

(IN)FORMING CONFLICT PREVENTION,  
RESPONSE AND RESOLUTION:



THE ROLE OF MEDIA  
IN VIOLENT CONFLICT

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PROCEEDINGS ON THE STAKEHOLDER SEMINARS

AFRICAN GREAT LAKES REGION

GISENYI, RWANDA, 28-29 SEPTEMBER 2016

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**PROCEEDINGS ON THE STAKEHOLDER SEMINARS**  
**AFRICAN GREAT LAKES REGION**  
**(EXECUTIVE SUMMARY)**

On 28 and 29 September 2016, five researchers from the INFOCORE team, representing almost all work packages of the project gathered with around 50 journalists, academics, policy makers and civil society representatives from the DRC and Burundi. This third INFOCORE dissemination stakeholder workshop took place in the town of Gisenyi (in Rwanda) and aimed at discussing the first provisional findings from the different work packages.

The programme was built around presentations made by INFOCORE research team members, followed by a thematic round-table including two Burundian and two Congolese resource persons for each topic, then a debate with the audience.

This report gives an overview of the presentations by the INFOCORE research team, the questions raised by the participants, and the most important issues, problems and challenges that were identified during the discussions. The workshop provided a unique opportunity for different actors playing an important role in conflict prevention, response and resolution in the African Great Lakes region to meet and share ideas. It allowed for Congolese and Burundian stakeholders to share their concerns related to the role of media in violent conflict, taking into account the specificities and similarities of the national contexts.

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## STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP, AFRICAN GREAT LAKES REGION

### GISENYI, RWANDA, 28-29 SEPTEMBER 2016

#### Introduction

The present report focuses on the third INFOCORE dissemination stakeholder workshop, which was held in Gisenyi in Rwanda, on 28 and 29 September 2016. The workshop was organized in collaboration with the local partner “Institut Panos Grands Lacs”, a regional NGO devoted to supporting media development in the Great Lakes region, and represented by the director Cyprien Ndikumana, as well as with the local facilitator Albert Tulinabo, editor-in-chief of the Congolese newspaper *Le Peuple Souverain*. The workshop was initially planned in the city of Goma in Eastern DRC on 21 and 22 September 2016. Due to the fragile political and security situation, after clashes that ended up with over 50 people killed in Kinshasa on 19 September, and after the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ministry issued a travel warning for the Eastern DRC, it was finally decided to reschedule the event and to change the location. Thanks to the great flexibility of most participants the programme was not too much impacted by these changes.

This report summarizes the most important topics that were addressed during the workshop including the presentations of the INFOCORE team, the discussion points of the panellists (thematic round-tables) and the debate with the audience after the presentations.

The workshop agenda was built on the structure of the INFOCORE project and focused on seven specific themes:

1. “*The role of media in conflicts: Objectives of INFOCORE*”: Aimed at describing the INFOCORE project and discussing its structure and the methodological approaches.
2. “*Journalistic practices in conflicts*” (WP1): Analysed how both local (Burundian/Congolese) and international journalists cover conflicts in Central Africa. What difficulties do they face? What role do they play in the escalation/de-escalation of conflicts?
3. “*Interactions between the media and political leaders in conflicts*” (WP2): Focused on the relations between political leaders and the media, and how these relations can generate a positive or negative impact on conflicts.
4. “*The intervention of NGOs in conflict news coverage*” (WP4): As humanitarian or media development NGOs play an increasingly important part in the news dissemination process, this panel looked into the different roles played by NGOs (local and international) in the conflict news coverage.
5. “*Media and publics: Mutual influences in conflicts*” (WP3): Aimed at analysing how publics and audiences perceive and interpret conflict related news. It helped identify if and how publics themselves turn into news producers by using new communication tools, which allow disseminating information rapidly. As news producers, publics may also have an influence on the news coverage.
6. “*The role of social media in conflict news dissemination*” (WP5): Discussed how the social media have transformed the way journalists work in situations of conflict. Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp

allow for a fast and interactive communication between different actors, but they can also be a challenge when it comes to crosschecking and verifying sources and information by journalists. How can social media be helpful or happen to become problematic for the daily work of journalists and NGO workers?

7. “*Discourse analyses of conflict news coverage: Media content, NGOs and political sources*” (WP6-8): Focused on the different techniques of discourse analyses (media content, NGO/political sources) used in academic research and how they can help to identify different conflict dynamics, as well as unveil how journalists and the media position themselves in a conflict environment.

The structure of the present report follows the chronological order of the workshop agenda.

## **PANEL 1 - Informing conflict prevention, response and resolution: The role of media in violent conflict**

### *INFOCORE Presentation*

**Eric Sangar** (King’s College, London) presented the basic structure and approach of INFOCORE, including the following aspects: the interactive and comparative approach as well as the transnational dimension of the project. Eric Sangar explained how the INFOCORE project aims at understanding the differences in conflict-related media coverage across different conflict countries and contexts in a global perspective. He emphasized the importance to focus on the different motivations of specific actors being involved in conflicts as well as on their interactions. INFOCORE follows a qualitative approach (qualitative guideline interviews with journalists, political actors and NGO representatives) as well as a quantitative approach (automated discourse analysis of media content, public communication material and parliamentary debates).

### *Discussion*

After the presentation, the participants raised the following concerns:

- The use of the same indicators for the different regions under investigation, e.g. Burundi-DRC and Middle East.
- The way the results of the project are planned to be used later on.
- The main objective is to identify relevant factors that can help to understand the role of the media in different conflict contexts. The analysis has not been finished, yet. But, for example, it is already clear that social media play an important role, today, in the circulation of conflict related news. The analysis and the identification of these common factors helping to explain the escalation, de-escalation and resolution of conflicts are still on going.
- The possible influence of the media on the nature of conflicts: Do media actually have an impact on the conflict dynamics or do they only inform about them?

