investigation would be conducted on top of phone calls I received.

I presume am fine.....! HRNJ-Uganda is sorry for what happened to you and I wish you luck in all your endeavors



## 2. Radio Veritas manager fired under unclear circumstances during February 2011 elections



David Opio, the station manager for Veritas radio was fired from his job following the appointment of a new radio board.

No sooner had the board members taken up their jobs, than they held their first meeting which discussed whether he (Opio) should continue moderating his two talk-shows; one check point on Burning Issues which was aired every morning in the week days, and a Saturday

talk-show under the name, 'The Teso we want'. They decided to suspend Opio, a decision the board chairperson Vincent Ogwang (RIP) disagreed with, and he even threatened to quit the board if such a decision was to be implemented. In the ensuing exchange Mr. Ogwang collapsed and was rushed to hospital where he later died.

Radio Veritas which is owned by Soroti Catholic diocese was once a radio to talk about in early 2000s especially during the Lord Resistance Army war times and the 2006 election. It was shut down by the NRM government.

On the afternoon of Sunday, June 22, 2003 police raided the radio offices of the Soroti Catholic Diocese Integrated Development Organization, where the station is located, and stopped all radio broadcasts. Officers searched the premises, confiscating audiotapes and documents.

The radio was accused of indiscriminate broadcasting of rebel-related news that reportedly caused panic, fear, tension and movement of local population from one area to another.

Following the death of Ogwang, the Board took a decision to call fresh interviews for all staff of the two radio stations. When Opio turned up, he was told that he couldn't sit interviews because he had been suspended indefinitely, due to reasons;

- Failing to account for the station motorcycle.
- Failing to remit funds for adverts for Soroti Municipality Parliamentary candidate Captain Mike Mukula.
- Running free adverts for his opponent in the race Moses Atan.

Opio reported his case to HRNJ-Uganda seeking to clear his name. It was later found out that the said Motorcycle had not been sold and was found with the mechanic where he had taken it for repair.

He added that adverts for candidate Mike Mukula had been aired on credit and when contacted, Mukula acknowledged he had not paid any money to Opio.

“I also explained that the FDC which had already paid for adverts for their presidential candidate had asked me to drop theirs and instead swap them with those of candidate Moses Atan,” said Opio.

HRNJ-Uganda noted that there was a lot of political interference particularly in Eastern region as the February campaigns intensified.

Soroti RDC Ben Etonu was reported to have attempted to block the community debates which were sponsored by the Panos Eastern Africa arguing that they were interfering with the campaign program and swaying voters from attending rallies.

As a result of pressure, especially from RDCs radios like Veritas FM decided to hold more in-studio debates instead of having them in the community.

It begun with the then Station manager of Veritas Fm, Father Athanasius Mubiru who was allegedly dropped from the radio in 2008 due to external pressure.

After the closure of the radio, Fr. Mubiru declined to shave and wash his clothes until government re-opens the station. He accused the government of punishing a radio which tried to give useful information to community to keep it out of danger caused by rebel incursions.

Opio has landed to a new job at one of the radios in the region. His efforts have not been in vain.

### 3. Female journalist has got two surgery operations after assaulted by police



It's high time I brought to your attention my plight as a journalist, if you have never experienced and swallowed the bitter pill of being a journalist, I bring to you my encounter with the police in 2010 during the parliamentary bi-elections in Mbale after the youthful MP of the municipality, Kajeke Winfred, resigned from parliament citing failure by government to addressing issues like corruption.

I was covering the elections which went on smoothly up to the time of tallying of results at the Municipal chambers from about 5:30PM to midnight when I met my assailant. I was with my Editor of Signal FM where I first worked from before transferring to Soroti Teso Broadcasting Services (TBS FM), where I currently work as the acting news editor for three months now.

My editor, Mary Kigo wanted us to record the jubilant crowd after Jack Wamai Wamanga was declared winner of the elections and we wanted also to interview some of them, so my editor told me we passed in-front of the municipal offices where we could catch up with the crowd at private sector offices. Before we could reach to the jubilant crowd, three police officers pounced on us and asking, "You stubborn ones where are you going and who are you?" We answered that we were journalists and we showed them our identity cards but they could not listen. One came from behind the lorry parked and said they are the stubborn ones and started beating me. My editor took off but I remained standing and I demanded an explanation as to why this police officer beat me up.

When my editor saw how courageous I was she came back and joined me, we called the station officer Opio Esau who came up to where we were and asked the police officer who beat (assaulted) gave me his credentials (particulars) but we insisted that they arrest him, he was arrested and we made statements, after we were told to leave and go for treatment, when we left the police officer was released and he only appeared when DPC ordered him back from his station in Kapchorwa. I underwent a first operation which was done by the police surgeon in Feb- 2010 one week after I was assaulted, he told me to first finish with the police case before the operation because it was going to deter me from my work.

I stayed home for two months before resuming my duties but before the hand could heal properly it was again swelling and in April 2010 I underwent a second operation in Mbale main hospital. By the start of this year the hand was swollen again and I was advised by the doctor to go to Mulago for a scan because the situation was worsening every time and they now feared it could be cancer. I

have no money for that because I have spent a lot so far. I am scared for my toes for another operation. My hand sometimes now becomes paralyzed and sometimes it pains a lot and when you massage, it swells a lot and itching. I need some encouragement from you members because I feel the pain before another operation and it is making me a coward.

#### **4. Journalists taking sides in political camps**

A journalist in Lira district told Human Rights Network for Journalists-Uganda (HRNJ-Uganda) that 2011 general elections posed yet another big challenge to the journalists whose role was important for the success of this election.

The challenges were both as a result of internal and external factors.

The journalist said, some journalists assumed roles in political camps with some spying on colleagues to meet their own selfish ends. Station managers continued to face pressure from security personnel and key NRM Party officials and on two occasions a meeting of station managers, news editors and outspoken presenters was called by NRM Party task force in the region at Lira Hotel where unspecified amount of money was reportedly given to them with the main aim of silencing them.

Although I did not attend the meeting I later learnt that a plan was hatched to deny the opposition airtime to popularize their programs. The NRM camp booked airtime from 8pm to midnight on most of the radio stations –this is normally talk show time, to block the opposition from accessing it. They made part payments for this airtime and till today most stations have not been fully paid for this.

As News Editor, I had to take leave in the run up to the election due to mounting pressure on my station manager from NRM Candidate and now MP Elect for Erute South Sam Engola. Apparently Engola was not pleased after I authorized the airing of a news article where his main challenger in the race was accusing him of drawing a gun at him and intimidating his supporters at one of the rallies.

During the campaigns a talk show moderator with Radio Rhino was asked by police to record a statement after he hosted members of different political parties on a talk show which discussed the content of a letter authored by the National NGO Forum.

The letter condemns the high level of corruption in the country citing the 20M Shillings given to MPs to “monitor” NAADS program. Officials of FAPAD, a Civil Society Organization dedicated to ensuring Good Governance which sponsored the show were also summoned by Police and RDC and later cautioned against spreading the content of that letter

According to the DPC, Mr. Chemonges Ashraf, doing so would jeopardize security.

## **5. Challenges in mitigating situation**

It has been observed in our previous Press Freedom Index reports (PFI) that most cases have been committed by security agencies namely; police, Joint Anti Terrorism Task Force (JATT), Chieftaincy of Military Intelligence (CMI), and Resident District Commissioners, individuals who command a lot of economic and political power and members of the public.

The challenge is that the will and speed applied during investigations and prosecution is too low which in turn has promoted impunity. In the last two years, out of the 40 cases committed by police against journalists, only one was taken to court (Sgt. Mundu Mohamed Vs Uganda). It was filed at Buganda road court after the Daily Monitor photo journalist Yusuf Muziransa was assaulted at Clock Tower in Kampala during the inter Party Cooperation demonstration. He was charged last year with two counts namely; assault and malicious damage to property. However, hearing of this case has stalled.

Petitions were lodged with the police's highest office and forwarded to Professional Standards Unit (PSU) of Police but findings have remained secret and the rest of the perpetrators of violence from police are still at large.

## **6. Economically and politically powerful individuals**

Most of the cases of violence against journalists in this group have failed to be prosecuted. Of the 15, only have cases graduated from police to court. These include; hon. Samuel Odong Otto Vs state. He threatened to shoot the Red Pepper journalist Stanley Ndaula. However, the case has remained stagnant. The other most difficult case is Basajjabalaba Hassan Vs state. This case was committed on 06th/09/2010 during the National Resistance Movement delegates' conference at Namboole stadium, a Kampala suburb. He slapped and boxed the New Vision photo journalist Arthur Kintu and shattered his lips. A case was taken to Buganda road court and a number of criminal sermons were issued against him in vain. Later, on 29th/Oct/2010 the magistrate Francis Kobusheshe dismissed the case on grounds that the Director of Public Prosecution (DPP) had failed to conclude investigations into the matter. "He noted that an assault case is not so complex to investigate and wondered what takes the Director of Public Prosecution so long to wind up with his investigations"

Human Rights Network for Journalists-Uganda and the New Vision legal team lobbied both the then Principal Judge of the high court Justice James Ogoola and the Resident state attorney at Buganda road fortunately the case was re-instituted. At the moment, the file case carries a warrant of arrest issued by court but no action has been taken.

Last year, Uganda witnessed two journalists killed in line of their duties RIP Dickson Ssentongo worked for Prime radio Kampala and RIP Paul Kiggundu worked for Top radio Masaka. The other victim was RIP Wilbroad Kasujja who worked for Buwama community radio; she was raped and later killed in 2008.

All the suspects who participated in the killing of late Kasujja and late Ssentongo are still at large. However, the seven suspects who allegedly killed late Kiggundu were arrested and charged with murder at Kalisizo magistrate court. Surprisingly, they are still on remand in one of the prisons in Kalisizo and have not been committed to high court for trial.

## **7. Journalists who underwent interrogation and are now reporting at Police**

1. Angelo Izama-Daily Monitor reports at Jinja Rd/ Kabalagala(7)
2. Henry Ochieng- Daily Monitor - Jinja Rd/ Kabalagala(7)
3. Akena Patrick -Ronex Voice of Lango - Lira CPS(2)
4. Joe Orech -Voice of Lango -Lira CPS(2)
5. Musa Kigongo -CBS fm -Masaka(1)
6. Dalton Kaweesa -Red Pepper -Jinja Road(2)
7. Ben Byaruhanga -Red Pepper -Jinja Road(2)
8. Johnson Kaweesa -Red Pepper - Jinja Road(2)
9. Timothy Kalyegira -Uganda Record - Kiira Road(15)
10. Yoweri Musisi- CBS fm, - Buwama police station(2)
11. Tabu Butagira- Daily Monitor - SIU (1)
12. Mugisa Mustapha- Summit Business Review- CPS Kampala and CID Hqtrs (7)
13. Dr. Samuel Ssejjaaka- Summit Business Review- CPS and CID Hqtrs (7)
14. Ssozi Ssekimpi- Top radio Masaka- CPS Masaka(8)
15. Livingstone Okumu, the Daily Monitor, 6 six times

