

# Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/gabon-two-opposition-weeklies-suspend-12-09-2014,46948.html>

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Africa - Gabon

Deception

## Two opposition weeklies suspend publication after bogus issues

12 September 2014

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***La Loupe* and *L'Aube*, two outspoken opposition weeklies owned by the same publisher, have announced that they are suspending publication until further notice because their latest issues were suppressed and replaced by fake issues supporting the government.**

In their statement announcing the suspension on 8 September, they said the government was clearly behind the production and distribution of the bogus versions.

Presidential spokesman Alain-Claude Bilie-By-Nze denied this when contacted by Reporters Without Borders. "*The President's Office and the Gabonese government have never pirated any newspaper, regardless of how virulent its articles were,*" he said.

"*If the government is behind this, it would constitute an unacceptable act of censorship and violation of freedom of information,*" Reporters Without Borders assistant research director Virginie Dangles, said. "*We urge the authorities to identify those responsible for this piracy so that *La Loupe* and *L'Aube* can resume publishing without delay.*"

The deception was first spotted when issue No. 193 of *La Loupe* was delivered to newsstands on 2 September. It was not the version produced by the weekly's staff. The real content had been replaced and, instead of the usual criticism, it praised the government to the skies.

A new member of the production and layout staff, a suspected government infiltrator, was blamed.

The front page that *L'Aube* produced for publication on 8 September was headlined: "The president's office pirates *La Loupe*. May you be cursed for life !!!!" The accompanying story accused President Ali Bongo's chief of staff, Maixent Accrombessi, of orchestrating the deception.

But *L'Aube's* readers never saw this issue. Someone – the weeklies say an envoy of the president's office – bought the entire print run from the distributor in Libreville before it hit the streets. The same person then reportedly went to Multipress, the company that prints *L'Aube*, and forced the staff to print a bogus issue.

Despite the 8 September announcement by the two weeklies, another fake issue of *La Loupe* appeared on newsstands the next morning, one that Multipress had also reportedly been forced to print.

Gabon is ranked 98th out of 180 countries in the [2014 Reporters Without Borders press freedom index](#).

(photo: La Loupe)

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