

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/eritrea-rwb-backed-satellite-radio-station-06-09-2012,43344.html>

Africa - Eritrea

Serial Jamming

RWB-backed satellite radio station sabotaged again

6 September 2012

Radio Erena, a Paris-based satellite radio station that broadcasts to Eritreans in Eritrea and to the Eritrean diaspora, is again the target of a pirate transmission from within Eritrea that is blocking its broadcasts – this time since 4 September.

The sabotage resumed two days after the radio and TV satellite company Arabsat restored *Radio Erena's* signal, ending three weeks of satellite silence that had been the result of an earlier pirate transmission from inside Eritrea.

Radio Erena was launched by Reporters Without Borders in 2009 with the primary chief aim of providing an independent news service to the residents of what is one of the most closed countries in the world, one that is ranked even lower than North Korea in the Reporters Without Borders press freedom index.

The method of sabotage is similar to the one that forced Radio Erena off the air from 14 August to 2 September. Arabsat, owner of the BADR-6 satellite that the station uses to reach Eritrea, said it had to suspend Radio Erena because its signal was being jammed by a pirate transmission.

Using geolocation, Arabsat has established that the jamming, which is targeted directly at the *Radio Erena* signal, has come both times from inside Eritrea. The first time, the jamming began after the station broadcast [an interview with an Ethiopian government minister](#).

"This Reporters Without Borders-backed radio station is really essential for Eritreans because the country's state media just carry the regime's bellicose and ultranationalist discourse," RWB director-general Christophe Deloire said.

"*Radio Erena* is the only source of independent news and information in the local language in what is an information black hole. We are not surprised by these attacks from a country that is ranked last in our press freedom index, but we reserve the right to take legal measures."

Reporters Without Borders created a [mirror of the station's website](#) so that another cyber-attack would not prevent Eritreans from accessing *Radio Erena's* news reports online. The organization urges Internet users to visit this exact copy of the original and to create more copies of it, in order to thwart the government's censorship.

The Reporters Without Borders mirror site was itself the target of cyber-attacks last night but the hackers failed to gain control of it.

Ranked last in the Reporters Without Borders press freedom index for the past five years, [Eritrea is Africa's biggest jail for journalists](#) and the fourth biggest worldwide, after China, Iran and Syria. In reality, it is one vast open prison for the media.

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