## **8. Journalists on trial by April 2011**

1. Richard Tumusiime, the Red pepper Criminal Defamation
2. Francis Mutazindwa, the Red pepper Criminal Defamation
3. Andrew Mwenda, the Independent Sedition
4. Charles Bichachi, the Independent Sedition
5. Moses Akena, The Daily Monitor Criminal Defamation
6. Otim Patrick Mega fm/Rupiny Treason
7. Daniel Kalinaki, the Daily Monitor Forgery & Uttering false document
8. Henry Ochieng, the Daily Monitor Forgery & Uttering false document
9. Siraje Lubwama, the Daily Monitor Sedition
10. John Njoroge, the Independent Sedition
11. James Tumusiime, the Observer Promoting Sectarianism
12. Ssemujju Nganda, the Observer Promoting Sectarianism
13. Andrew Mwenda, the Independent Promoting Sectarianism
14. Joachim Buwembo, the Daily Monitor Criminal Defamation
15. Emmanuel Gyezaho, the Daily Monitor Criminal Defamation
16. Robert Mukasa, the Observer Criminal Defamation
17. Bernard Tabaire, the Daily Monitor Promoting Sectarianism
18. Angelo Izama, the Daily Monitor Criminal Defamation
19. Betty Nambooze CBS fm Sedition
20. Angelo Izama, the Daily Monitor Libel
21. Henry Ochieng, the Daily Monitor Libel
22. Musa Kigongo CBS fm Sedition
23. Ben Byaruhanga, the Red Pepper Publishing false news
24. Dalton Kaweesa, The Red Pepper Publishing false news
25. Johnson Talemwa, the Red Pepper Publishing false
26. Yoweri Musisi, CBS fm, publishing false news

## **Appendix II: Petition to the President**

### **a) Thirty-four International Freedom of Expression members urge President Museveni to respect press freedom in lead-up to general elections**

Joint action – Uganda (15 February 2011)

Thirty-four IFEX members urge President Museveni to respect press freedom in lead-up to general elections

*SOURCE: Human Rights Network for Journalists, Committee to Protect Journalists*

(HRNJ-Uganda/CPJ/IFEX) - 15 February 2011 - IFEX members are concerned that journalists have been threatened and assaulted, opposition parties have been denied access to the media and draft legislation threatens to restrict the right to free speech and peaceful assembly:

H.E. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni  
President of the Republic of Uganda  
State House  
P.O. Box 24594, Kampala  
Fax: +256 414 256143  
E-mail: secretary@op.go.ug

We, the undersigned freedom of expression organisations, are alarmed by the decreasing space for the voices of journalists and opposition parties during the run-up to the 18 February 2011 general elections in Uganda.

Violations of freedom of expression have plagued the electoral process in the country since November 2010 when campaigning officially began. Journalists have been threatened and assaulted, opposition parties have been denied access to the media and draft legislation threatens to restrict the right to free speech and peaceful assembly. We urgently call on the authorities to immediately investigate all attacks on journalists and media workers and we urge media houses to adhere to licensing obligations of providing equal opportunities to all election candidates and to respect freedom of expression.

At least 10 journalists have been assaulted in election-related incidents since November 2010, reports Human Rights Network for Journalists-Uganda (HRNJ-Uganda). For example, journalist Michael Kakumirizi of "Red Pepper" was assaulted on 19 January 2011 by supporters of the ruling National Resistance Movement (NRM), in Alebeatong. On 20 January, journalist Issa Aliga of NTV and editor Ssozi Ssekimpi of Top Radio Masaka were both assaulted by Sauda Namagwa, the Masaka district Member of Parliament.



Furthermore, on 17 December 2010 journalist Drake Kizito was beaten by supporters of Peter Claver Mutuluzza, the NRM parliamentary candidate running in the Mawokoa North constituency. Most disturbing is the case of journalist Arafat Nzito of Radio Simba who was detained for a week, assaulted and then dumped in a suburb of Kampala by security agents. Nzito, who often reported news from the leading opposition party Forum for Democratic Change (FDC), went missing on 4 November 2010. Charges were never laid, and Nzito has yet to receive an explanation for his detention. All of these abuses were committed with impunity.

In addition to these assaults, journalists critical of the current government, or those who provide a platform for voices of opposition parties are facing censorship, threats and detention. Journalist James Kasirivu was suspended in December 2010 by the Mbarara-based Edigito Radio for reporting on an opinion poll that suggested a clear victory for the FDC presidential candidate Dr. Kiiza Besigye. Mustapha Mugisa and Samuel Ssejjaaka, respectively the chief executive officer and editor of the "Summit Business Review" magazine, were arrested on 11 January 2011 by security operatives and detained by police in relation to their publication of a cartoon image of President Museveni on the cover of the magazine.

Opposition candidates themselves are being silenced by private radio stations that are denying them the opportunity to be interviewed or to share their views, even when such spaces are paid for. FDC leader Dr. Besigye has faced numerous obstacles accessing the media. On 2 January 2011, he was turned away from appearing on Radio Kitara, Spice FM and Kings Radio; all three stations are owned by ruling party supporters. In Nakaseke district, Besigye paid for space on a community radio talk show, but found the station locked and surrounded by anti-riot police when he arrived.

These incidents demonstrate that media houses are not adhering to their licensing obligations that include providing an equal platform to all candidates and promoting freedom of expression. This also shows that the obligations are not being enforced by the Broadcasting Council, whose role it is to insure there is no political interference in the media.

Also problematic to freedom of expression and assembly is the draft 2009 Public Order Management Bill that is pending to be tabled in parliament. The intention of the Bill is to regulate the conduct of public gatherings, and grants the Inspector General of Police (IGP) and the Minister of Internal Affairs wide discretionary and unjustifiable powers over the management of public meetings, meaning that people wishing to hold public gatherings would have to seek permission from the IGP. If passed in its current form the implications of the Bill would be far reaching; it would impact the operation of civil society organisations, human rights defenders, academic and professional institutions. The bill violates a number of provisions of the 1995 Constitution of Uganda,

notably the right to freedom of assembly and to demonstrate freely. It not only infringes on the rights guaranteed by the Constitution, but also those in the African Charter on Human & People's Rights, the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

We therefore demand that:

- The **authorities** immediately investigate the attacks on all journalists and that those found guilty of targeting the media are brought to justice without delay;
- **media houses** adhere to licensing obligations of providing equal opportunities to all election candidates and their responsibilities of promoting the right to freedom of expression;
- The **Broadcasting Council** promptly investigate cases of abuse and political interference by media owners;
- **Members of Parliament** vote against the proposed Public Order Management Bill, which in its current form has far-reaching negative implications for civil society and freedom of expression and assembly in Uganda.

Signed,

For more information:

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Adil Soz - International Foundation for Protection of Freedom of Speech

ARTICLE 19: Global Campaign for Free Expression

Association of Independent Electronic Media

Bahrain Center for Human Rights

Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies

Canadian Journalists for Free Expression

Cartoonists Rights Network International

Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility  
Center for Media Studies & Peace Building  
Comité por la Libre Expresión  
Ethiopian Freepress Journalists' Association  
Freedom House  
Free Media Movement  
Globe International  
Hong Kong Journalists Association  
Independent Journalism Center  
Institute for the Studies on Free Flow of Information  
Institute of Mass Information  
International Federation of Journalists  
International Press Institute  
Maharat Foundation (Skills Foundation)  
Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance  
Media Foundation for West Africa  
Media Institute  
Media Institute of Southern Africa  
National Press Association - INTERIM MEMBER  
Pacific Freedom Forum  
Pacific Islands News Association  
Pakistan Press Foundation  
Palestinian Center for Development and Media Freedoms  
Privacy International  
Reporters Without Borders

## **Appendix III: Cases of attacks to media freedom as they occurred.**

### **a) Case Register from November 2010 to April 2011**

Nzito Arafat , 23years, was picked by plain clothed men in a private registration Toyota double cabin on 3<sup>rd</sup>/Nov/2010 at around 2:00pm local time from Radio Simba.

He is a resident of Kitintale, in Nakawa division, in Kampala –Uganda’s capital city.

Radio Simba’s chief news editor, Emmanuel Okello told Human Rights Network for Journalists-Uganda(HRNJ-Uganda) that Nzito’s disappearance followed him receiving numerous phone calls to go and see meet some people in the radio’s parking yard-about 30meters away.

So he left his work half done and went to meet those people but he never returned to complete filing his news story. He did not return the following day as well.

According to an eye witness who declined to be named, Nzito was whisked away by four men in a vehicle with tinted screens at around 2:30pm. He first talked to them before he sat in the back seat in between two men. He did not notice the car registration number.

Nzito joined Simba last year as an intern student, and upon completion of his internship, he was enrolled as a reporter but on probation for two months now.

He regularly reports news from the police and the opposition Forum for Democratic Change which is the leading opposition political party in Uganda.

“He did not return to office to complete the story, so I called his cell phone but was not picking up. He did not report the next day, so I called again to no response. When I called again in the afternoon, the phone had been switched off”. Said Radio Simba Chief News Editor Emmanuel Okello

Nzito’s sister, Hadijah Nantambi has told HRNJ-Uganda that she noticed his absence on 5<sup>th</sup>/Nov/2010 yet his cell phone was off.

“When his phone remained off all through the night, I reported the matter to police and searched at various police stations and the Rapid Response Unit (RRU) - a serious crime crack down unit, but could not find him. We are very scared for his life, we need help”. Said Nantambi

The commandant of the Chieftaincy of Military Intelligence (CMI), James Mugira was surprised when HRNJ-Uganda contacted him over the matter.

“It’s news to me, but I am dispatching a team to investigate the younger man’s disappearance”. Mugira said.

“We are greatly concerned about such incidents; these threats are real at a time when politics is at its peak in Uganda ahead of the general elections early next year. Justice should prevail all the time, so Nzito’s captors should subject him to the courts of law if they suspect him of any crime”. Said HRNJ-Uganda Board Chairman Robert Ssempala

**03<sup>rd</sup>/12/2010;** Unidentified people attacked the New Vision photo Journalist Eddie Ssejjoba and made off with his camera and other valuable items.

Ssejjoba who has been working with the New Vision since 1997 as a crime and general news reporter at the time of the attack was going to Kati Kati Restaurant located at Lugogo, Nakawa division in Kampala district to cover a music concert organized by a local artist Bebe Cool a.k.a Moses Ssali.

He said that the incident occurred at around 10pm near Game shopping mall. “I boarded a taxi outside old taxi park and as I reached at Lugogo I asked the driver to leave at the stage but he continued driving until I was dropped between 150 to 200 meters away from the exact stage” Ssejjoba narrated.

“Upon jumping out of the taxi, I called my colleagues from Bukedde news paper who were supposed to cover the same activity but in the process, unidentified person hit me from behind with a hard object and grabbed my phone. I screamed and shouted. Some other people whom I thought were good Samaritans came but turned against me and started beating me from left, right and centre. I was pulled in the middle of the road and in the process I became unconscious and what happened later I can’t say it.” Ssejjoba said.

Ssejjoba told Human Rights Network for Journalists-Uganda that he could not remember much about what transpired but said he found himself in the Kampala hospital being attended to by doctors.

A staff said a rescuer got him in the middle of the road being beaten by unidentified men and scared him off but went with all his properties including a camera and other valuable items. He was picked and brought to the New Vision headquarters located in the industrial area in bad state.

“He was dirty and bleeding. We took him to hospital and he was unconscious for around seven hours” a staff said.

Ssejjoba said he sustained bodily injuries and his right limb was the most affected and my leg. “I was discharged on 05<sup>th</sup>/12/2010 but I continued reporting to the hospital to monitor my progress.

**5<sup>th</sup>/Nov/2011;** Red pepper reporter Kits Mabonga was arrested and assaulted by Presidential Guard Brigade (PGB) for talking photos of accidents along Yusuf

Lule road. A speeding PGB vehicle was involved in an accident with a saloon car. He was accused of taking a photograph of a president's car.

**On 06<sup>th</sup>/Dec/2011;** The Anglican Bishop for Western Buganda Diocese, The Rt. Rev. Kefa Kanya Ssemakula has manhandled and strangled a photo journalist working with Kamunye news paper- a sister Luganda newspaper of the Red Pepper publication.