- The limitations of the project in time and space: How were the choices made? The Great Lakes region has been through many different conflicts during the two past decades: How does the project take into account previous conflicts?
- Hate speech. One peculiarity of the project is its comparative approach (3 regions in the Balkans, Middle-East and Central Africa) and the use of tools helping to identify hate speech. Is hate speech always linked to an escalation in violence? Can specific observations also be applied in other contexts?
- The gender issue. The project was presented as including a “gender sensitive” perspective, but how is this aspect practically taken into account in the research? The role of gender is, for instance, addressed in the interview guidelines, in order to understand if female journalists have a specific approach of conflict-related news or if there are specificities in conflict-related discourses concerning women.
- Interviews were organized with representatives from NGOs, media outlets, political parties and institutions, which are very distinct stakeholders. The automated discourse analysis applied to media content, parliamentary debates and public communication (e.g. NGO material) allows comparing the findings from different contexts and different categories of actors.
- The mix between local and international actors and their perceptions. Local perspectives are important, as much as the reaction of the other regional actors and of the international community. The project looks at the international media as well as at the local media, and investigates the interactions between actors at different levels, in order to frame the international dimension.

## **PANEL 2 - Journalistic practices in conflicts**

### *INFOCORE Presentation*

**Abit Hoxha** (LMU Munich) gave a presentation entitled: “Researching conflict news in DR Congo and Burundi”. Together with his colleague Thomas Hanitzsch, they looked specifically into “Conflict News Production”, the process of how news comes into being. Their fundamental question is: “How journalistic professional values and routines, their interactions with sources, audiences and other actors, and various contextual factors shape the production of conflict related news”. From a methodological point of view, they selected the most prominent media outlets in each country under investigation. After the selection process, they identified relevant stories related to conflicts and then interviewed the respective journalists. The sample consists of seven different conflict cases and of four cases they call “European decision making centres” including Brussels. The main findings at this stage are as follows:

- News in conflict situation is complex and involves a number of decisions in and out the newsrooms, and journalists are witnesses or producing a “first draft of history”;

- Journalists legitimize their role as authoritative storytellers. Reporters often refer to narratives that reinforce a journalistic professional ideology: The “reality” dictates the story, and not the journalist. But in fact this has to be debated: Does the journalist tell the “reality”, or does he select the facts, the sources, according to his point of view to build a certain vision, a certain understanding, a certain “narrative” of the facts? Contrary to popular beliefs, journalists don’t just report facts but tell stories about the conflict.
- Journalists almost always have a particular perspective in mind that frames their interpretation of a conflict or push them into adopting specific narratives. This particular perspective is based on their personal beliefs, but also on interactions that they have with their colleagues in the newsroom, on the editorial line of the media, as well as the guidelines received from the management. Many other actors have an impact on the way the “narratives” are built.
- There are many, equally “true” variations of stories depending on the key narrative the journalist chooses in order to tell a meaningful story to his or her audience. In Burundi today, it is obvious that when the national radio television RTNB and when exiled media such as *Inzamba* report on the same facts, they present totally different stories.

#### *Roundtable with 5 journalists*

- **Jules Ngala**, journalist at *Radio Okapi* (The UN broadcaster in the DRC), argued that journalists from *Radio Okapi* focus only on facts and often disregard comments or intellectual analysis of a specific situation. *Radio Okapi*, as a partner of the MONUSCO and the *Fondation Hirondelle* in the DRC, and by agreement with them, reports only factual and rigorous information. Journalists’ work is driven by the core values of impartiality and objectivity. A more analytical approach is not allowed in order to prevent abusive comments. The journalists of *Radio Okapi* agree with this strategy and observe that they have not been exposed to major troubles with the authorities until now. Jules Ngala believes that this approach chosen by *Radio Okapi* is appropriate.
- **Alexandre Niyungeko** of Radio *Inzamba* (an online programme elaborated and disseminated by Burundian journalists currently exiled in Rwanda) explained that *Inzamba* does report facts, but that *Inzamba* do not have the same vision of the same facts than other radios. The contexts in which *Radio Okapi* and Radio *Inzamba* operate are very different. Niyungeko reminded how Radio *Inzamba* was created by Burundian journalists in exile, threatened with death, after the destruction of their media. Exiled abroad and deprived of their media outlet, these Burundians still wanted to do something as journalists. It is impossible, for the journalists working for Radio *Inzamba*, to get any information from the Burundian authorities. They would like to report more comprehensively, but they lack access to information sources, as well as to the field, because they are not allowed to go to Burundi. Sometimes they use other media outlets as information sources: BBC, Deutsche Welle, etc. They work with very small budgets. Their situation is very different from that of the journalists working for *Radio Okapi*, well paid and respected by the



authorities. But the journalists of Radio *Inzamba* remain professional. They always focus on facts and are independent. Regarding the conflict situation, the aim of Radio *Inzamba* is not to influence but to inform the public, because there is a denial of access to information in Burundi, where the government closed down most of the independent broadcasters. The journalists have a responsibility towards their audience. Of course, their work can always be improved and Alexandre Niyungeko says that he does not believe it is possible to be totally objective, but at least impartial.

- **Christian Bigirimana**, journalist at the independent newspaper *Imacu* in Burundi underlines how difficult it is to do professional work as a journalist in a conflict situation. However, professionalism should remain the guideline, with or without conflict. The newspaper *Imacu* tries to apply this principle by getting information from the field, in Burundi. It is very difficult because people are afraid of talking and don't want to be cited as sources in the news. This situation weakens the news reporting and undermines the role of the media. Journalists shouldn't add fuel to the fire and have to handle the facts with precaution. Regarding the specific situation of female journalists, Bigirimana says that it is probably even more difficult for them to report. Female journalists of *Imacu* have not reported from the field for one year. Concerning the financial resources, they were limited, even before the crisis. But today the situation has deteriorated. Media outlets were destroyed and journalists are living in exile. At *Imacu*, advertising sales have diminished, while costs are rising: Journalists have circulated with two or four persons (for security reasons) while they used to go on their own before the crisis. It is difficult to do a good job as a journalist without money. And Bigirimana ends with a plea to donors for support.
- **Tuver Wundi** is the Goma correspondent of the organization *Journaliste en Danger* (JED) that monitors press freedom attacks in Central Africa, mainly in the DRC. The organization has noticed that access to information is a big issue. There is a problem of balance because a lot of political leaders want to appear in the media content and therefore put pressure on journalists. Wundi believes that journalists can influence the people's decisions. In this context, it is difficult for the population to make an informed decision and to take a position. He then enumerates the main obstacles faced by journalists during conflicts: Physical insecurity, difficulties to access the field and talk to sources, lack of contracts, militancy and political commitment among journalists, competition with social media that are difficult to control. He mentions that there is no law on access to information in the DRC, and the current press law is supposed to be revised. In Burundi, there is no such a law at all. The revision and creation of these laws must be a priority. Media also need direct and indirect support. Journalists need basic and advanced training as well as continuing education to keep in line with professional standards. They have to be independent from sources that are trying to bribe them.
- **Agathonique Barakukuza**, President of the Association of female journalists in Burundi, goes back to the problems faced by female journalists: They are exposed to social pressure, as they are



