

Police raid Congolese radio station for report on new tax

Authorities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo should thoroughly and credibly investigate an August 5 police raid on Radio Télévision Chrétienne (RTC), return all seized equipment, ensure the protection of journalist José Mbuyi, and hold all those responsible to account, the Committee to Protect Journalists said.



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Police raided the community radio station in the town of Kananga roughly an hour after it broadcast a report on a new tax on motorcycles, according to RTC's director and [media reports](#).

The director of the station, Sosphète Kambidi, told CPJ that Jean Mwamba, the mayor of Kananga, in Central Kasai province, phoned him shortly after a 6am broadcast in which Mbuyi reported on the new tax.

"He was angry about the report we had broadcasted at 6am, and said he was going to close the radio station," Kambidi told CPJ. "Then, an hour later, police officers arrived in our office saying that they were looking for journalist Mbuyi."

The five police officers did not present a warrant to enter the radio station, Kambidi said, but confiscated two computers, two recorders, and a microphone before leaving. Mbuyi told CPJ that he left the station as the five police officers [arrived](#). He has since received phone calls from unidentified callers [threatening him with death](#), he told CPJ.

"The police raid on the Congolese community station Radio Télévision Chrétienne is a crude act of intimidation intended to censor the radio station and its journalists," said CPJ Africa program coordinator Angela Quintal. "Journalists in the Democratic Republic of the Congo must be permitted to report without fear for their safety or harassment by police."

Mwamba declined to comment when contacted by CPJ.

Kambidi told CPJ that the five police officers responsible for the raid were detained on August 5 at the local police station, but that they were released on August 7 without charge. Two of the five police officers were re-arrested yesterday, Moisi Dibuwa, RTC's lawyer, told CPJ.

Dibuwa said that the re-arrest of the two was in response to a criminal complaint the radio station filed against the police officers with the military prosecutor's office, which has the authority to hold the armed forces and police accountable for their actions.

Kananga Police deputy major Zeus Nzengu told CPJ that he could not comment on an ongoing investigation.

Kambidi told CPJ that Radio Télévision Chrétienne has resumed broadcasting, but in a more limited capacity, since pieces of "key equipment" remain missing.

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