Brian Luwagga was photographing the Bishop at the Masaka High Court premises where the Bishop had been dragged by the Christian followers in the Diocese led by Mugabi John and Lubega Bowazi opposed to the way the Bishop's successor Rev. Can. Makumbi Godfrey had been elected. They wanted court to nullify the election.

They however withdrew the case because it had been overtaken by events since the election had been rushed and finished before court could make a judgment. The petitioners are however intending to file another petition blocking Rev. Can. Makumbi Godfrey's consecration.

Bishop Ssemakula grabbed Luwagga by the collar demanding to know who had given him the permission to take his photos.

"He grabbed me by the collar and pressed my neck hard asking for my permission to photograph him. He was joined by the diocese spokesperson, Rev. Enock Muwanguzi. I told them that I was a journalist but would not listen. They demanded that I delete the photos, but I refused". Narrated Luwagga.

Luwagga said he was rescued by other people opposed to the Bishop's ways of work, "when they demanded to know what the matter was, the Bishop was scared away and ran to his waiting car and sped off. The scuffle lasted for about 20 minutes.

The Diocesan spokesperson, Rev. Muwanguzi defended the Bishop. He told Human Rights Network for Journalists-Uganda (HRNJ-Uganda) that Luwagga did not introduce himself to the Bishop prior to taking the photos.

"The Bishop was angered by this man who kept on photographing him right from the court proceedings and followed him all the way to the courtyard. So he demanded to know who this person was. So it's not true that he manhandled and strangled him". Said Muwanguzi

"HRNJ-Uganda is dismayed by the clergymen's actions against the journalist. We demand that the Arch Bishop of the Church of Uganda, Rt. Rev. Luke Orombi intervenes and prevails over Bishop Ssemakula and Rev. Muwanguzi. The religious leaders are supposed to be the mirrors of the society" There should be a meeting to reconcile these two key members of the society". Said the HRNJ-Uganda Programmes Coordinator, Geoffrey Wokulira Ssebaggala.

## **b) Bunyoro radio stations deny Besigye airtime**

Five privately-owned radio stations in the Bunyoro-Kitara region allegedly rejected Inter-Party Cooperation presidential flag bearer Kiiza Besigye from appearing on earlier scheduled radio talk shows at the weekend. Dr Besigye was scheduled to appear on Bunyoro Broadcasting Service last night but its owner, Mr Ernest Kiiza, is said to have ordered the cancellation of the programme.

Mr. Kiiza is the Masindi Municipality NRM MP flag bearer. According to sources, Mr. Kiiza said Dr Besigye was no longer welcome to his radio station and his money was rejected.

Mr. Kiiza, however, dismissed the allegations, calling them lies. “Dr Besigye has never booked for airtime on my radio station. He is a liar. Maybe his agents conned him of his money. We do not have any record of such a booking,” Mr. Kiiza said last evening.

The Forum for Democratic Change leader was also turned away from Radio Kitara, owned by President Museveni’s pilot Brig. Ali Kiiza, Spice FM owned by PPDA Executive Director Edgar Agaba and Kings Radio owned by Information Minister Kabakumba Masiko.

## **c) Hoima mishap**

In Hoima, Dr Besigye was scheduled to appear on Radio Hoima but an apparent visit by Hoima RDC Martha Asimwe to the station prompted its owner Canaan Kyanku to reject Besigye and his team.

Daily Monitor was unable to contact Lt. Asimwe for clarification. According to another source, Radio Hoima had hosted FDC officials two years back, a thing that did not go down well with certain big wigs in the area. “They were given few hours to submit a copy of the recording of that show to State House,” the source revealed

Mr. Patrick Baguma, the FDC vice-chairperson western region, said yesterday that Lt. Asimwe had been moving around Hoima threatening service providers not to assist Dr. Besigye’s team.

He attributed the resistance from private radio station owners to Dr Besigye to fear of likely consequences if they hosted him on their radio stations. Mr. Ibrahim Ssemujju Nganda, the IPC spokesman, said the IPC had hoped to

better articulate issues through the radio stations but that has not been forthcoming.

**12/2010;** Mbarara based Endigito radio sacked its presenter James Kasirivu over an opinion poll that gave Inter-Party Cooperation and Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) candidate Dr. Kiiza Besigye a clear win.

Kasirivu a.k.a the Great was presenting a week day radio programme called 'World Express' between 2pm to 5pm.

The programme focused on topical issues at local and foreign scene.

On that day, the local news papers had published an opinion poll that gave Dr. Besigye a lead. "I picked the matter during my programme and made a clear and independent comment that if elections were to be held yesterday, Dr. Besigye would win according the polls in the news papers.

**On 08<sup>th</sup>/12/2010;** Iganga District Police commander Dan Kamugisha threatened to arrest the Daily Monitor journalist Yazid Yolisigira over audio recordings.

DPC Kamugisha while at Iganga Municipality council ordered his officers to Yolisigira who had refused to relinquish an audio recording of the DPC. However, the attempt to effect arrest was frustrated by fellow journalists who shielded him.

**09<sup>th</sup>/12/2010;** Police in Barr sub-county in Lira district threatened to arrest two Voice of Lango radio journalists Munira Suwed and Omara James Elem over community radio debate that discussed police involvement in committing human rights abuse against people they are supposed to protect.

The community radio debates are requested by the victims basing on the issues affecting them.

"The controversial debate focused on a defilement case allegedly committed by a police man called Martin ongom" Munira said. The case was reported to higher authorities by some members of the community but the culprit was allegedly assisted by the same police to escape before the arrest.

Some members of Abolet parish accused police in the area for detaining suspects in a toilet.

Munira told Human Rights Network for Journalists-Uganda that a day after the debate she receive a telephone call from the local chairperson informing us that police was threatening to arrest us for inciting the public.

Lira district is part of the northern region recovering from a 20 year war with the biggest percentage of the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) returning to their respective communities.



**Mpigi, 20<sup>th</sup>/12/2010;** Supporters of Mawokota North aspiring Member of Parliament Peter Claver Mutuluza have roughed-up and beaten a journalist Drake Kizito at a campaigning rally.

Kizito, a journalist with Ink Media Agency had gone to cover Mutuluza's rally on 17<sup>th</sup>/12/2010 at Jjeza parish, Muduuma sub-county, Mawokota north in Mpigi district.

The Mawokota North seat has attracted five candidates including Ameria Kyambadde a former president Museveni's private secretary from the ruling party (National Resistance Movement), Peter Claver Mutuluza as an independent, Tebusweke Mayinja from Democratic Party, Buwembo Shafik from Forum for Democratic Change and Kaweesa Ahmed of the Justice Forum ticket.

Mutuluza is an incumbent Member of Parliament for Mawokota North who won the seat in 2006 on the National Resistance Movement ticket.

An eye witness told Human Rights Network for Journalists-Uganda (HRNJ-Uganda) that the rally had registered fewer people and Mutuluza was accusing police for blocking his supporters.

Drake Kizito said "he traded accusations before his supporters when he saw him joining his rally with a camera. "He accused me of spying for Ameria Kyambadde" His supporters rounded me up immediately and started beating me until police came for my rescue" Kizito said got injuries on his two legs.

When HRNJ-Uganda contacted Hon. Mutuluza he did not own up nor deny the matter.

"This is the first case of assault at the campaigning rally to be recorded by HRNJ-Uganda since the campaigns for members of parliament started on 16<sup>th</sup>/December/2010. "It indicates that campaigns for members of parliament are likely to be more violent than presidential and local government campaigns" HRNJ-Uganda Programmes Coordinator Geoffrey Wokulira Ssebagala said.

By the time this alert was written nobody had been summoned for questioning nor arrested despite that Kizito reported the matter and recorded statement at Jjeza police post.

HRNJ-Uganda demands that Hon. Mutuluza be arrested for inciting violence and assaulting a journalist.

**21<sup>st</sup>/12/2010;** The Uganda Broadcasting Council has banned a radio presenter at Voice of Kigezi FM from appearing on any airwaves in Uganda until claims of him participating in partisan politics are investigated.

According to the December 17 two-page letter addressed to the director of the radio station, the legal and compliance manager at the Uganda Broadcasting Council, Ms Susan Atengo Wegoye, banned Ms Prosy Nyeteitera and demanded that recordings of her past programmes be submitted to the council for investigations.

“We have received complainants regarding Ms Prosy Nyeitera who has been appearing on your radio station as a presenter and whose contributions purportedly violate some of the provisions of the law, especially the minimum broadcasting standards. By copy of this letter, the said presenter is thus instructed not to appear on any other airwaves until investigations into her matter are complete,” said Ms Wegoye.

The director of Voice of Kigezi, Eng Ivan Mbabazi Batuma, confirmed receipt of the broadcasting directives and was in the process of implementing it.

The NRM party chairman for central division, Mr. Robert Matsiko, said they had complained several times to the station’s director over the misconduct of Ms Nyeitera, especially her open campaigns for candidates of her choice during the NRM party primary elections on air

**Kampala, 31<sup>st</sup>/Dec/2010;** The Broadcasting Council of Uganda has blocked privately owned radio stations from broadcasting live a conference organized by Buganda Kingdom (Ttabamiruka).

Ttabamiruka is an annual conference organized by Buganda kingdom to review and discuss the social, cultural, economic and developmental issues of the Kingdom. The theme for this year’s conference was ‘Poverty and Development’.

The conference held on 17<sup>th</sup>/Dec/2010, at the Wampewo avenue based Hotel Africana, a suburb of Kampala, was supposed to be broadcasted live by different radio stations including Buganda Kingdom owned radio the Central Broadcasting Services (CBS FM), but were all stopped by the Broadcasting Council (BC).

By the time a directive was made by the Broadcasting Council, CBS FM was already relaying the debates live.

A CBS FM staff who preferred anonymity said the radio received a call from the Broadcasting council suspending the live broadcast- equating it to an open air talk show locally known as ‘Ebimeeza’ which were banned in September 2009.

“We only broadcasted live the speech of the King His Majesty Ronald Muwenda Mutebi II” a staff said. The radio was accused of not consulting the Broadcasting council on issues to be discussed and aired during the conference.

Buganda Kingdom is one of the largest ethnic groups in Uganda based in the central region, with most of its people languishing in poverty.

The national poverty statistics according to the Uganda National Bureau of Statistics figures indicate that more than 38% of the total population in Uganda lives below poverty line.

The chairman of the Broadcasting Council Eng. Godfrey Mutabazi told Human Rights Network for Journalists –Uganda (HRNJ-Uganda) that the conference was not much different from the banned Ebimeeza which were broadcasted from the bars.

“We were not informed as a regulatory body about the topics to be discussed and the guests. So what they were doing was illegal because we banned Ebimeeza in 2009. We were even taken to court over our action”. Mutabazi said.

He explained that there is a license requirement that all radio stations planning to have live programmes broadcasting should own pre-listening gadgets but most radio stations have still failed to comply.

“We can tolerate live soccer matches or Independence commemorations but not debates” Eng. Mutabazi stressed.

In September 2009, the council arbitrary closed down five privately owned radio stations including 88.8 and 89.2 CBS FM, Ssuubi FM, Radio Sapientia and Radio Two (Akkaboozi) and consequently banned open air radio talk shows.

HRNJ-Uganda feels that the Broadcasting council is over stepping its powers when it begins to regulate people’s thoughts, conscience and information. These actions are illegal because they limit space under which citizens exercise their fundamental freedoms and liberties stipulated under Art. 29 of the constitution of the Republic of Uganda

Art. 29(a) states that, “Every person shall have the right to freedom of speech and expression which shall include freedom of the press and the media”

“Ugandans must be free to discuss any issues that touch their lives and their views must be heard by those in authority as a way of holding them accountable, especially during this campaign period. The radio is a primary source of information to Ugandans which must operate independently without interference from the government”. Said the HRNJ-Uganda Board Chairman, Robert Ssempala

In light of this, HRNJ-Uganda calls on the judiciary to speed-up the hearing of a case challenging the Broadcasting council’s power over people’s right to freedom of expression which was filed early 2010.

