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Africa - DRC

Journalist killed

Rebel fire kills TV journalist travelling with military

18 February 2014

Reporters Without Borders is saddened to learn that a TV journalist was fatally injured during the weekend in the eastern province of Nord Kivu when the military truck in which he was travelling was ambushed by members of ADF-NALU, a Ugandan rebel group based in the province.

Kennedy Germain Mumbere Muliwavyo of *Radio Télévision Muungano d'Oïcha* died in a hospital on 16 February from the gunshot injuries to the head and abdomen that he had received in the ambush the day before.

Two other journalists with him sustained gunshot injuries in the attack that were not life-threatening. The three reporters were travelling with the Congolese army in order to cover its offensive against the ADF-NALU rebels and its impact on the population.

"This tragic event highlights the dangers that journalists face in war zones," said Cléa Kahn-Sriber, the head of the Reporters Without Borders Africa desk. "Those that dare to defy threats from certain officials trying to prevent them covering military operations are exposed to equally serious dangers as they advance into the areas where the fighting is taking place.

"It also underscores the clear [correlation between armed conflict and a decline in freedom of information](#), and the need for the military to guarantee the safety of journalists as much as possible. We can only salute the courage of these reporters, who wanted to cover what the local civilian population has suffered in this fighting between the Congolese army and rebel groups operating in Nord Kivu for years."

Patient Subiri of *Radio Télévision Rwanzururu Beni*, who was one of the two other journalists injured in the ambush, told Reporters Without Borders that they are among a number of journalists who travel in military vehicles once or twice a week in order to reach the front and cover the fighting.

"Most of the time we travel to the front line with Gen. Lucien Baumba, the commander of the 8th military region, in order to prepare reports and show the local population the reality on the ground and how the military operations are progressing."

As regards security, he said the journalists are usually "next to the general, with bodyguards and some way from the very front line." On 15 February, Muliwavyo, Subiri and **Mitterand Hangi** of *Radio Télévision Muungano d'Oïcha* were hoping to do a series of reports in Kamando, a town from which the Congolese army recently expelled the rebels.

They were travelling in a truck carrying supplies, an obvious potential target for the rebels. When it came under ADF-NALU fire, Subiri was hit three times in the hands and forearm, Hangi sustained two gunshot injuries to the left leg, and Muliwavyo was hit in the head and stomach.

Muliwavyo was taken to the main hospital in the town of Oïcha, where he died on 16 February and was buried the same day.

In a statement yesterday deploring Muliwavyo's death and reiterating support for the Congolese offensive against the rebels, the French foreign ministry said: "The protection of journalists, including their protection in war zones, is a priority of our diplomatic action. It is essential that journalists should be able to work freely and safely."

Journalists' safety has been a leading issue for the international community for months. The UN General Assembly adopted a [resolution on the safety of journalists](#) on 26 November that

echoed the UN Security Council's Resolution 1738 of 2006 on the protection of journalists in armed conflicts.

In partnership with UNESCO, Reporters Without Borders produced a [Handbook for Journalists](#) in 2007 to help journalists to protect themselves while working in dangerous areas.

The Democratic Republic of Congo is ranked 151st of 180 countries in [the 2014 Reporters Without Borders press freedom index](#), eight places lower than its position in the 2013 index.

Photo : REUTERS/Thomas Mukoya

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