

# UN protests suspension of Radio Okapi

The United Nations has expressed "deep disappointment" at a 30 November 2012 decision of the Congolese media regulatory body to suspend transmissions of Radio Okapi. Broadcasts of Okapi, a partnership between the UN and Fondation Hirondelle, have been scrambled since Saturday in some parts of the country.

In a statement dated 2 December, the head of the UN mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Roger Meece said the decision had not been communicated either to Radio Okapi or the UN mission. He said the timing and lack of notification by the Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel et de la Communication (CSAC) was "puzzling and regrettable".

This is the first time in its 10 year history that Congolese authorities have interrupted Radio Okapi's broadcasts. "This is particularly unfortunate given the current very sensitive and difficult situation in North Kivu province," said Meece, who is also the special representative of the UN Secretary General in the DRC.

"Radio Okapi is broadcasting essential messages to the population with appeals for calm by religious and other leaders, communication regarding a curfew by Provincial government authorities, and other essential information."

Meece said that given the seriousness of the security situation in Goma (capital of North Kivu province in the eastern DRC), he had taken the decision to "use alternate means to ensure continued and intermediate transmission of Radio Okapi in North Kivu".

However, Radio Okapi 's broadcasts today remain scrambled in the capital Kinshasa. Meece said in his statement that the UN mission, known by its acronym MONUSCO, was registering an official protest with the Congolese authorities.

The official reason for the suspension is administrative. A written CSAC decree obtained by the UN cites a dispute over the submission of program scheduling to the CSAC as the basis for the decision. Some media and press freedom groups suggest it is linked to the broadcast on Radio Okapi last Thursday [29 November 2012] of an interview with Jean-Marie Runiga, political head of the M23 rebel movement which recently captured Goma and is now pulling out.

Radio Okapi, launched in 2002, broadcasts across the DRC in French and four local languages. It is the country's most popular radio station with more than 22 million listeners.

Source: [allAfrica](#)

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