**Kampala, 3rd/Jan/2011;** Court in Kampala has ordered a news paper the ‘Rolling stone’ to compensate individuals whose names and faces were labeled as gays in one of its reports.

This followed the aggrieved individuals through their lawyers Henry Onoria, John Francis Onyango and Ankankwasa Edward to drag the paper to court over violating their right to privacy, the right to human dignity and protection from inhuman treatment.

On the 2nd/October/2010, the paper carried a story that was labeled as “Scandal” and under the headline “Hang them; they are after our kids!!!! Pictures of Uganda’s 100 homos leak.”

Some extracts of the story read: A 12 months clandestine investigation into the dark world of homosexuality and lesbianism in the country has led to the full exposure of the facial appearances of leading gays in this nation. The paper alleged to have secured 100 pictures and more were coming in a four-part series.

Delivering the judgment, the High Court judge Justice V.F. Musoke-Kibuuka issued an injunction restraining the paper and its servants from any further publications of the identities of the persons and homes of the applicant and homosexuals generally.

Justice Kibuuka found that the impugned publication threatened the rights of the applicants to respect for human dignity and protection from inhuman treatment and the right to privacy of person and home.

He also ordered the news paper to pay 1,500,000 Uganda Shillings which is equivalent to U S \$ 750.00 to each victim as compensation as well as paying legal costs for the applicants. Human Rights Network for Journalists-Uganda (HRNJ-Uganda) believes that the enjoyment to freedom of press and freedom of expression come with a responsibility to protect and promote other people’s rights.

“Regulatory bodies should not be targeting to close down critical media houses or arresting and sacking journalists under duress but they should neutrally enforce the licensing regulations” HRNJ-Uganda Programmes Coordinator Geoffrey Wokulira Ssebaggala said. We applaud court for the judgment because it will bring back the declining state of responsible media.

**08<sup>th</sup>/Jan/2011;** Protest note on the censorship of privately-owned radio stations from live broadcasting a conference organized by the Buganda Kingdom by The Broadcasting Council (BC) of Uganda **from Pakistan Press Foundation**

**13<sup>th</sup>/Jan/2011;** The Chief Executive Officer and Managing Editor of the Summit Business Review magazine, Mustapha Mugisa was arrested by security

operatives and detained at police over running a cartoon of President Museveni on his magazine cover.

The Summit Business Review magazine Vol.02, issue 10, of October 2010 ran a cartoon of the president while cutting a cake to mark 48 years of Uganda's independence. The magazine examined Museveni's outstanding challenges under his 24 years in power. They included; roads, health, economy, security, transparency, development and education.

It also paid special attention to the forthcoming general elections between February and March this year, and what was next for the country after Museveni's 24 years in power out of the total 48 that Uganda has been independent. It was summarized in the headline, 'Uganda at 48. Museveni at 24. Where next?'

On 11<sup>th</sup>/January/2011, at around 11:30am, 10 security operatives in civilian clothes, stormed the magazine offices in Kamwokya- a suburb of Kampala, Uganda's capital city, armed with copies of the magazine and asked to know whether he was Mugisa the editor of the magazine.

"Upon introducing myself as the editor/CEO of the magazine, they told me to record a statement there and then over Museveni's cartoon, which I did for about 40 minutes. After which, they demanded that I follow them to the Central Police Station (CPS) in Kampala to face their boss". Mugisa told Human Rights Network for Journalists-Uganda (HRNJ-Uganda).

When he reached at CPS, Mugisa was detained in a police cell without a charge and his laptop confiscated. The Co-director of the Magazine, Dr Samuel Sseijaaka was subsequently arrested when he went to CPS to rescue his colleague.

The dual was detained for over four hours and later released on a police bond which did not mention any charges preferred against them.

Sources told HRNJ-Uganda that the dual's file has been forwarded to directorate of Criminal Investigation Department based at Kibuli and they are required to appear before political offences desk today 13<sup>th</sup>/Jan/2011

Art. 29(a) states that, "Every person shall have the right to freedom of speech and expression which shall include freedom of the press and the media"

HRNJ-Uganda believes that using a cartoon is one form of expression which is acceptable in any democratic state and recognized by international treaties to which Uganda is a party and the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda therefore, nobody should be punished for expressing his or herself.

"It is an abuse to the enjoyment of the right to freedom of expression and the media for security to detain people at their own discretion basing on this. This is

persecution that should not go unpunished and the police must explain this act urgently.” Demand by HRNJ-Uganda Board Chairperson, Robert Ssempala

HRNJ-Uganda calls on the Office the United Nations Special Rapporteur, development partners as well as others bodies to bring the government of Uganda to order and remind it about its responsibility of protecting rights and freedoms.

#### **d) Minister Nsambu’s Radio Reporters Banned from DP Rallies**

Minister Alintuma Nsambu’s rival has banned his radio reporters from covering her rallies, sparking off protests from media activists.

Florence Namayanja, the Democratic Party candidate for Bukoto East has banned all reporters from Tropix FM radio based in Masaka from covering her campaign rallies. She says she does not need Tropix radio reporters because they are biased in their reporting.

Tropix FM Radio broadcasting on 100.7 FM is owned by ICT State Minister John Alintuma Nsambu.

Florence Namayanja, says they have agreed to ban Tropix Radio reporters from attending and covering her campaign rallies, because they have defied media ethics. Namayanja claims that Minister Nsambu, her rival, is misusing his journalists to meddle in the Bukoto East campaigns. Namayanja claims that a team of Tropix FM reporters led by Kalanzi Edward and Venna Nagadya, together with Minister Nsambu’s supporters, stormed her rally at Bulayi village in Mukungwe Sub County and stirred violence.

Namayanja also alleges that Tropix reporters stole her Nokia mobile phone and handed it over to their boss Minister Nsambu. But Nsambu has not commented.

Tropix Radio reporters however say they will not respect the ban, because it is illegal. Erias Haruna, Venna Nagadya and Dickson Wamala say Namayanja has no authority to stop them from covering her rallies.

Venna Nagadya, who is blacklisted among Tropix reporters who stormed Namayanja’s rally and later stole her phone, has denied the allegations. She explains that on that fateful day she arrived at Namayanja’s rally, but was shocked when Namayanja’s supporters pounced on her and beat her up because she worked for Tropix radio.

Nagadya, who presents a morning show, alleges that she suffered internal bleeding as a result of the beating and has since been undergoing treatment at Dr. Kalevu Medical clinic.

Erias Haruna, another reporter says he will continue covering Namayanja's rally because there is no written instruction from the police and the Uganda Broadcasting council, stopping them from covering any rally.

Haruna instead says Namayanja has cases to answer at Masaka central police, because her supporters beat them up and stole Tropix Radio gadgets which include a voice recorder, camera and an exciter receiver used in outside broadcasting.

Wokulira Ssebagala, the coordinator Uganda Human Rights Network for Journalists, says Namayanja has no right to ban any journalist or media house from covering her rallies. Wokulira told URN that what Namayanja has done is in total defiance of the the press and journalist act. He argues that Namayanja is denying listeners and voters from listening to all sides to make an informed decision on the political issues.

He has advised Namayanja to raise her concerns with the Media council, broadcasting council, and the Independent media council of Uganda, which have the mandate to investigate her grievances.

On 17<sup>th</sup>/Jan/2011; Two police men attached to Fort Portal Central Police Station assaulted a radio journalist, Mutegeki Geoffrey, 25, working with Voice of Tooro. He suffered the police wrath when he went to cover an impending students' strike at Fort Portal School of Clinical Officers. The school is found in Western Uganda.

The students had threatened to stage a strike over poor welfare and their demand for the transfer of the college's principal.

Mutegeki was signing into the visitor's book at the school's main entrance when the police men suspected him of carrying a camera. They demanded that he deletes any photographs he could have taken.

"I reached at the news scene at around 2pm. As I was signing into the visitor's book, a policeman mistook my cell phone for a camera; he then started demanding that I delete all the photographs in it. I told him that it was a cell phone not a camera but he went ahead to confiscate it" Mutegeki said.

He adds that as he was being accused of having taken photographs by one policeman, another one came from behind and clobbered his head twice and kicked his right leg.

Sources told Human Rights Network for Journalists-Uganda (HRNJ-Uganda) that Mutegeki, however, could not file a case of assault because the police in the area denied him access to Police Form 3 when he went there for assistance. "They kept referring me from one police officer to another until I gave up on the matter." Mutegeki told HRNJ-Uganda.

Police form three (3) is an official diagnosis document used by victims of assault. HRNJ-Uganda learnt that the police had ignored the case until radios in the area publicized it.

"We received a call from the District Police Commander of Fort Portal, Joseph Kihamba who invited us to a meeting. He blamed us for having aired such negative stories against the police" a journalist who preferred not to be named told HRNJ-Uganda.

"This violent act was criminal and infringes on the enjoyment of the right to freedom of expression and the media as enshrined in Uganda's constitution." Said the HRNJ-Uganda, Board Chairman Robert Ssempala

HRNJ-Uganda therefore demands that these errant officers be brought to book for their unprofessional behavior in the period possible failure HRNJ-Uganda will not hesitate to institute a private prosecution case.

The Fort portal District Police Commander Joseph Kihamba told HRNJ-Uganda that the case was being investigated and promised to have taken action by Monday 24<sup>th</sup>/Jan/2011.

**19<sup>th</sup>/Jan/2011;** a Red Pepper's photo journalist Michael Kakumirizi was mobbed up by suspected the ruling party National Resistance Movement (NRM) party supporters while covering an opposition presidential candidate's campaign rally in the Lango sub-region.

Kakumirizi, in his late 20s, escaped with a deep wound on his forehead and bruised arm which were hit by bricks and a bicycle that was thrown at him.

Others beaten included Francis Tumwekwazize a former WBS TV journalist now attached to the Inter-Party Cooperation (IPC) Press Unit. IPC is a coalition of different opposition political parties fronting retired Col. Dr. Kiiza Besigye for the Uganda presidency.

Him and other journalists were roughed up by the suspected NRM functionaries who accused them of taking their pictures while allegedly bribing voters at Aloi Police Post in the newly created Alebeatong district in an attempt to keep residents away from Dr. Kizza Besigye's Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup>/Jan/2011 rally in the area.



This group in Alebeatong district was awakened by the camera flash to realize that journalists were part of the group of residents that they had called to Aloi Police Post to receive the money.

Human Rights Network for Journalists-Uganda (HRNJ-Uganda) was told by eye witness that supporters pounced on the journalists and tried to take away their cameras, but the journalists too put up a spirited fight, to save their equipments and dear lives.

“I was rounded up by these functionaries as I tried to escape. They beat me using batons, kicks, and fists. I became helpless because the area police just looked on. I was saved by Besigye’s guards. I am not political, and at the time I was only doing my journalistic work.” Kakumirizi narrated to Human Rights Network for Journalists-Uganda (HRNJ-Uganda).

The guards arrested the Aloi Sub County NRM Chairman Francis Owino who is accused of leading the attack on journalists. The Police struggled with FDC supporters to save Owino from being lynched.

Owino and other suspects were immediately driven to Alebeatong Police Station where journalists also filed cases of assault against this group of NRM leaders.

Surprisingly, however, the District Internal Security Officer (DISO), Abdul Ogwal secured the release of Owino and his allies before they were rocked up. It was later established that the DISO is Owino’ relative

“HRNJ-Uganda is greatly concerned about the increasing violence against journalists at the hands of ruling party supporters with impunity. We challenge the police and other authorities to prosecute this group as a way to preserve and protect journalists during this campaign period.” Said the HRNJ-Uganda Board Chairperson, Robert Ssempala

**20<sup>th</sup>/Jan/2011;** The Masaka district Woman Member of Parliament (MP), Sauda Namagwa assaulted Issa Aliga of NTV and Ssozi Ssekimpi the Masaka based Top Radio editor.