perceived as responsible for their family. Consequently, female journalists are not free to tackle all issues. Women are indeed “protected” by male journalists, but then also excluded from the field. The management therefore considers them as less indispensable and they are more likely to lose their job. In addition, during conflict, women suffer much more atrocities than men.

- The panel recalls that Jean Bigirimana has “disappeared” for three months and that many other colleagues in Burundi or in the DRC are arrested, tortured, and jailed.

### Discussion

- *The law on access to information* has been adopted by the DRC Senate and should soon pass the Assembly; the draft law on freedom of the press, revised during three years by many actors and supposed to replace the current out-dated legislation, was presented to the National Assembly.
- *Freedom of expression* is a right, but journalists also have a duty, e.g. to be objective. How both could be reconciled? When media are destroyed and when violence affects the population, isn't it possible to communicate the facts differently, without limiting the role of the journalists, by letting them explain the dangers of such destructions? An independent press is needed in order to have a clear view of the different opinions prevailing in the society, even during conflicts. The right to information and to freedom of expression are essential and should not be denied, even during conflicts.
- *Facts and comments.* The journalists have the right to give their opinion, but they also have duties. Ethical aspects include that facts should not be mixed with comments. The difference between facts and comments must be obvious.
- *Journalists are members of the society.* For instance, the conflict in Burundi has its origin in the colonial period, and journalists are human beings with their own personal history. Therefore, it is difficult for them to distance themselves from their own personal background. How, in these circumstances, could journalists do a professional work? Christian Bigirimana insists that journalists should be able to distance themselves from their own personal history; otherwise it doesn't make sense to say that they do a professional job. Alexandre Niyungeko adds that a lot of books and articles have been written about Burundi's conflict, sometimes with contradictory views. What is the role of the journalists in this debate? Journalists are not there to give lessons, but to communicate information, by letting all the parties express their views. If a journalist does not overcome his position as a victim, he is no more journalist. At *Inzamba*, the editorial board collectively discusses every paper.
- *The recent evolution of the Burundian “media model”.* The situation prevailing today in Burundi is unique because the authorities destroyed the main independent media and dozens of journalists are living in exile while trying to make all the voices heard. They are in a position of “resistants”. Before the crisis, media played a preventive and peace-building function. They warned the authorities about possible dangerous outcomes of their politics. But they were not listened to.

Today, in Burundi, both listeners and journalists are worried. The police version is the only one that prevails in public as well as pro-government media.

- *The main problems* faced by journalists in the DRC are increasing in times of conflict:
  1. Activism. Some journalists are activists (notion of “committed journalism”)
  2. Populism. Some journalists want to be popular through the media and adapt their way of working for that purpose.
  3. Arrogance, in the name of freedom of expression. Some journalists report in a sensational manner in order to attract attention, without following professional rules.
  4. External financing of media. Some donors impose their views.
  5. Exacerbation of conflicts through the positioning of media. Few journalists are neutral.
- *Professional stability and professionalism*: A lot of Burundian journalists do not have a contract and work under difficult conditions. What kind of journalism is possible when journalists are in a fragile financial and administrative situation?
- *The position of the national broadcaster*. Especially in conflict times, the national radio does not give the same version of the reality than the other Burundian media. At the Burundian RTNB, the sources are the police; while private media in exile, such as *Inzamba*, does not have the same sources. NGOs do not talk openly, and other sources are very hostile towards the RTNB. RTNB meets problems with investigation, and tries to combine “conflict-sensitive” journalism (providing model personalities to people and denouncing atrocities) with “classic” journalism. The public broadcaster tries to appeal to reason, not to emotions, in order to prevent violence. Access to information and to sources is difficult for all the media.
- *The constraints faced by exiled journalists vs. journalists who stayed* in the country. There was a large and very intense discussion between Burundian journalists currently on exile and the ones who still operate in local media, under huge constraints and constant fear. Both meet specific problems, including survival, but also level of freedom.

### **PANEL 3 - Interactions between the media and political leaders in conflicts**

### *INFOCORE Presentation*

**Marie Fierens** (Université libre de Bruxelles) presented a paper on behalf of **Marie-Soleil Frère** (Université libre de Bruxelles) about interactions between journalists and political leaders in Burundi and the DRC. She talked about political and economical interactions that have structured these relations since the emergence of the private media, at the beginning of the 1990's, highlighting the specificities of these relations as well as their consequences during times of conflict. She labelled these interactions as “dangerous connections”, raising several issues including:

- Their impact on the independence of the media, in a conflict context where citizens need to get unbiased, complete and balanced information. This kind of information is crucial during conflicts, for security reasons.
- The individual and collective responsibility of journalists in front of political leaders. Every media has to think about the consequences of disseminating each piece of sensitive information. This responsibility grows during conflicts as media discourses may have an important impact and cause casualties and victims. Journalists should not be mouthpieces for political leaders.
- The democratic pluralism. The various tendencies existing in the society must be heard through the media, even during conflicts.
- The acceptance of the fourth estate by the political establishment. Political leaders have to accept the existence of a diversity of voices in the public sphere that may evolve out of their control, even during times of conflict.

