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MEDIA SUSTAINABILITY VIOLENCE AGAINST JOURNALISTS NEWS

Crisis in the DRC: in North Kivu, the right to information is in grave danger



ORGANISATION:  RSF_en

The security situation in the city of Goma is deteriorating, and journalists can no longer report, the media has been forced into silence, there is no stable access to electricity or the internet. Reporters Without Borders (RSF) is urgently alerting the international community to this crisis in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and calling on the parties involved in conflict to respect and protect the public's right to information.

Communications with journalists in Goma are rare and sporadic, thanks to unstable electricity and internet that has plagued the city since the advance of the M23, an

armed rebel group backed by the Rwandan army. The M23 now **controls** the key points of this town, the most populous in the province of North Kivu.

Almost all local and international radio stations have stopped broadcasting in the area. The headquarters of the local branch of *Radio Télévision Nationale du Congo (RTNC)* has been empty since 27 January. “No RTNC staff are present at the station,” provincial director Tuver Wundi told RSF. The people of Goma now rely on the Rwandan radio stations broadcasting from the neighbouring town of Gisenyi for information.

The media professionals that RSF was able to contact all expressed an urgent need to evacuate the area. Yet, at the time of this writing, there was no safe way out; as **Valéry Mukosasenge**, director of the Goma-based online website *larepublique.net*, explained to RSF. Only the journalists from the United Nations radio station in the DRC, *Radio Okapi*, have been evacuated to Kigali, the Rwandan capital, with their families.

The deteriorating security situation is drastically challenging the right to information in Goma, which has become a refuge for displaced journalists from the province for several months. Radio stations have fallen silent, and journalists have been forced to leave their workplaces and are being attacked and persecuted. Any solution to this dire crisis must factor in the protection of and respect for the right to information. RSF calls on all parties involved in the conflict to ensure that the media can do their work freely – and to protect journalists.

Sadibou Marong

Director, RSF Sub-Saharan Africa Bureau

The nightmare facing displaced journalists

The M23's advance into Goma is the apex of the attacks on journalism that have occurred during the ongoing conflict in North Kivu. Since January 2024, over 25 radio stations have closed due to violent clashes and looting, and **many** journalists have been displaced to refugee camps in Goma.

The situation has worsened in the past few days. On 24 January, a community radio director – who remains anonymous for security reasons – expressed his concern to RSF: “We no longer know what to do to escape the bombs that are falling on civilians.” Some journalists have managed to find refuge in military camps. Others are hiding as best they can, waiting for the situation to stabilise. Five of the journalists RSF spoke to have been displaced since July and have managed to leave the city and take refuge further south.

Attacks on journalists

Among the journalists assaulted during the conflict is *Sky News* journalist **Yousra Elbagir**, who was attacked by unidentified assailants on 26 January in a village north of Goma while covering the massive movement of displaced people fleeing towards the city. Essential professional equipment, including a camera and two telephones, were stolen. Journalist **Samuel Adiba** of *Go FM*, a radio station dedicated to women's rights, was attacked and his professional equipment stolen by “Wazalendo”, local militiamen who have partnered with the Congolese military.

AFRICA

Democratic Republic of Congo

133 / 180

Score : 42.31

Découvrir le pays

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