The two were assaulted on 20<sup>th</sup>/Jan/2011 at Masaka Central Police Station where the MP had gone to record a statement over a crash with her political opponent, Freda Mubanda who is vying for the same seat.

Namagwa and Mubanda had crashed at a local meeting at Ssenyange parish, Nyendo-Ssenyange division in Masaka Municipality where they got into a bitter argument. It is said that Namagwa had not been officially invited. The anti-riot police rescued the situation. Namagwa went to police to record a statement.

Namagwa did not want to be filmed as she engaged the police into negotiations. So she got a stone and hit Aliga's left foot. She grabbed Ssekimpi by the collar as she shouted at the two accusing them of interference. The police just looked on as the scuffle ensued.

Aliga recorded a statement of assault at Masaka Central police Station.

Human Rights Network for Journalists-Uganda (HRNJ-Uganda) condemns such violence against journalists in the strongest terms possible.

We call upon the police to expeditiously investigate the misconduct and prosecute Namagwa for abusing the very principles which she herself should have been defending.

#### **e) Journalists Blocked from Covering NRM Liberation Celebrations**

Masaka, 26th/Jan/2011: 15 journalists have been turned away from covering the NRM liberation day celebrations in Masaka.

The journalists from Red Pepper, WBS & NTV, Bukedde FM, radio Buddu and Beat FM were shown the exit by Soldiers attached to the presidential guard brigade.

The soldiers ordered the journalists to vacate the venue with all their gadgets on grounds that they are a security threat to the hundreds of NRM supporters at the function.

Henry Mukasa, of the Red Pepper says that he was assured that he would not be allowed into the venue, because his name does not appear on the "official" list of journalists, in their possession.

Only 6 reporters working for Tropix Fm were allowed to cover the celebrations.

Norah Namazzi of WBS TV says the decision to deny journalists access to the NRM celebrations venue, is an infringement on her rights.

The journalists in Masaka are now threatening to boycott all NRM functions.

Wokulira Ssebagala, of Human Rights Network for journalists has condemned PGBs action. Ssebagala says what PGBs has done is illegal because there is no law stopping that stops journalist from covering a national event. Wokulira however says he will personally meet with Linda Nabusaayi, the Presidential press secretary to explain why PGBs continue to violate press freedom.

The PGBs have also disarmed all security officers including policemen in Masaka.

**Masaka, 10<sup>th</sup>/Feb/2011**, Masaka based NTV Uganda correspondent Issa Aliga has been detained by the Special Forces Group (SFG) for filming a scuffle involving Rwemiyaga area Member of Parliament Theodore Ssekikubo ahead of President Museveni's campaign rally.

Special Forces Group is part of the bigger presidential protection unit.

According to an eye witness, the scuffle ensued after SFG blocked MP Ssekikubo from pinning his banner, 300meters away from Mr. Museveni's campaign venue.

Ssekikubo is an incumbent MP for Rwemiyaga County seeking re-election on the National Resistance Movement-Organization part chaired by Museveni.

Aliga who was late January 2011 assaulted by MP Sauda Namagwa told Human Rights Network for Journalists-Uganda (HRNJ-Uganda) that when he reached at Rwemiyaga trading center in Ssembabule district at around 11:15pm, he found a charged crowd which seemed fighting and jumped out of the vehicle to start filming.

“While filming I was roughed up and man-handled by four Special Force Guards personnel who confiscated my camera. I was pushed here and there on accusation of filming an event without permission. I was taken to their bus and interrogated for some minutes after introducing myself to them” Narrated Aliga.

He said after interrogation, he was released and his pleas to get his camera back fail on deaf ears. He was then ordered to go through the usual security checks and attend a campaign rally like any other voters.

Efforts from HRNJ-Uganda to talk to SFG spokesperson Capt. Edison Kwesiga were futile as his mobile phone was switched off.

HRNJ-Uganda has received information to the effect that SFG has barred Aliga from attending Museveni's rallies following his (Aliga) refusal to record a forced statement.

“Aliga becomes the second journalist to be subjected to such cruel treatment after Red Pepper freelance reporter Kits Mabonga during this same election period. Why aren't those errant soldiers who survive on tax payers' money be brought to justice” wondered HRNJ-Uganda Programmes Coordinator Geoffrey Wokulira Ssebagala.

HRNJ-Uganda condemns such an inhumane treatment of a journalist in the strongest term possible and challenges police to investigate the matter and bring those responsible to justice in the shortest period of time possible.

Failure HRNJ-Uganda will not hesitate to seek legal redress using other means.

Aliga's camera was however returned late in the evening with deleted video clips.

**f) Freedom FM boss knifes 9 staff**

Freedom FM, a local radio station in Kabale town has been hit by shortage of staff after its director sacked nine staff members. The radio station is owned by Justus Bagamuhunda, the director of National Foundation for Democracy in Uganda (NAFODU). The knifed staff includes Eliad Amara, the news editor, Ngaboziziza a presenter, Mosettie Arinanye, a news reporter to mention but a few. We hear the radio proprietor is now the editor after sacking Amara. The rift between Bagamuhunda and his staff started last week when he raided the place of work and accused the sacked staff of being lazy. It is also said the staff were cooperating with those of his rival (Voice of Kigezi). "Even those that are still at the station are not sure of their jobs because the man has all along been threatening to swing the knife left right and centre," a snoop said. The sacked staff was heard complaining that their sacking was a blessing in disguise because they had spent four months without any penny and had resorted to taking kikomando.

**g) Radio Veritas manager fired under unclear circumstances during February 2011 elections.**

David Opio, the station manager for Veritas radio was fired from his job following the appointment of the radio board.

No sooner did the board members took up their jobs than they held a first meeting which discussed whether he (Opio) should continued with the two talk-shows Mr. Opio was modulating. The show included; 'Burning Issues which was aired every morning of week days programme, check point every morning throughout week days and a Saturday talk-show under the name, 'the Teso we want'. Then, they decided to suspend Opio which action the board chair Vincent Ogwang (RIP) disagreed with some members and even threatened to quit the board if such a decision was to be implemented. In the ensuing exchange Mr. Ogwang collapsed and was rushed to hospital where he later died.

Radio Veritas which is owned by Soroti Catholic diocese was once a radio to talk about in early 2000s especially during the Lord Resistance Army and the 2006 election. It was shuttered down by the National Resistance Movement Organization government.

On the afternoon of Sunday, June 22, 2003 police raided the radio offices of the Soroti Catholic Diocese Integrated Development Organization, where the station is located, and stopped all radio broadcasts. Officers searched the premises, confiscating audiotapes and documents.

The radio was accused of indiscriminately broadcasting rebel-related news that reportedly caused panic, fear, tension and movement of local population from one area to another.

Following the death of late Ogwang, the Board took a decision to call fresh interviews for all staff of the two radio stations. When Opio turned up, he was told that he couldn't sit interviews because he had been suspended indefinitely, for the following reasons listed below which were mentioned to him by interviewers.

- Failing to account for the station motorcycle.
- Failing to remit funds for adverts for Soroti Municipality Parliamentary candidate Captain Mike Mukula.
- Running free adverts for his opponent in the race Moses Atan.

Opio reported to HRNJ-Uganda that he later explained in writing and cleared my name over all these allegations. It was later proven that the said Motorcycle had been sold and was found with the mechanic where I had taken it for repair.

He added that adverts for candidate Mike Mukula had been aired on credit and when contacted, Mukula acknowledged he had not paid any money to me.

“I also explained that the FDC which had already paid for adverts for their presidential candidate had asked me to drop theirs and instead swap them with those of candidate Moses Atan” said Opio.

**Kibale, An editor for Kagadi Kibaale community** radio Ismael Kasooha is living in profound shock and fear from some politicians who accuse him of bias.

Mr. Ismael Kasooha new editor at Kagadi Kibaale community radio claims that his life is in danger. He accuses supporters of the Kibaale woman MP Ms Juliet Kabonesa of threatening to harm him. “They are accusing me of supporting Robinah Nabanja which is not true. They have threatened to harm me and I have reported the matter at Kagadi police station” Kasooha says.

Ms Kabonesa is facing a stiff challenge from the former Busia RDC Robinah Nabanja. They are vying for the Kibaale woman's parliamentary seat.

Kabonesa who reportedly booked for a one hour talk show at Kagadi Kibaale Community Radio(KKCR) on Sunday night, allegedly turned up for the show accompanied by a team of her campaign managers.

Kasooha says part of Kabonesa's team was comprised of his two brothers. He says the campaign managers started hurling insults against Nabanja. His efforts to advise them to stick to the manifesto of their candidate and issues they hope their candidate will address, only heightened tempers in the studio. The campaigners allegedly accused Mr Kasooha, who was the producer of the show of bias. "A man claiming to be Kabonesa's body guard man handled me and threatened me" Kasooha says.

The scuffle which is said to have started at about 11.30pm on Sunday ended at about midnight when police personnel from Kagadi police station rushed to the studios and calmed the situation.

The two night watchmen who were guarding the station called for police intervention into a fight that paralyzed work at the station. Kasooha identifies some of the people at the centre of the fight as Omehereza kusemerewa, the NRM chairman for Kyenzige sub county. Mr. Safi sebandeke and Mr. Wali Hassan who are Kasooha's brothers did not protect him either.

Kabonesa confirmed disagreeing with Mr Kasooha. "I booked for that show several weeks ago but Kasooha has been sabotaging it. He stunned us when he came into the studio and switched the radio off when the show had just started. Actually thirteen minutes after we had started the show" Kabonesa says.

She claims to have registered a complaint at Kibaale police station and will follow up the matter with her lawyers. "I want compensation from that radio. I have suffered physiologically and it may have an impact on my campaigns. All those losses should be paid. Many people are bitter with him" she says.

She accused Kasooha of being biased in favour of Ms Nabanja. As for the alleged manhandling of Mr Kasooha and threats against him, she claims not to know. "I remained in the studios thinking the radio will be back on air so that we proceed with the show. I did not witness that" she adds. The Kibaale district criminal investigation officer Mr Michel Ogwal says police will investigate the matter.

**16<sup>th</sup>/Feb/2011;** The Uganda Communication Commission (UCC) and Broadcasting Council (BC) are implementing a draft policy which is not a law to gag telecommunication sector.

UCC and BC were emerged late last year on the directive of the cabinet without amending the two laws that establish the two institutions.

The two institutions months ago having been drafting guidelines for the bar any telecommunication company or internet from being hired or to used by an organization to send block texts.

**On 18<sup>th</sup>/Feb/2011,** Telecommunication service providers have blocked DemGroup text message relaying election related reports to their data centre established at Muyenga, a Kampala suburb in Makindye division.

**Mbale 18<sup>th</sup>/Feb/2011;** A WBS TV journalist based in Mbale district Gerald Mutembu has been beaten up by a mob allegedly supporting the state minister for Housing Michael Werikhe.

Wavah Broadcasting Service (WBS) television is a privately owned media house based in Uganda's capital, Kampala

Mutembu who received information about the electoral malpractices rushed to Khamoto trading centre in Bungokho Sub County, Mbale district to ascertain the situation.

“At about 1pm on 18<sup>th</sup>/Feb/2011, I arrived at the news scene and found groups fighting over the alleged bribery and intimidation of voters by supporters of Werikhe and security operatives clad in civilian clothes” said Mutembu

He said he embarked on filming of the scuffle at the trading center but to his surprise a mob turned against him by grabbing him by the collar, tried to confiscate his camera and during the resistance process, Mutembu was boxed and shuttered his lips leading to bleeding.