### *Roundtable with four political leaders*

- **Kizito Mushizi**, Deputy at the National Assembly in the DRC, and former journalists, acknowledges the fact that there are always potential conflicts between political leaders and media. He recalls that he had worked in the media sector before becoming a political leader. During times of violent conflicts, there is no rule of law, but only a violent opposition between various actors. Usually, one conflict party wants to stay in power, the other wants to take power. Both use the media to achieve their goal. It is important to identify these actors, to identify the critical force between these camps and to understand that political leaders often use victims as tools to justify wars, victories or defeats. Political leaders use various means to reach their goals: (i) communication (ii) intimidation (phone calls, anonymous messages, etc.) (iii) money (corruption: by buying a media manager, journalists, etc.) (iv) manipulation (by giving false information, false sources, etc.) (v) censorship (if all the other strategies fail; media can also be closed, journalists may be forced into exile, etc.)
- **Catherine Mabobori**, former Burundian Senator and journalist, currently on exile, explains that, in Burundi, the relations between media and political leaders have changed over time. Today, a lot of political leaders, journalists and other personalities are out of the country. Political leaders in exile use the media that are based abroad. It is a mutually advantageous relationship. Catherine

Mabobori congratulates the Burundian exiled journalists who keep working although they fear for their families who stayed inside of the country. The exiled media are considered as “enemies of the nation” by the Burundian authorities, and people inside of the country are not allowed to listen to these media, otherwise they are also perceived as “enemies”. Despite this situation, the audience tries to remain informed, through tools such as WhatsApp, Soundcloud, etc.

- **Emmanuel Nkengurutse** is also a former Burundian Senator. He advocates that democracy is the basis for a free and independent press. Because of their hidden agendas, the Burundian governmental authorities have undermined that basis progressively, by modifying the press law, dismantling the political parties, weakening the right of association, etc. In Burundi today, political and media pluralism have both disappeared.
- **Alain Cuma**, Spokesperson for the Congolese political opposition party UNC, emphasizes that the relationship between political leaders and journalists depends on their mutual objectives, therefore creating hypocritical relations. Journalists are paid for coverage and will frame the information in a way the sources want them to do it – and this information provider can be a political leader. Many political leaders in the DRC have created their own media outlets, in order to have a maximum of control on the journalists. Therefore, it is an unbalanced relationship, in the advantage of the political leaders. Some of the problems faced by journalists (taboo subjects, “coupage” - journalists paid by their source of information) are increased by the political ownership of media outlets.

### *Discussion*

- *Political leaders’ attitude in times of conflict.* There will always be potential conflicts between political leaders and journalists. But in the DRC and Burundi, political leaders do more harm to journalists than in other countries that are in conflict. They do not seem to care about bloody conflicts in their own country. To undermine the media, political authorities try to weaken professional solidarity (e.g. Burundian journalists in exile are considered as “putschists” and targeted by an arrest warrant.) For the Burundian authorities: “If you are not with me, you are against me”.
- *Journalism and political communication.* Some of the panellists were active in the media sector before their political career and were asked to share their experience regarding the manipulation of journalists by political leaders. How did they resist that influence as journalists? How do they manipulate journalists today, as politicians? Kizito Mushizi reminds that he was jailed several times because he resisted to political influence, including by rebel groups in Eastern DRC. Journalists have to know what they really want and respect the professional standards. Catherine Mabobori refused to support the authorities and accepted the consequences: the exile. She underlines the distinction between manipulating the media and communicating through the media.

- *Financial and sustainability issues* are essential to guarantee the media outlets' independence towards political leaders. In the DRC, a lot of media lack entrepreneurial spirit. They need to have a business plan, real management, etc. Media should not overly rely on direct or indirect funding from external donors. In Burundi, the new press law established a media fund, but it was never really implemented by the government that did not devote enough resources to it.
- *The lack of independent regulation.* Even though there are independent media regulatory bodies in Burundi and in the DRC, both institutions lack any independence. It could be important to strengthen them and give less power to the “Ministry of Communication”, which implies a direct control of the government on the media sector. But the regulatory bodies cannot be independent as long as there is no separation of powers, nor any rule of law. The whole state structures need to be reformed.

#### **PANEL 4 - The intervention of NGOs in conflict news coverage**

##### *INFOCORE Presentation*

**Eric Sangar** presented the current results of INFOCORE regarding communication strategies of NGOs and their impact on conflict-related media coverage in the DRC and in Burundi. He highlighted the following aspects:

- The high influence of both local and international NGOs as media sources in DRC and especially Burundi, compared to other INFOCORE conflicts.
- The importance for NGOs to produce and disseminate “evidence-based” information in order to strengthen their credibility towards journalists and political authorities.
- The various ways in which journalists can disseminate this information. Sometimes it is almost repeated word-by-word, sometimes it is changed and becomes more of a partisan analysis.
- Access to “traditional” media (radio, television ...) is still very important for NGOs, given the low internet penetration rate.
- The conditions under which Burundian and Congolese NGOs work are quite similar, but the discourses produced and disseminated by the Burundian NGOs seem to have more impact on both local media and international actors.
- The increasing politicized role of NGOs in Burundi, resulting from the disappearance of a regular political opposition and civil society organizations becoming the only effective non-government voice.

##### *Roundtable with 4 NGO representatives*

- **Déogratias Nzunogera**, from *L'Observatoire de l'action gouvernementale* (OAG – Observatory of the Action of the Government) in Burundi, explains that his organization doesn't work anymore since the Attorney General of the Republic blocked its bank account in November 2015. Before their activities were suspended, OAG took position on topics concerning the Burundian national

situation, including governance-related issues. The OAG issued between eight and twelve reports per year and produced important data that was also broadcasted by the media. The current conflict has made relations with the media more difficult, as everybody is hiding. In the absence of a rule of law, it is impossible to maintain any relationship, and therefore impossible to work, as media and civil society organizations are interdependent.

