

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/uganda-police-raids-on-two-kampala-21-05-2013,44637.html>

Africa - Uganda

Crackdown

Police raids on two Kampala newspapers

21 May 2013

Reporters Without Borders is appalled by raids, on Monday (May 20), by police on two Kampala-based newspapers, the forced closure of their printing presses and the closure of two radio stations.

The raids were carried out in the morning on the headquarters of Pepper Publications, which publishes the newspaper *Red Pepper* and two other weekly magazines, and the headquarters of Monitor Publications Limited (MPL), which publishes the *Daily Monitor*.

In the afternoon, the police continued their offensive against freedom of information by closing two radio stations – *KFM Radio* and *Dembe FM* – which are sister stations and broadcast from the MPL's premises.

Reporters Without Borders already wrote to President Yoweri Museveni on 23 April, a month before these latest incidents, voicing deep concern about an increase in threats against journalists and about the campaign to intimidate the media that the authorities have been waging for months.

"This national police offensive is the latest in a series of grave violations of freedom of information in Uganda since late 2012," Reporters Without Borders said. "These actions are symptomatic of a terrible climate for news providers and reflect the government's desire to stifle media independence.

"We offer our full support for the news media being targeted by the authorities and we join Uganda's human rights NGOs in calling for an end to media freedom violations by the security forces. We urge the government to respect Uganda's constitution, which protects freedom of expression."

The raid on MPL headquarters was carried out by police armed with Kalashnikovs, who were acting on orders from the Criminal Investigations and Intelligence Directorate (CIID) with the aim of identifying the sources for a 7 May report in the *Daily Monitor*.

Three *Daily Monitor* journalists – **Don Wanyama**, **Richard Wanambwa** and **Risdel Kasasira** – were already questioned about the same article for nine hours on 14 May and on two consecutive days afterward.

During the raid, the police shut journalists inside their offices, blocked access to the premises, and confiscated *Daily Monitor* journalists' material. The police also used tear gas to disperse a crowd that began to gather and protest outside the MPL's headquarters in support of media freedom.

According to information obtained by Reporters Without Borders, the police raid on the MPL was linked to the *Daily Monitor's* publication of a confidential letter by Gen. David Sejusa about a plot to assassinate senior Ugandan officials, either members of the government or senior army officers.

The aim of the plot is said to have been the elimination of senior officials opposed to President Museveni's rumoured intention of installing his son, Brig. Gen. Muhoozi Kainerugaba, as his successor.

The publication of the leaked letter about the so-called "Project Muhoozi" triggered a wave of panic within the government. The raids on the MPL and *Red Pepper*, which also published stories about the affair, followed a government announcement that no more stories about the "Project Muhoozi" would be tolerated.

Accusing the media of not being "professional and impartial," the Ugandan Communications Commission also announced that it would withdraw the licence of any news outlet that continued to cover the affair.

The authorities have not offered any grounds for closing *KFM Radio* and *Dembe FM*, the two stations that operate out of the MPL's premises, but the closures seem to be part of the blackout imposed on MPL news outlets.

More information on media freedom in [Uganda](#).
