

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/uganda-amid-pre-election-woes-for-27-01-2011,39409.html>

Africa - Uganda

Murder investigation

Police investigating activist's murder urged not to rule out any possibilities

27 January 2011

Reporters Without Borders is disturbed to learn that, according to Uganda's inspector general of police, Maj. Gen. Kale Kayihura, the police are treating gay rights activist David Kato's murder as a case of robbery that is not linked to his activism.

We urge the Ugandan authorities to do everything possible to identify those responsible for Kato's murder and to not rule out any hypothesis. We also remind them that homophobic media such as the Kampala-based magazine *Rolling Stone* are inciting hatred and contributing to a generalized climate of violence.

27-01-2011- Amid pre-election woes for journalists, homophobic media blamed for gay activist's death-

Reporters Without Borders is deeply shocked by the death of gay activist **David Kato**, who was clubbed to death in his home 15 km east of Kampala yesterday by an unidentified intruder. Kato's name and photo, along with those of other gay activists, were published last October in an issue of the Ugandan tabloid newspaper *Rolling Stone* under the front-page headline "Hang Them!"



Kato's barbaric killing is the direct consequence of an outrageously irresponsible and homophobic press that makes a speciality of calling for murder. A Ugandan court recently ordered *Rolling Stone* to pay damages to the score of gay activists it had exposed to public condemnation.

Reporters Without Borders calls for stronger action from the authorities. This death must not go unpunished. Kato's killer must be found and the Kampala-based magazine *Rolling Stone*, which we hold responsible for his brutal murder, must be banned outright.

"The existence of tabloids such as *Rolling Stone* is extremely harmful of the rest of the Ugandan media," Reporters Without Borders said. "By trading on stirring up hate, they pose a threat to civil society and undermine the credibility of the real news media. Homophobia and incitement of

hatred should be severely punished.”

Aged 43 and a leading member of a group called Sexual Minorities Uganda in country that already bans “carnal knowledge of any person against the order of nature,” Kato was one of the leading campaigners against an Anti-Homosexuality Bill that would introduce the death penalty for “aggravated homosexuality.”

Reporters Without Borders points out that while publications such as *Rolling Stone* sully the Ugandan media’s image, many journalists do their best to work in a serious and professional manner despite the many difficulties linked to the forthcoming elections. Five journalists have been physically attacked in the course of their work in the past 10 days.

In the most recent case, *NTV* correspondent **Issa Aliga Masaka** and *Top Radio* editor **Ssozi Ssekimpi** were assaulted by the parliamentarian Sauda Namagwa on 20 January. *Red Pepper* photographer **Michael Kakumirizi** and **Francis Tumwekwasiye** of the Inter Party Cooperation press group were attacked on 19 January in Lango by supporters of the ruling National Resistance Movement, who threw bricks at them, injuring Kakumirizi on the head and arm. *Voice of Tooro* reporter **Mutegeki Geoffrey** was roughed up by policemen while covering a student strike in Fort Portal on 17 January.

With presidential and parliamentary elections due to be held on 18 February, it is unacceptable that journalists are being prevented from working, especially by politicians. Reporters Without Borders appeals to Uganda’s political class to respect the media and to support freedom of expression, transparency and diversity of opinion.

Photo : AFP