- **Me Jean-Claude Katende** is the President of the Human rights Congolese association *L'Association africaine de défense des droits de l'homme* (ASADHO), created in 1991. He explains that all Congolese political authorities consider this organisation as an opposition political party, while they are an organization defending human rights. ASADHO's principles are in strict adherence to the legislation and justice, as well as to respect for the victims. The media often cites ASADHO because the information it provides about human rights abuses is based on verifiable facts. The organization is represented in most parts of the DRC and deals not only with civil and social rights, but also with economic rights. For instance, it provides free legal and judicial aid, also to journalists.
- **Libérate Nakimana** works for *Le Centre d'alerte et de prévention des conflits* (CENAP – Alert and Conflict prevention centre) in Burundi. She suggests that there are two types of NGOs: On the one hand there are NGOs denouncing the abuses of political leaders and dealing with issues related to governance. Media often cites these NGOs in order to denounce governance-related problems. On the other hand, there are NGOs that are more focused on trying to produce changes in society (including CENAP). These communicate in a different way than the NGOs being part of the first category. She insists that sometimes, CENAP is even a bit afraid of the media (and will avoid them), because they sometimes do not respect exactly what the sources say. Mrs Nakimana also emphasizes that organizations that still work currently in Burundi cannot be accused of supporting the government, even if they are aware that the authorities are key resources in order to change social mentality.
- **Jean-Pascal Mugaruka**, President of the Civil Society network in Goma (DRC), shows that civil society organizations aim at representing the population in its diversity, but they have to be careful because the authorities sometimes try to prevent them from doing so. He insists on the fact that civil society is an important source for the media, which can be used to circulate press releases and communicate. Some organizations are also involved in advocacy work towards the authorities. From a journalistic perspective, he believes that public communication by NGOs is also a mean to reduce the cost, as journalists do not have to go the field to collect data: NGOs give free information. But sometimes journalists misinterpret the information given by NGOs. They use it against political leaders or to support them or they use it for financial reasons. To conclude, NGOs and the media face similar challenges in times of conflict:
  - Wrong information given by journalists. In this case, both NGOs and journalists are in trouble.

- Difficulties in accessing the field to collect data during conflicts.
- Troubles with the security services.
- Lack of financial resources: Some media outlets ask for money before publishing information.

### *Discussion*

- *The “neutrality” of NGOs.* Eric Sangar suggested that NGOs play a political role, but what does that mean? An NGO cannot remain neutral in front of situations of injustice. Me Jean-Claude Katende insists that all is political and that every single person who is interested in improving society or defending basic rights without trying to come to power is involved in politics. Political leaders accuse NGOs of trying to climb up to power, while all they want is to help manage important social questions. In Burundi, OAG was probably blacklisted because it stated that the third mandate of Nkurunziza was not in line with legal texts and wrote a report about it, shared with political leaders, civil society and the media. The organization also signed a petition addressed to Ban Ki-moon in order to get the support of the international community in the Burundian conflict. Of course, these are political statements, but does that mean that OAG is not “neutral”?
- *The change of behaviour approach* requires various complementary tools. The current crisis in Burundi did not come from nowhere; it is not a one-off problem. It is also a matter of education. The solution can only be a global one. Advocacy can be another tool.
- *Influence of funding on NGOs work.* It depends of the contracts that NGOs are signing with their donors. Civil society is legally entitled to receive subsidies or equipment.

## **PANEL 5 - Media and publics: Mutual influences in conflicts**

### *INFOCORE Presentation*

**Igor Micevski** (School of Journalism and PR, Skopje) presented an analysis of media use and perception and evaluation of the local and global news coverage of conflicts in Burundi and the DRC. He explained that the INFOCORE team is particularly interested in the question whether and how audiences and lay publics shape the news coverage by interacting with the media or by using social networks. He underlined the differences that characterize both Burundian and Congolese media landscapes and detailed the questions the project is trying to answer: How do people find information to help them overcome uncertainty in conflicts? How do they perceive and evaluate the information they get? Do they trust conflict-related news coverage? Do they know under what circumstances journalists have to work? In his conclusion he described media use patterns in both countries. He also addressed the issue of trust towards conflict-related news and discussed aspects of media literacy.



*Roundtable with 4 journalists*

- **Jacques Bukuru**, editor in chief at the national Broadcaster RTNB in Burundi, addressed the issue of new interactivity with audiences through mobile communication, the Internet and social media. In Burundi, at the national broadcaster, everyone does not yet use mobile phone, Internet and social media. Consequently, the relation between the media and the public is not obvious. Public media still have a unidirectional relationship with the public. Journalists give information and don't care about if the public is satisfied or not. However, Bukuru acknowledges that small local radio stations intensively use ICTs, mobile phones and Internet. Their programmes include a lot of talk shows where listeners can intervene by using these technologies. Journalists ask questions on Facebook, Front line SMS, WhatsApp and the public reacts or also asks questions. But it is not the approach of the "public media" so far... There are disadvantages of using information provided by the public: Information is difficult to verify, it takes a lot of time to crosscheck. So RTNB does not broadcast information taken from the Internet.
- **Marie-Noël Kabuya**, editor in chief at Emmanuel TV in Goma (DRC), explains how the ICTs have changed the relations between journalists and the public. At normal times, people follow the media according to their political affiliation. During times of conflict, people follow every media, including Internet, in order to adapt their behaviour to the situation. For example, when the M23 occupied Goma, "classic media" said that the city was still in the hands of the authorities. But Facebook and mobile phones conveyed another version and said that the M23 was already in Goma. They were right. Marie-Noël Kabuya also insists on the changes in media consumption especially for women. Usually, women have less education than men and turn to sentimental programmes, with less interest for political debates. But during conflict times, everybody searches for information, and women turn easily to social networks access data or pictures. Sometimes, they are the ones informing the men about what is going on. Traditionally, male journalists mainly cover political subjects; female journalists are more interested in social facts. But in times of conflict, women also want to access political information and therefore use their mobile phone, be it on the bus, or at the market, etc.
- **Aloys Batungwanayo**, from *La Benevolencia* in Burundi, emphasizes how the new interactions ICTs are useful for the journalists' daily work. Even Facebook groups help reporting information from the field. Sources are more diversified. Before the emergence of ICTs, the editor in chief was the only one who suggested ideas and the members of the editorial staff could only comment on them. Now, in the newsroom, all journalists consult their smartphone to suggest topics. But it is still difficult to go to the field to verify this information.
- **Benx Katondji**, journalist at the public broadcaster RTNC in Goma and correspondent of the self-regulatory body OMEC, explains that there was an evolution in the use of these technologies. At the beginning, journalists picked data on the Internet and disseminated quickly what was circulating on social networks. Now, journalists are more cautious and try to go to the

field to verify information. He also mentions that, through these technologies, audience members are proud to suggest news and send information. ICTs establish a kind of cooperation with journalists.