**Kampala, 23<sup>rd</sup>/Feb/2011;** Kampala central division chairman Godfrey Amooti Nyakana and his bouncers have rounded up and assaulted a Red Pepper photojournalist Arinaitwe George Sidel over taking photos without their permission.

Arinaitwe is the seventh journalist to be assaulted during the wide-spread violence that characterized the local council five polls for district chairpersons and councilors held today.

Arinaitwe, 26 told Human Rights Network for Journalists-Uganda (HRNJ-Uganda) that at 9:30am local time he was alerted about the electoral malpractices by a source at Railway Park polling station along Jinja road and hurried to reach the scene.

He said upon reaching at the scene he found people arguing over the many ballot papers which had been stuffed in the box yet very few people had voted according to the register.

“I started taking photos and immediately a gang of people came, lifted me up and took me to Nyakana who immediately grabbed my camera. I pleaded to him to release my camera but instead his bouncers boxed me in the face and I fell down” Arinaitwe narrated.

HRNJ-Uganda has learnt that despite pleadings from fellow journalists to get back the camera but Nyakana resorted to insults and disappeared with camera on a motorcycle locally referred to as boda bodas. He accused the journalist for taking his photo without his permission

“People should understand that photojournalists are not obligated to seek permission to take a photo of anybody while in a public place. Such an act is a gross abuse of journalists’ rights and freedoms and this is the second time when Nyakana is taking the law his hands” Said HRNJ-Uganda Programmes Coordinator Geoffrey Wokulira Ssebagala.

HRNJ-Uganda demand for the arrest of Nyakana and his bouncers to and brought to justice as a way of reducing high level of impunity in Uganda.

**Gulu, 23<sup>rd</sup>/Feb/2011;** Police in Gulu district have arbitrarily arrested and detained the Daily Monitor correspondent in Gulu Livingstone Okumu on orders of a district councilor Phillip Olanya.

A councilor is a political representative elected at sub-county level to the district

According to the Daily Monitor Gulu Bureau office, Okumu was assigned to follow-up on reports of two illegal pre-ticked ballot boxes which were allegedly being transported to Bar-Olam polling station and another to Loyoboo polling station which borders with a military barracks.

Okumu who arrived at the polling station few minutes after 10am local time told Human Rights Network for Journalists-Uganda (HRNJ-Uganda) that the councilor Olanya approached him and asked whether he was at the polling station on behalf of Uganda People’s Congress one of the political parties in Uganda but he explained to him that he was journalist.

He said within few minutes a group of seven rowdy youth besieged him and accused him of campaigning at a polling station.

“He ordered police to arrest me and I was first detained at Bar-Olam polling station and later transferred to Odek police post where I was detained from 11am-3:30pm” said Okumu.



HRNJ-Uganda has learnt that Bar-Olam polling station experienced serious electoral malpractices during the presidential and parliamentary elections.

“This outrageous, how can the police allow to be used to harass a journalist who is on duty? It’s important for the force to exercise its independence” said HRNJ-Uganda Board Chairman Robert Ssempala.

Okumu was charged with electoral malpractices contrary to sec. 155(b) and (c) of the Local Government Act and Elections Act and conversing vote and using slogan at the polling station and later released on police bond.

HRNJ-Uganda has petitioned the police leadership take punitive measures against its officers in Gulu district over misuse of power.

We demand that all charges preferred against Okumu be withdrawn

He’s required to report to Gulu central police station on 25<sup>th</sup>/Feb/2011.

**Kampala, 23<sup>rd</sup>/Feb/2011**, Stick-wielding hooligans linked to the Kampala mayoral candidate of the ruling NRM party Peter Ssematimba have assaulted six journalists at Kakeeka polling station, Rubaga Parish, Lubaga division in Kampala.

Ugandans on February 23<sup>rd</sup> were electing the local council five chairperson and district councilors.

Information indicate that the hooligans hatched a plan to beat up journalists as they called media houses that a candidate Peter Ssematimba was going to vote at Kakeeka polling station at 10am and therefore requested for media presence . Peter Ssematimba had voted earlier than the time communicated.

The plan to beat up journalists resulted from wide coverage that was highlighting the election regularities where several ballot boxes were found full with pre-ticked ballot papers favoring Peter Ssematimba the ruling party candidate.

“We were tricked that Ssematimba was going to vote at Kakeeka. Many of us went but reaching there we found hooligans throwing stones at police and polling officials and we started recording” said Nabukeera a victim journalist.

She said the violence sparked off when some supporters questioned the volume of ballots which were stuffed yet there was small number of voter who had turned up.

Among the journalists critically assaulted and beaten up in the line of duty is Nabazziwa Lydia a reporter for Bukedde TV who sustained a serious injury on the right ear and is undergoing an operation at Kololo Hospital. She was beaten up at super FM Radio owned by the Ruling party candidate Peter Ssematimba

where there was a report that pre-ticked ballot papers had been dropped in the toilet where she was roughed up.

Nixon Bbaale a camera person with Channel 44 TV survived with a big cut on his head while covering the scuffle at Kakeeka polling station in Lubaga division. He is currently admitted at Mengo hospital in St. Luke Ward one in a critical condition.

Brian Nsimbe a reporter for Channel 44 TV was assaulted and injured one of his arms. He was admitted at Mengo hospital and later discharged.

Nabukeera Florence a reporter with Bukedde FM was violently beaten up at Kakeeka polling station in Rubaga where she had gone to cover Peter Ssematimba a candidate while voting. According to the medical report, she has developed a clot in the left arm which has swollen and is being attended to at Rubaga Hospital.

Namatumbwe Christine a reporter and Luganda News anchor at Metro FM was also roughed up and sustained several injuries on the right arm, her radio recorder, mobile phone and the hand bag were all stolen. She was rushed to Rubaga hospital for medical treatment and later discharged.

The Metro fm Editor Hasfa Namuli told Human Rights Network for Journalists-Uganda (HRNJ-Uganda) that by the time of attack, Namatumbwe was reporting live from the polling station about the scuffle between National Resistance Movement-Organization's candidate Peter Ssematimba and Ssuubi's candidate Erias Lukwago.

"I found her at the Lubaga hospital in severe pain where she was admitted following injuries on her right arm" said Namuli

Jane Anyango a senior reporter with Uganda Broadcasting Corporation Television was violently assaulted at the Kakeeka polling station. Anyango was critically injured in the face, had blood ooze from the mouth, sustained injuries on the leg and has bruises on the buttocks and is in acute pain. She is undergoing treatment at Mayor Clinic.

She told Human Rights Network for Journalists-Uganda (HRNJ-Uganda) that victims who were interviewed before had alleged that Ssematimba had hired hooligans to clobber journalists and supporters of rival candidates.

"I saw them armed with sticks with nails and stones to assault us. The hired hooligans were traveling in four taxies to the scene of the crime" said bleeding Anyango.

"We are worried about the escalating cases of violence against journalists in Uganda. This is the highest number of victims we have received since the

beginning of electoral process in November in 2010 committed in a day” said HRNJ-Uganda Programmes Coordinator Geoffrey Wokulira Ssebagala.

The beating up of journalists occurred in the presence of an armed police constables who looked on as journalists were being assaulted.

In this election, frontline journalists e.g. photographers and camera persons and their tools that were used to document history were majorly targeted following the media coverage that unearthed a lot of election irregularity marred the just concluded presidential and parliamentary elections.

In the meantime, HRNJ-Uganda has also recorded a case where four journalists including Steven Mbidde a journalist with K FM and Michael Kigozi a presenter and reporter with radio One as well as two female journalists from Bukedde TV were cut-off by stick-wielding hooligans at Super fm but police rescued them before the situation had gone out of hands.

The harassment was one of the tools to intimidate journalists as a measure to silence them from covering critical areas referred to as hot spots where election malpractice was suspected to occur.

**Masaka, 28<sup>th</sup>/Feb/2011;** a presenter at Masaka based Top radio Ssozi Lyazi Ssekimpi is reported to have been sacked under duress over a talk show which discussed electoral malpractices witnessed during presidential and parliamentary elections.

Ssekimpi who joined Top radio four years ago has been working as an editor and programme presenter of a weekly talk show ‘voice of the people’ aired between 11am-1pm local time.

Ssekimpi’s sacking happened immediately after appearing before Masaka police for questioning on 28<sup>th</sup>/Feb/2011 at 10am over the Saturday 26<sup>th</sup>/Feb/2011 talk show which discussed the February 18<sup>th</sup> election violence and other malpractices.

Human Rights Network for Journalists-Uganda (HRNJ-Uganda) has learnt that the Saturday show called ‘the voice of the people’ discussed the arrest of Masaka district returning officer Ephraim Tugume after taking a bribe from a candidate who lost an election.

A returning officer is a public servant appointed to head electoral issue at the district.

“We questioned the integrity of the embattled returning officer who declared the highly contested declaration of the Speaker of Parliament Edward Kiwanuka Ssekandi as a winner for Bukoto East parliamentary seat” narrated Ssekimpi.

Ssekimpi told Human Rights Network for Journalists-Uganda that he was interrogated by three detectives for seven hours after which he was charged with inciting violence

Sources told HRNJ-Uganda that Ssekimpi's sacking was influenced by the alleged letter dated 28<sup>th</sup>/Feb/2011 addressed to radio manager Pr. Beatrice W. Kitende from key personalities in the government . However, HRNJ-Uganda has not obtained the letter yet.

When contacted the radio's managing director Pr. Beatrice Kitende confirmed the suspension of Ssekimpi however, denied having received the alleged letter.

"We suspended him for being summoned by police and a complaint from the outgoing Member of Parliament for Bukoto East Alintuma Nsambu. We are meeting as radio management on this Friday 4<sup>th</sup>-March-2011 to study the content of the talk show" Said Pr. Kitende.

She said the meeting will also be attended by officials from police and key personalities who listened to the show.

Sources added that the letter directed the Radio manager to suspend Ssekimpi from conducting any activity of the radio including gathering news and modulate a talk show for a period of three months.

"It's absurd that radio managers in Uganda are being used by those in authority to silence critical voices. In a period less than three years more 20 critical journalists have been sacked under duress resulting into self censorship ranging from editorial, newsrooms and programming" said Programmes Coordinator Geoffrey Wokulira Ssebagala.

Although the employer has the right to recruit and sack a worker, HRNJ-Uganda challenges the Top radio management team investigating Ssekimpi to adhere to principles of natural justice including to accord him a fair hearing

**Masaka, 2<sup>nd</sup>/March/2011;** WBS TV journalist Sadab Kitatta Kaaya survives being knocked down by National Resistance Movement (NRM) chairman for Nyendo Masaka Sub County Reagan Ssentongo.

Kaaya was accused of filming Ssentongo who was caught ferrying students of Masaka Exodus High School to vote at Binyonyi A polling station on allegation to vote for him.

**Kabale, 4<sup>th</sup>/March/2011;** The Kabale Resident District Commissioner (RDC) has threatened a legal suit against two journalists who reported stories in the media that he pulled out a gun to shoot a Umeme staff. The RDC is also alleged to have mobilized communities to attack journalists which the RDC denies.

Umeme is an electricity service provider in Uganda.

Goodluck Musinguzi, a journalist with the New Vision and Robert Muhereza who works for the Daily Monitor wrote stories alleging that RDC Cox Nyakairu pulled out a gun to Umeme staff that had gone to disconnect him over the enormous electricity bill. Nyakairu could not let the staff go until the power was reconnected.

