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Africa - DRC

Arbitrary closure

Political and business motives suspected in radio station's closure

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Reporters Without Borders deplores the closure of Mishapi Voice TV, a popular privately-owned radio station in Goma, in the eastern province of Nord-Kivu, on the alleged grounds that its broadcasts were disrupting air traffic control communications at Goma's airport.

The station's transmitter was dismantled and removed on 23 March by representatives of the Congo Post and Telecommunications Regulatory Agency (ARPTC), who said it was jamming the frequency used by the Air Transport Authority (RVA) for air traffic control in Goma.

"We condemn Mishapi Voice TV's arbitrary closure and point out that it was not up to the ARPTC to take such a decision, which should have been referred to the public prosecutor's office," said Cléa Kahn-Sriber, the head of the Reporters Without Borders Africa desk.

"In the event that the station's broadcasts were interfering with the RVA's radio communications, why didn't the ARPTC just assign it a different frequency instead of closing it down or demanding that it buy a new frequency? Everything suggests that this was a reprisal of a political and business nature.

"Unfortunately, the victims are the population of Goma and the surrounding area, who are being deprived of news and information, and the station's journalists, who have been put out of work. We call on the ARPTC to stop this undue meddling and to allow Mishapi Voice TV to resume operating."

It so happens that *Mishapi Voice TV's* owner, local businessman Adelard Mineene, is currently embroiled in a legal battle over the failure of a microfinance company he ran, in which senior provincial officials were involved.

Mishapi Voice TV's closure may have been designed to put pressure on Mineene in this legal dispute – a suspicion supported by the fact that the ARPTC suggested that the radio should buy a new frequency for 25,000 dollars, a sum that it already spent to get its existing frequency in 2012.

Democratic Republic of Congo is ranked 150th out of 180 countries in the [2015 Reporters Without Borders press freedom index](#).