### Discussion

- *The methodology of audience analysis.* Igor Micevski was asked to expand on both qualitative and quantitative methods used for this research on audiences. INFOCORE was organized along two groups of researchers: One analysing the content produced by the media (with quantitative methods); another one focusing on the actors who take part in the production of information (e.g. journalists) or use the information (e.g. media users). This second group used more qualitative methods such as interviews, focus groups, etc. The research group that dealt with audiences and lay publics had a mixed method approach which was elaborated on the session.
- *The issue of hate speech* was addressed again, in the frame of audience's perceptions. If members of the audience perceive information as hate speech, it is important to know, even if journalists did not intend to produce hate speech.
- *The importance to crosscheck data provided by the social networks.* Journalists have to check the information conveyed on social networks; this information can be crucial. There are more and more professional social networks where information is verified. But still, journalists have the duty to verify information, especially the information coming from WhatsApp.
- *The cost of access to the Internet.* In Burundi, it is still very expensive and limited to a few privileged urban people.
- *The development of multimedia platforms.* When studying the interactions between the media and the public, one should note all the changes introduced by the media outlets to adapt to new contexts and situations. For instance, the website of *Iwacu* gained dozens of thousands of visitors, because of the Burundian crisis and the destruction of the most popular radio stations: People had to turn more towards online reading. On the *Iwacu* website, debates are very vivid.
- *The reluctance of the national broadcasters to use social media content.* In times of crisis, many viewers keep following the national broadcasters, even though the audience is not satisfied with the information provided. If the journalists get information through a social network and wishes the authorities to react, he will turn to them. If they don't react, the information is not published.

### PANEL 6 - The role of social media in conflict news dissemination

#### Roundtable with 4 journalists

- **Samson Maniradukunda**, deputy director of *Radio Isanganiro* in Burundi, insisted on the advantage of social media: Social networks can reach a large audience through mobiles phones, etc. They are very useful tools. But he also pointed the disadvantages of social media, and especially the difficulty to verify information and sources. Social networks can convey rumours.

The consequence of unchecked information can be very damaging because the population adapts its behaviour on the basis of the information it gets. There is also the problem of identity: A person or a group of people can easily pretend to be somebody else. This situation is very dangerous both for the malefactor and the person whose identity was stolen. Social networks can also convey insults, hate messages. Finally they are able to influence journalists in a positive or a negative way.

- **Simon Kabamba**, director of RTGA radio in Kinshasa (DRC), argued that the social media offer huge advantages: It is a good way of collecting information. He gave a concrete example: On the 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> of September 2016, a peaceful march was planned in Kinshasa in order to push Kabila to step down. A reporter was supposed to be there to capture the images. Unfortunately, the demonstration became violent and turned into a riot. Without social networks, Facebook, WhatsApp, etc. the RTGA could not have had images about these clashes. But the ones who stayed in the newsroom received information through social networks, even from correspondents based in small localities, and who were in the street with their mobile phone. More and more viewers, listeners and readers are connected in Kinshasa. Every day, they react to news. At RTGA, there is a whole section dealing with digital information, giving feedback but also building strategies to fully develop these tools. According to Kabamba, social media can bring traditional media closer to their public. They are also very useful to communicate within the team. But journalists must be careful and verify information from social media before publishing it. Developing online services is also an expensive process that RTGA tries to solve through partnerships and advertisement contracts with Internet companies.
- **Charly Kasereka** is a Blogger and VOA correspondent in Goma (DRC). For him, the advantages of the social media are as follows: they can play a warning role; they provide additional information; they enable people to share information; more and more Facebook or Twitter accounts are held by credible people; the practice of “citizen-journalism” is growing, everybody can become a journalist and all the journalists are now obliged to do “citizen-journalism” with their smartphone, etc. But he also underlines some disadvantages: it is always important to verify information; this verification gives more work to journalists; information conveyed by these networks are often emotion-driven and can lead to bad reactions, to an escalation of the crisis; social media compete with “traditional media”.
- **Anschaire Nikoyagize**, from the Human rights association *Ligue Iteka* (Burundi) presented how social media also help NGOs in their daily work. The organization is currently in trouble, as people from *Ligue Iteka* who worked for “sensitive” programmes had to escape from the country. The rest of the staff is still in Burundi, where the *Ligue*’s bank account was blocked. For the moment, members of the community keep providing information about what is going on in their area, mainly through social networks. Burundian authorities are afraid that “sensitive” information (about violations of human rights for instance) could reach the population. But

radio, newspapers and NGOs have “focal points” among the community, who can use social media to communicate. Of course, they delete their messages or reports just after sending them. The authorities don’t know these people. Social media also play an important warning role: A lot of people are saved thanks to social networks. So, even if fact checking is a real problem, social networks present more advantages than disadvantages.