A number of radio stations in the area and national news papers ranging from the New Vision, the Daily Monitor and the Red pepper among others have ran stories about the conduct of the RDC

The Resident District Commissioner is a president's representative at the district whose constitutional mandate is to monitor the implementation of central and local government services in the district and is the chairperson of the district security committee.

On 25<sup>th</sup>/March/2011 Nyakairu flanked by his lawyers vowed to take the two journalists to court over defamation and spreading false information. He also accused reporters for being used by his rivals to tarnish his name. The press conference got a massive coverage by radio stations in the region until Monday 28<sup>th</sup>/March/2011.

HRNJ-Uganda has noted the growing uneasiness for the two journalists due to confrontations received from members of the public.

“Since the press conference I have been confronted on different occasions by members of the public curious about attacking RDC Nyakairu in my news stories” said Musinguzi.

Musinguzi told HRNJ-Uganda researcher that he wrote a well balanced story because whoever was involved in the story was contacted ranging from the RDC to Umeme officials who confirmed that company's technician called Godfrey Kirembeka was threatened with a gun at the RDC's home.

Human Rights Network for Journalists-Uganda (HRNJ-Uganda) has learnt that RDC Nyakairu owed Umeme four million eight hundred thousand Uganda shillings (UGX 4.8m) which has accumulated since 2008 the time he was posted in Kabale district.

When HRNJ-Uganda contacted the RDC Nyakairu, he however said he should not be accountable for public reaction towards the duo.

“They have offended the public, my relatives and friends writing negative stories about me. It's within their rights to express discomfort otherwise am considering taking them to court” said Nyakairu.

“Journalists play an oversight role and they should not be punished for exposing ills in the society. Such good causes should be defended resentfully to

encourage other Medias or journalists do their role for the public good” said HRNJ-Uganda programmes Coordinator Geoffrey Wokulira Ssebaggala.

Although the RDC has the right to seek legal redress in courts of law but we are concerned about the public reaction in this matter because it’s likely to compromise the security of the journalists

HRNJ-Uganda calls for the quick intervention of the appointing authority and the Uganda Police Force (UPF) to investigate RDC Nyakairu and be punished for the misconduct.

**Kampala, 09<sup>th</sup>/March/2011;** The Special Investigation Unit (SIU) have arrested and interrogated the Daily Monitor Journalist Tabu Butagira over Dr. Kiiza Besigye’s story published by the paper.

The special Investigation Unit is a newly established unit under the Uganda Police Force.

The Daily Monitor under tagline Uganda decides, published Dr. Besigye’s story on 28<sup>th</sup>/Feb/2011 with the headline “Besigye; I can’t rule out war”

The agency based in Naguru, a Kampala suburb, summoned Butagira to assist police in its investigations.

Butagira flanked by lawyers James Nangwala and Timothy Ntale was interrogated for about an hour by detectives to purposely extract information to be used against the opposition leader of Forum for Democratic change (FDC) Dr. Kiiza Besigye.

“Police tried to extract information to implicate some people but we warned them against abusing the journalism code of ethics that empowers journalists to protect their sources” Said James Nangwala.

Butagira is the second journalist at the Daily monitor after Robert Mwanje to be compelled to testify against their sources.

“Such police actions are illegal and an insult to the journalism profession. Why do the security agencies want to make journalists in Uganda enemies to everybody including members of the public? They should stop using us to fight their wars” said HRNJ-Uganda Programmes Coordinator Geoffrey Wokulira Ssebaggala.

Human Rights Network for Journalists-Uganda (HRNJ-Uganda) demands for the respect of the journalism profession and the understanding the core values of the profession including the protection of sources of information.

Butagira wrote a two paged statement at the agency's offices before his lawyer James Nangwala and the one detective Mafabi giving an account of the interview with Rt. Col. Besigye.

He was later released.

**Masaka, 12<sup>th</sup>/March/2011;** Mutesa I Royal University students who have been demonstrating over alleged incompetence of university administrators and poor hygiene have assaulted two journalists.

Mutesa I Royal University is owned by Buganda Kingdom, the largest ethnic group in Uganda based in central region.

Brian Luwaga, a correspondent with Kamunye news paper and Edward Bindhe, a stringer with Uganda Radio Network one of the Uganda's news agency were invited by the University guild president Francis Kayiira on 11<sup>th</sup>/March/2011 to cover students' demonstration.

Human Rights Network for Journalists-Uganda (HRNJ-Uganda) has learnt that before the assault of these journalists, the students had earlier locked an official from the kingdom headquarters in a pit latrine.

An eyewitness said journalists were rounded up inside the university premises while conducting interviews with some students, beaten-up and their tools of trade were seized and damaged.

"I was interviewing students who stormed out of a negotiation meeting chaired by the deputy premier of Buganda Kingdom Rt. Hon. Emmanuel Ssendaula and rounded-up by rowdy students. They demanded for my identification and immediately grabbed my recorder and my laptop that fell down and got damaged" said Edward Bindhe.

Bindhe said he was beaten-up and called Luwaga to rescue him who was subsequently roughed up by students.

"I was assaulted for taking students' photos who were harassing Bindhe. Students who attacked me from behind seized my camera and all photos were deleted. I was assaulted for some time until anti-riot police showed up.

"The safety and security of journalists in Uganda has been our major concern even before February 2011 general elections. We have recorded the highest cases of violence against journalists in the past one year including murder. Our worry is that even members of the public who are supposed to protect journalists are now enemies" said HRNJ-Uganda Geoffrey Wokulira Ssebaggala.

HRNJ-Uganda reminds all journalists to measure their security before deciding to go for a story however, we challenge police to investigate and bring all rowdy students to justice.

The matter was reported to police and a general inquiry file has been opened at Masaka police station.

**Jinja, 12/March/2011;** Two journalists have been reported injured in a peaceful demonstration organized by opposition political parties in Jinja town, Eastern Uganda.

David Lukakama, a reporter for Jinja-based radio Voice of Busoga and Hasfa Nakyanzi a reporter for Top Television were covering the violently dispersed demonstration.

Article 29 (d) of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda states that “every person shall have the right to freedom to assemble and to demonstrate together with others peacefully and unarmed and to petition”

An eyewitness told Human Rights Network for Journalists-Uganda (HRNJ-Uganda) that by the time anti-riot police started firing tear gas from behind the demonstrators most journalists were caught up in the area which was hit most by tear-gas canisters.

“A tear gas canister hit me and I fell down sustaining a big cut on my mouth. I lost a teeth and another one got disfigured” Nakyanzi said. Her toe got a fracture.

Nakyanzi was taken to Jinja referral hospital where she received first aid treatment before being transferred to Kadic clinic in Kampala where her mouth was stitched and other necessary treatment.

Journalists who were at the scene told HRNJ-Uganda that anti-riot police was targeting television camera persons and photojournalists who were in front of the demonstrators but the commandant who is the Jinja District Police commander Jonathan Musinguzi did nothing to the affected journalists.

“Cases of violence against journalists in this period seem to be organized to target frontline Journalists. Such moves are intended to scare them off from their messenger work. The commandant of the day, therefore, should be held responsible for abusing the rights of Journalists” Said HRNJ-Uganda Board Chairman Robert Ssempera

When HRNJ-Uganda contacted the DPC Jinja, Jonathan Musinguzi to give an account of how the Journalists were targeted and abused, he denied targeting journalists saying they are his friends.

HRNJ-Uganda condemns such acts of violence against journalists in the strongest term possible and challenges the police leadership to investigate Jinja DPC Jonathan Musinguzi and take punitive measures to punish him.



**Kanungu, 18th/March/2011;** Patson Baraire, the news editor of Kinkizi Fm and Freelance Journalist with the New Vision has been assaulted in court premises by the councilor elect of Kanungu town council Emmy Magezi Byarugaba. He was covering a court case in the chief magistrate's court.

Kinkizi Fm is owned by Amama Mbabazi, the Security Minister and Member of Parliament for Kinkizi West constituency.

Human Rights Network for Journalists-Uganda (HRNJ-Uganda) has learnt that Baraire is the second person to be assaulted by Byarugaba after he allegedly assaulted some individuals during the local council elections.

“I attended a court session on 18<sup>th</sup>/March/2011 where Byarugaba and his friend Godfrey Karabeda are facing assault charges. When the case was adjourned I stepped quickly out to take photos of the suspects. I took the first one and as I tried to take another photo, Byarugaba jumped to grab my camera. When he missed it he started boxing me and I took a refuge at police opposite the court where the case was reported” said Baraire

An eyewitness told HRNJ-Uganda that Byarugaba accused Baraire of taking his photos without his permission in the court premises. Adding that he was bitter about what the media has been airing since he was taken to court.

Baraire sustained bodily injuries and he was rushed to Kihhi health center IV where he received treatment.

“A number of journalists have been physically attacked during the election period we are concluding and the organs responsible to enforce the law have the burden to bring all perpetrators of violence to justice before it's too late. Failure such institutions will be partly accountable for the growing level of impunity in Uganda” Said HRNJ-Uganda Programmes coordinator Geoffrey Wokulira Ssebagala

HRNJ-Uganda challenges the Kanungu district Resident State Attorney to quickly sanction the charges since police has concluded its investigations into the matter.

**Mpigi, 21<sup>st</sup>/March/2011;** Police in Buwama, Mpigi district have arrested and detained Central Broadcasting Service (CBS FM) correspondent Yoweri Musisi over a story which alleged increased lawlessness in the area.

Musisi is a correspondent for Buganda Kingdom owned radio CBS FM in Mpigi district, 80 kilometers, south of Kampala.

He was arrested on 19<sup>th</sup>/March/2011 at 10am by armed police men at Buwama trading centre on the orders of Officer in Charge of the station Abbey Ngaho.

Human Rights network for Journalists-Uganda (HRNJ-Uganda) has learnt Musisi reported a number of stories about the increasing theft and house breaking cases in areas of Luwunga, Nkozi and Bwere.

Sources told HRNJ-Uganda that residents in these areas live in fear since the beginning of this year due to likely cases of rape since thugs forcefully enter into people's houses.

“When I was writing the previous story, I went to OC CID Buwama police station called Natukunda with a complainant from Bwere village Simon Peter Kawuki. He confirmed that police have recorded cases of theft and house from such areas” said Musisi

When HRNJ-Uganda first visited Musisi at Buwama police station on 20<sup>th</sup>/March/2011 he said, he was not aware of charges despite being behind bars.

O/C Ngaho told HRNJ-Uganda that Musisi was on charges of inciting of violence and giving false information.

“He reported in the news that there were rebels in the area. He traded false information and we shall punish him for that” said Ngaho

Musisi was released on bond on 21<sup>st</sup>/March/2011 at 1:00 o'clock after being charged with giving false information.

“Police should not use laws to silence voices of the people rather to guard communities from criminal elements. People resorting to the media to express their concerns clearly indicate that police has failed its work or people have lost trust in the institution of police. ” said HRNJ-Uganda Programmes Coordinator Geoffrey Wokulira Ssebagala

HRNJ-Uganda challenges police to investigate and arrest all criminals who have been terrorizing communities than suffocating voices of those who speak for the voiceless.

Musisi is required to report on bond on Thursday the 24<sup>th</sup>/March/2011 at 10:00am

**26<sup>th</sup>/March/2011;** a police officer called Gertrude Temaiya attached to Masaka central police station assaulted WBS TV journalist Sadab Kitatta Kaaya over interviewing someone who was on the wanted list of police. Kaaya was found interviewing the suspect.

**Kanungu, 4<sup>th</sup>/April/2011;** Police in Kanungu has opened trumped-up charges against the New Vision journalist Patson Baraire who was assaulted in court premises over taking a photo without permission.

On 18<sup>th</sup>/March/2011 the councilor elect of Kanungu town council Emmy Magezi Byarugaba assaulted Baraire after attending a court session where he (Byarugaba) was accused of assaulting some individuals during the local council elections.

