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Rwanda: Journalists honoured for the first time

On February 24th, the Intercontinental Hotel in Kigali (Rwanda) hosted an award ceremony for the best journalists of 2005. This was the first time the ceremony was held in Rwanda.

Forty journalists took part in the event, organised jointly by the *Rwandan Journalists Association* (ARJ) and *Great Relations*, a new public relations and events agency. An independent jury selected the laureates on the basis of submitted articles and programmes, under the chairmanship of Jean-Pierre Gatsinzi, director of the School of Journalism and Communication at the Rwanda National University.

In all, ten prizes were awarded in a number of subjects, including health, photojournalism, culture and reconciliation, sport, and new information technologies (ICT).

Faustin Kagame, Editor-in-Chief of the private radio station, *Contact FM*, was nominated "Journalist of the Year", seconded by Sylver Busingo of the English-language paper, *New Times*, which is published four times a week.

The ceremony was presided over by Information Minister, Prof. Laurent Nkusi, who praised the initiative, recalling the duties of the press vis-a-vis the public, namely to inform, educate and entertain, in a spirit of responsibility.

In his speech, Gaspard Safari, president of ARJ, explained that the competition, which will now be held yearly, is a means of encouraging journalists to maintain professional standards of reporting. "The Rwandan press is facing a number of difficulties," he said, "not least the lack of properly trained journalists". He added that he was sure the best solution would be to set up a permanent centre for basic and advanced training for journalists.

AR / IPP

1. PRINT MEDIA NEWS

Cameroon: *Communautés Africaines* back on the news stands

After a two-year absence, *Communautés Africaines* returned to the news stands in January, with a colourful new design for its 86th issue. The paper, which is published by the Association for the Promotion of Community Initiatives in Africa (APICA), is mainly devoted to articles on the economy.

"We decided to stop for a while and have a rethink," said Veza Tulumba, the paper's publishing director. *Communautés Africaines* has been published quarterly since 1982 and is on sale for 500 FCFA (0.76 euros).

JW / IPP

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DRC: Result of inquiry into the killing of journalist, Franck Ngyke Kangundu

On February 14th, the association *Journalistes en Danger* (JED), published the report on its inquiry into the killing of journalist, Franck Ngyke Kangundu and his wife, Héléne Paka, on November 3rd 2005.

The journalists' rights association decided to undertake its own investigation after refusing to accept the Congolese police version of the crime. After an inquiry lasting several months, JED wished to make public the conclusions of its 30-page report. "*This report is JED's contribution to a quest for truth that befalls the entire country*", said the association's president in the introduction to the report.

With support from a number of press freedom organisations, notably *Reporters sans frontières* (RSF) and the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), JED hopes the Congolese government will quickly set up a committee of inquiry to shed some light on what happened.

The Institut Panos Paris has worked with JED for many years, and is deeply concerned by the threats hanging over representatives of JED and press freedom in general. The Institut Panos Paris has confirmed its support for JED and has drawn the attention of CIAT, the international committee to support the transition in DRC, to these issues, at a time when press freedom is a crucial element for open debate in the run up to elections.

MPL / IPP

The JED report (in French) is available at:

<http://www.jed-afrique.org>

2. RADIO AND TV NEWS

DRC: Sixth radio station goes on air in Bukavu

Radio télévision Bukavu liberté (RTBL), a new radio station based in Ibanda, started broadcasting on February 1st this year on 107.3 MHz FM.

With a 500W transmitter and a range of about 200 km, the station broadcasts from 5 am to 9 am, 11.30 am to 4 pm and 5 pm to 11.30 pm. Déogratias Mubalama Murhabazi, the radio's director, intends to follow an editorial line that promotes organisations working for development, human rights, education, post-conflict peace and the electoral process in DRC.

Radio télévision Bukavu liberté is now Bukavu's sixth community radio station, following *Maendeleo*, *Kahuzi*, *Maria*, *Rehema* and *Neno la uzima*.

DM / IPP

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3. LEGAL AND FINANCIAL FRAMEWORKS FOR THE MEDIA

Gabon: Parliament votes in law on Fonapresse

On December 21st 2005, the Gabon parliament, in a joint sitting of the National Assembly and Senate, voted through a National Development Fund for the Press (Fonapresse). With its main objective to support the publication, printing and distribution of printed media, the new fund marks an end to the 500 million FCFA (762,000 euros) annual State grant for independent print media, which has been awarded since 2003.

The fund will also be used for press, radio and television products, the acquisition of technical equipment, training sessions and to advance the various sectors involved with communication.

State subsidies are the main source of funding for Fonapresse, although their value is not known at present.

The head of Fonapresse is appointed by Presidential decree, on the basis of a proposal by the Minister of Communication. The steering committee comprises 13 members from the ministries of Communication (president of the Fund), Finance (vice-president), Planning, the National Communication Council, the Office of the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister's office, the National Assembly, the Senate, the Economic and Social Council, and communicators from both private and public sectors.

AN / IPP

4. STRUCTURING AND PROFESSIONALISATION OF THE MEDIA

Burundi: Burundi's Press Centre elects a new president

On January 28th 2006, journalists from the state and independent press met at the Press Centre to elect a new president and vice-president for the Centre. The elections were held three weeks after the Annual General Meeting elected a new nine-member Executive Committee.

Jérôme Sinankwa, a journalist with RTNB's second channel, was elected president with 48% of the votes. There was a good turnout of journalists for the elections, proof of their interest in the Press Centre, which has become increasingly dynamic in recent years, regularly holding training sessions in Burundi and abroad. The Centre has recently held training sessions in environmental journalism, thanks to a collaboration with the University of Makerere in Uganda, and has also set up an Internet cafe with support from the Institut Panos Paris.

Following the elections, the new president confirmed his intention to continue to develop partnerships to support the media.

ET / IPP

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