### *Discussion*

- *Social media and “traditional media”: complementary or competitors?* Traditional media outlets need financial resources and manage a great deal of other editorial constraints too. For this reason social media are a threat for journalists who might not be able to stand the competition. In media history, a new media has never replaced a previous one: Television did not replace radio and Internet will not replace television. Also, social media can be perceived and used as alternative media by journalists in dangerous contexts, an opportunity, e.g. for journalists, to overcome limits of their editorial line. Journalists can use these networks to disseminate information that could not be published through their own “official” media. This point was heavily discussed as some participants argued that journalists should publish the same information through all media channels to guarantee a coherent behaviour. Participants agreed that the journalists from “traditional media” have to give an added value in their own news reporting in order to compete with social media.
- *Trust and credibility of the information disseminated through social media.* The debate focused on the issue of trust one can have in information provided by community-based people. It is often a question of personal relations: A journalist will trust someone that he has known for decades. Also, there are a lot of fake pictures circulating. For example, when the opposition organizes a meeting, they always manage to show pictures with a huge crowd. The local community can help to differentiate propaganda from truth, fake from true pictures, as long as the media or the NGOs make sure they have reliable contact persons in the population.
- *Censorship of social media by the government.* The Congolese government shut down the Internet in January 2015, after demonstrations and clashes in several cities. In Goma, the Internet is available in neighbouring Rwanda, so journalists could still have access to social media. It was much more difficult for journalists based in Kinshasa. The SMS service was also shut down, journalists had to make phone calls. The purpose of the authorities was obviously to impede the journalists’ coverage of events but also to prevent demonstrators to get organized.
- *Political propaganda* is not only circulating on the Internet. Even official sources or politically oriented media can provide propaganda instead of information. It is important to work with experienced journalists when dealing with sensitive matters.

## **PANEL 7 - Discourse analyses of conflict news coverage: Media content, NGOs and political sources**

### *INFOCORE Presentation*

**Marc Jungblut** (University of Munich) presented the main findings of the INFOCORE team dealing with the analysis of conflict discourses (including media content, NGOs and political sources). He provided insights into the quantitative computer-based content analysis and he also explained the use of the qualitative content analysis in order to analyse key moments/events, relevant ideas/frames and actors. He also gave an overview of the analysed data and briefly introduced a selection of research projects, which were conducted by the INFOCORE team so far. Jungblut also highlighted the next steps: The interaction between different discourses will be investigated in order to find out, for example, how strategic communication/PR affects the news or how the news can hold an impact on parliamentary debates. The objectives are to analyse how ideas, frames and claims can “travel” from one discourse to another. The purpose is also to link the findings from the interviews to content analytical data. Researchers of the INFOCORE project will integrate the feedback, critique, research interests and ideas of local experts into future research projects. By combining both local expertise and an academic approach the INFOCORE researchers want to produce results that are not only relevant for the academic community but also helpful for improving communication in conflicts.

### *Roundtable with 3 researchers*

- **Pierre N’sana** is a Congolese Ph.D. student at Université libre de Bruxelles, working on international, national and local radio coverage of the M23 conflict in Eastern DRC. He explained some key elements of his study: The cycle of armed conflict over the past twenty years in the DRC, especially in Eastern DRC; the strategic nature of journalistic information during conflicts and the binding nature of the journalistic professional rules. The aim of his research is to understand the underlying messages of the M23 conflict in radio discourses (e.g. the terminology used), but also contextual constraints having an impact on journalistic practices. As for his methodology he mainly uses samples of media content, interviews and previous research. He finally presented some of his first results, e.g. the way actors involved in the conflict are labelled and designated in radio discourses, the visibility of these actors as sources of information, etc.
- **Fidèle Sebushahu** is a Burundian Ph.D. student from the Université libre de Bruxelles who investigates the intervention of the international donor community in Burundi’s media sector for the past decades. Before the crisis, Burundi benefited from important investments of the international community. Donors particularly targeted the media sector as the media were considered as important tools to strengthen peace and citizenship. The media sector was both “free” but dependent on international aid at the same time. Sebushahu’s research is centred on the following question: Does the dependence on donor support of the Burundian media sector

create a specific media system? He also talked about his methodology and the difficulties to do research in the context of the current Burundian crisis. His concluding remarks included provisional results related to the precarious working conditions of journalists, the non-existent legal framework, the new forms of information production, the new distribution channels, the weariness and frustration among journalists. Sebushahu explained that the “peace-journalism” concept has been pushed into the background today (donors have encouraged a type of professional practice that does not correspond with the political environment), and journalists cannot produce any credible information. Yet, the self-image and role perceptions of journalists have not changed after the destruction of the Burundian media in 2015. Burundian journalists remain optimistic. They think the situation will improve and that they will return to Burundi one day.

- **Marie Fierens**, post-doctoral researcher at the Université libre de Bruxelles, addressed the question: “Why and how analysing media discourses?” She explained her own research on the role of print media in the DRC and in the Ivory Coast that showed how professional rules are always challenged in times of crises. The changes that crises bring about are visible in media discourses. Journalists as a specific professional group are made up of subgroups. In her view, during times of conflicts, these subgroups clearly distance themselves from each other; the tensions among these subgroups destabilize the whole professional group; these tensions also modify the journalistic professional practices and these new professional practices have an impact on conflict.

### *Discussion*

- *Analysis of hate speech.* Once again, the debate focused on the importance of identifying and neutralizing hate speech. Journalists do not always understand what type of discourse is dangerous, but also, they are often only conveyors of hate speech produced by the authorities or conflicting parties themselves. Sometimes, when asked why they use this or that terminology, journalists and political leaders can answer that they were not aware of the fact that their words can hurt and be very dangerous. Can research help raising awareness among them?
- *Accountability for disseminating political discourse.* The main issue is also the one of responsibility: To what extent are journalists conscious that they are responsible when they disseminate hate speech coming from political authorities? Journalistic responsibility is a very complex matter. Journalists will always say that they want to contribute to peace. But if they give the floor to a group that has a negative influence on conflicts, aren't they “promoting” them? Some authors think that media should not be held accountable for hate speech when they are under the influence of political actors because in these contexts, journalists only try to survive. Other authors think that journalists are as responsible for hate speech, just as the political actors, and can even be prosecuted for that. Each media should develop its own reflexion about that. For instance, *Radio*

*Okapi* did not give the floor to the M23, but it always balanced the information. When the Congolese government prohibited media to talk about the rebels, some media were closed because they had broadcasted interviews with the rebels, but, at the same time, a radio station in Goma on which the M23 could be heard has never been prosecuted.