Baraire immediately reported the matter to police, recorded a statement and later transferred to the police surgeon to be diagnosed with bodily injuries.

Sources at the Kanungu police told Human Rights Network for Journalists-Uganda (HRNJ-Uganda) that Byarugaba opened a counter case against the journalist on the same day.

We have learnt that Baraire was supposed to be taken to court on 1<sup>st</sup>/April/2011 on charges of assaulting Byarugaba but the intervention of HRNJ-Uganda has caused the Resident State Attorney has called for the case file and study the charges.

“I was informed by police through a phone call on Friday morning the 1<sup>st</sup>/April/2011 that I was being taken to court to answer charges of assaulting Byarugaba. I wondered how I could be taken to court yet I reported an assaulted to police” said Baraire

Information reaching HRNJ-Uganda indicates that the charge sheet is likely to be amended to fighting in a public place from assault.

When HRNJ-Uganda contacted the Kanungu District Police Commander (DPC) Moses Ssemakula said both Baraire and Byarugaba are on charges of fighting in a public place and they are being taken to court any time this week.

“It’s absurd that police officials in Kanungu district could be convinced that a photo journalist (Baraire) who was on duty could beat-up somebody whom he was photographing. We insist that these are flimsy charges preferred against Baraire” said HRNJ-Uganda Programmes Coordinator Geoffrey Wokulira Ssebaggala.

Ssebaggala said such charges against Baraire are intended to frustrate him from pursuing the assault case against Byarugaba.

HRNJ-Uganda expresses its dismay with the way the police is persecuting Baraire and demand that police should withdraw such charges against Baraire with immediate effect.

We also call for the intervention of Director of Public Prosecution (DPP) into the matter as a way of stopping individuals in police from persecuting Baraire.

**Mpigi, /7<sup>th</sup>/April/2011;** Court in Buwama has charged Central Broadcasting Services (CBSFM) journalist Yoweri Musisi under publishing false news law which was nullified by the highest court in the land.

The Supreme Court Judge J.N. Mulenga in 2004 declared the law on publishing false news unconstitutional saying that it was exerting unacceptable chilling effect on the freedom of expression.

The law on publishing false was challenged by Charles Onyango Obbo and Andrew Mujuni Mwenda in 2002.

Musisi 37, a resident of Nabusanke, Nkozi Sub county Mpigi district on 24<sup>th</sup>/March/2011 appeared before Buwama Grade II magistrate court and charged with publishing false news. He entered a plea of not guilty.

Musisi was on 19<sup>th</sup>/March/2011 arrested and detained at Buwama police station. He has been on police bond which was granted to him following the intervention of Human Rights Network for Journalists-Uganda (HRNJ-Uganda).

Prosecution alleged that Musisi on 08<sup>th</sup>/March/2011 published false statement likely to cause fear and alarm to the public contrary to section 50 of the Penal Code Act, Cap 120.

“It’s unfortunate that individuals in justice institutions decided to use illegitimate laws under guise of bringing justice. I think such an act is intentional to criminalise the work of the media and persecute Musisi in Uganda” said HRNJ-Uganda Board Chairman Robert Ssempala

HRNJ-Uganda condemns in the strongest term possible the use of unconstitutional laws under guise of bringing justice.

We are petitioning the Director of Public Prosecution (DPP) to quash the charges against Musisi and set him free unconditionally.

Musisi was release on a non cash bail and required to report back on 28<sup>th</sup>/April/2011

According to the prosecutor, police has not concluded investigations into the matter.

**Kampala, 11<sup>th</sup>/April/2011;** The Bukedde television journalist Ssemakula Bambilazabwe has been arrested and detained for 12 hours at Mutundwe police post.

Ssemakula was arrested on Saturday the 09<sup>th</sup>/April/2011 at 9pm while covering a scuffle at Kampala University Mutundwe campus between students and university administration. The scuffle ensued after some properties of the students had been thrown out of the hostel in a bid to create space for new foreign students.

He was arrested by a group of drunkard policemen lead by one policeman called Asimwe who beat him up sustaining injuries on his ankle and other parts of the body.

Ssemakula was dumped at the Mutundwe police post and policemen made off with his money totaling to eighty thousand Uganda shillings about thirty dollars.

Human Rights Network for Journalists-Uganda (HRNJ-Uganda) has learnt that by the time of Ssemakula's arrest he was filming the scuffle. He was at first confronted by the university Dean of students only identified as Harriet who accused him of being an intruder.

“Five policemen confronted me and I was accused of filming them while on duty. I was arrested, handcuffed and assaulted. I was manhandled and later dumped at Mutundwe police post. While I was in cells the police denied me the right to communicate to my family or bosses” Said Ssemakula

The Bukedde Television editor Hannington Muluuta told HRNJ-Uganda that Ssemakula was detained without a charge and he recorded a statement after their intervention.

“We meet the Officer in Charge of the police post known as Rugumayo who was not aware of the detained journalist. Most police men at the post are drunkard and we also saw many inmates being harassed inside the police cells” said Muluuta

Ssemakula was charged with inciting violence and released on police bond.

HRNJ-Uganda condemns in the strongest term possible the acts of violence subjected to Ssemakula and now that the matter has been brought to the attention of A/IGP Asan Kasingye, we call for the immediate investigation into the conduct of policemen at Mutundwe police post and their prosecution.

**Mukono, 14<sup>th</sup>/April/2011;** Bukedde news paper Paddy Nsohya has been assaulted over taking a photograph of a woman who was arrested by police for drink and drive.

The suspect was arrested and later released on police bond.

**Kampala, 14<sup>th</sup>/April/2011;** Eight journalists have been attacked and injured in different parts of the country as they covered the proceedings of the second day of the walk-to-work campaign in which politicians and the civil society are protesting high fuel and other commodities.

1. In Kampala, WBS TV cameraman Francis Mukasa was beaten at Makindye Ssabagabo court while covering protests following the arrest the Kampala mayor elect Ssalongo Erias Lukwago. Mukasa suffocated after police flashed tear gas onto him. He was rushed to Nsambya hospital in severe condition.

2. Ronald Muyinda a Radio one journalist was roughed up by military personnel at Wampeewo from where he was relaying live scenes of gun fire. Muyinda was properly identified as a journalist because he was in his radio station jacket. Men in military police attires charged at him and manhandled him. This resulted into breaking his pelvic and the left leg.
3. Stuart Iga of the Red pepper got mixed up in the stampede and in the process he sustained injuries on the arms, ribs and right jaw as he struggled to protect his still camera.
4. Yunusu Ntale, a journalist with Central Broadcasting Service (CBS FM) sustained a big cut on his left arm after being hit by a teargas canister. He was covering protests at Kasubi, a Kampala suburb at around 1pm.
5. In Masaka district, the UPDF and the police applied violent means of calming the protesters. In the process, four journalists became victims. Ali Mabule a journalist with the New Vision was beaten up by a UPDF soldier as he tried to take a photograph of a UPDF soldier beating up a protestor near New Vision offices in Masaka.
6. Isa Aliga an NTV Masaka correspondent was clobbered and his video camera confiscated by UPDF soldiers. In the process Aliga sustained cuts on his left eye and arm.
7. Norman Kabugu a journalist with a daily tabloid Kamunye was beaten by UPDF soldiers for taking photographs of a fellow journalist Ali Mabule being beaten by UPDF. The UPDF also confiscated his camera.
8. Dismus Buregyeya a New Vision journalist also received beatings and camera confiscated by the UPDF during the same protests.

“Most victim journalists we have talked to indicate that they were properly addressed with stations’ marked jackets and identifications. There was no way the military could have mistakenly identified these journalists. Therefore, these were organized crimes to stop journalists from documenting brutal attacks against protestors” said HRNJ-Uganda Board Chairman Robert Sempala

HRNJ-Uganda is investigating reports that the Broadcasting Council on 14<sup>th</sup>/4/2011 was secretly issuing directives to media houses to stop live broadcasts of protests as well as video clips of Dr. Kiiza Besigye whose figure was allegedly shot. Dr. Besigye is a leader of the opposition party Forum for Democratic Change.

**To this effect, HRNJ-Uganda states that;**

- The UPDF returns all the confiscated tools to their respective owners with immediate effect.

- We are dragging individual commanders to court for these violations, amongst them are Col. David Muhoozi the commandant of Armored Brigade in Masaka and the military police commandant among others.
- We implore the security forces to exhibit professionalism and restraint in such situations in protecting the 4<sup>th</sup> estate of gov't- the media.
- Call upon Ugandan journalists to remain solid and united in championing the cause for a free media in Uganda at all times.

On 21<sup>st</sup>/April/2011 while covering the arrest of Dr. Besigye at Wandegeya, a suburb of Kampala, several video cameras were damaged by security at the spot where Dr. Besigye was being arrested. One the cameras included of the Reuters' correspondent Justine Dralaze. "It's very difficult to explain how my camera was attacked because a security guy used the elbow to hit the LCD which affected other parts of the camera. I can say it happened when Dr. Besigye was being pushed into the police car. That's where I stopped filming" said Dralaze.

Some days before his camera was destroyed, he reported that he was confronted by officials when he had gone to cover a press conference at the Media Center. He said the Media Center boss Mr. Opoloti blamed him for sending negative pictures to Aljazeera television. Dralaze quoted Opoloti saying they had downloaded all video clips from Aljazeera.

He said the second time was when he went to Rwakitura to cover president Museveni's press conference. "I was confronted by Presidential Guard Brigade (PGB) personnel who asked me whether I was Dralaze. When I replied yes, one official told me that they were watching me on line which left me confused because I don't know what they meant" Dralaze narrated

BBC journalist Joshua Mmali reports to HRNJ-Uganda that security apparatus has been tracing and interested in knowing where my residence is located. He told HRNJ-Uganda researcher that one of the drivers he has been using to cover the 'Walk to Work protests' called him panicking and told him that some individuals confronted him asking where the do I stay. Mmali quoted the driver that I told them that I only took him to Kasangati and that's all but the security accused him of lying and they cited even the time the driver drove him (Mmali) to Rwakitura.

"I was so surprised to hear that because I left the driver out of the president Museveni's residence. Whoever confronted this driver was at Rwakitura because nobody saw me leaving because I left early as 5am. I tried to call police leadership and informed them that I was watching whatever they were doing" said Joshua Mmali

**Kampala, 19<sup>th</sup>/April/2011;** the Uganda Communication Commission (UCC) is under pressure from security apparatus to block social media platforms as activists and politicians intensify their ‘walk-to-work’ campaign protesting high costs of fuel and other commodities.

According to the April 14<sup>th</sup> letter obtained by HRNJ-Uganda, the UCC has succumbed to the security pressure and directed the Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to shut down face book and twitter platforms for 24 hours.

The Uganda Communications Commission was merged late 2010 with the Broadcasting Council into one regulatory body that will oversee both communication and broadcasting matters in the country. It’s under the ministry of Information and Communication Technology.

In the same letter signed by Mr. Quinto Ojok, the Acting executive Director addressed to major providers of internet namely; Broad Band Company, Foris Telecom Company and Infocom limited, among others, stated that UCC was requested by security agencies to minimize the use of such platforms.

“ We have received a request from security agencies that there’s need to minimize the media that may escalate violence to the public in respect of the ongoing situation due to the demonstration relating to ‘Walk-to-Work’ mainly by the opposition in the country. As a stakeholder that has communication infrastructures that host media such as face book and twitter, the commission wishes to request for your indulgence in this matter” the letter reads apart.

The letter added that ISPs were required to block the use of face book and twitter for 24 hours as of now, that is: 14<sup>th</sup> April 2011 at 3:30pm to eliminate the connection and sharing of information that incite the public.









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