

# Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/rd-congo-political-broadcasts-banned-during-17-06-2014,46460.html>

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Africa - DRC

Censorship and threats

## Political broadcasts banned before elections

17 June 2014

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Democratic Republic of Congo's journalists are finding it harder and harder to work because of threats and censorship of political debate. Media freedom is being undermined by political tension linked to local elections and to uncertainty surrounding the 2016 presidential election.

The tension has been fuelled by the government's announcement of a constitutional reform before the presidential election. The opposition fears that President Joseph Kabila wants to run for a third term, which is prohibited under the constitution as it stands.

Journalists have been among the leading victims of the tension. Some have been threatened by gunmen for broadcasting undesired interviews or for reporting corruption allegations. Some have even had to go into hiding.

In Likasi, in the southeastern province of Katanga, Mulongo wa Kabikuyu, the head of the city's communication and media service, imposed censorship on local community and religious medias on 12 June, announcing a ban on any broadcasts of a political nature although local elections are going to be held in the region.

*"We call on the authorities to guarantee freedom of expression and to protect journalists, so that they are able to make their contribution to the democratic debate,"* said Virginie Dangles, deputy head of research and advocacy at Reporters Without Borders. *"We also urge the authorities in Likasi to lift the ban on political broadcasts announced on 12 June."*

### **Frequent threats**

As well as the Likasi ban, there have been other violations of freedom of expression in recent days.

The NGO Journalist in Danger reported on 6 June that the homes of two journalists based in Kiriba in the far-eastern province of South Kivu, **David Munyaga** and **Bienvenu Malega** of *Radio Ondes FM*, were visited by armed men suspected of being Burundian soldiers, who threatened their families. The two journalists have been living in hiding ever since.

Journalists with *Radio Liberté*, a radio station based in the north-central city of Basoko, were reportedly threatened by Dido Bilali, a Congolese army non-commissioned officer on 10 June in connection with a series of interviews it broadcast on 5 June about Bilali's alleged abuses. Gen. Jean-Claude Kifwa, a senior army officer, denied *Radio Liberté's* claims when contacted by Reporters Without Borders. "All that is false, totally false," he said.

Finally, Reporters Without Borders learned on 11 June that a journalist in the western city of Bandundu has repeatedly been threatened with arrest by members of the National Intelligence Agency (ARN). According to the Observatory of Media Freedom in Africa (OLPA), Bandundu province governor Jean Kamisendu ordered the journalist's arrest after he accused the governor of embezzling 11 million Congolese francs in a programme broadcast by *RTVS1* on 30 May.

Democratic Republic of Congo is ranked 151st out of 180 countries in the [2014 Reporters Without Borders press freedom index](#).

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