- *Vocabulary.* Participants also wanted to know if the researchers analysing media content played specific attention to the use of some words (e.g. the use of possessive adjectives). During the M23 conflict, some Congolese journalists spoke about *our* troops when talking about the Congolese army FARDC. They gave the impression that they were part of the army. The question of “neutrality” of the vocabulary used is important and research should investigate how actors are designated or labelled by the media, the qualification that is attributed to them by the media, as well as their visibility in the media (as sources), to assess the neutrality of media outlets
- *Challenges for collecting media material* in the Great Lakes region is another point that was discussed. Indeed, most people listen to the radio and radio stations do not keep complete archives of what they broadcast. The researchers testified how difficult it was to gather the raw data.
- *The impact of external funding on media content* was also raised. In a very difficult situation, how can media outlets considering themselves as “free media” get out of this dependence, e.g. by developing their own capital? Most of the journalists involved in “foreign-funded peace-building media” say that there is no dependence towards the donors, but probably there is always a kind of conditionality. Participants agreed that it is important to go beyond external funding and to identify, for instance, how the media used to finance their activities before arrival of donors. It would also be interesting to know why donors pulled out of Burundi at such a crucial moment, when the media really needed them. Finally, it would be interesting to see what types of projects and programmes have been funded and the reasons why they have been funded.



## Recommendations

### *Recommendations by the consultant*

- ***Proposing practical solutions and concrete actions***

The reactions of the workshop participants in Gisenyi clearly showed that there is an enormous interest in INFOCORE's approach and results. During the discussions it became obvious, however, that local stakeholders are predominantly interested in practical oriented research and solutions. It is important for INFOCORE's dissemination strategy to address real demands and needs of people on the ground. Results and findings must be translated into concrete actions helping local stakeholders in advancing knowledge in conflict resolution. At the same time, expectations are high and it must be clear that academia cannot be a panacea for all the difficulties countries in conflicts face. For this reason, the INFOCORE team should also review its own strategy and avoid awakening false hopes that could backfire rather than resolve issues at stake.

- ***Deepening investigation on the conflict cases***

This also includes the question of contextualization. While the workshop participants in Gisenyi were informed about INFOCORE's comparative approach and the studies being conducted in other conflict regions (i.e. the Middle East and the Balkans), they stayed very much focused on the two African cases. The interest in the other conflict regions remained rather low which indicates that the INFOCORE project should not omit the individual cases: On the contrary, it seems mandatory to "dig deeper" and to highlight and explain differences between the countries rather than to scratch the surface or to draw too general conclusions applicable for all conflicts. Workshop participants insisted, for instance, on the various differences between the two countries Burundi and the DRC. Also the structure and research design of the INFOCORE project should be less rigid and more flexible to avoid the impression that the research is based on pre-fabricated solutions.

- ***Speeding the dissemination of the findings and assessing the impact***

Another challenge that might not be resolved, but should be at least addressed, is the fact that academic results are often published with a certain delay and might be even out-of-date, in particular with regard to conflict situations that can easily change from one second to another. It should be important for the INFOCORE team to think of a mechanism allowing for a quick dissemination of the findings. This can be done, for instance, with the help of local communities: through networks of NGOs, civil society organizations etc. This goes hand in hand with the monitoring of the impact of the findings. It is well known that researchers often move on to new topics after the end of a project, but it seems important to guarantee some sort of follow up and to take into consideration the feedback of local stakeholders, too.

- ***Raising academic interest for an underresearched Africa***

Another observation is the limited presence of INFOCORE researchers at the Africa stakeholder workshop. Each researcher, even when s/he focuses on conflict regions other than Africa, should remain open for the work of his/her colleagues. The African continent, in particular, is underresearched and often forgotten by the international community (unlike, for instance, Palestine and Israel or the Balkans that “attract” a much higher attention). It is a pity that this trend is also reflected by the INFOCORE project. One possibility to overcome the North-South gap could be, for instance, the establishment of partnerships with universities and research institutes from the Global South for mutual exchange on research about the mitigation of conflicts. An EU-funded project dealing with Africa should also include researchers from the Global South. On a more positive note, it is important to emphasize that the presence of young researchers bringing fresh insights to a conference in Central Africa was highly appreciated by the workshop participants for the reasons mentioned above: They did not come up with pre-fabricated solutions, but were open to debate and to bring in a new perspective. This should become common practice.

*Recommendation by Institut Panos Grands Lacs (IPGL)*

The following recommendations emanate from the discussions during the workshop in Gisenyi. They were formulated by the local partner, Institut Panos Grands Lacs, and are addressed to the international community and all the stakeholders involved in media assistance in the Great Lakes region.

- ***Training of media professionals***

Workshop participants emphasized the various deficiencies of the local media sectors, such as a lack of professionalization among media professionals. For this reason, IPGL recommends to strengthen the capacity of the local media sector and to increase its professionalization through trainings of media professionals and media regulatory bodies on press freedom and access to information principles.

- ***Strengthening the independence of journalists and media outlets***

Another challenge that was identified is the strong influence of political actors and the civil society on the local media sector. To guarantee the independence of the media, IPGL recommends awareness raising campaigns among political actors and representatives of the civil society on principles and practices of good governance, including the role of a strong and independent public media. The same goes for awareness raising campaigns on safety of media professionals in conflict regions and the provision of specific trainings on protection and self-protection of media professionals (in particular prior

to/during elections).

- ***Building mechanisms and strategies to insure the sustainability of media outlets***

An issue that was discussed at length during the Gisenyi workshop was the lack of financial independence of media outlets. IPGL suggests the provision of media planning trainings to increase the financial sustainability of the media sector (e.g. in acquisition, advertisement, development of business plans, fund raising etc.). This also includes the creation of a media trust fund, supported by the local governments and international donor community. One should introduce specific instruments to support the local media sector directly and indirectly, e.g. through price reductions for transportation, tax benefits for media professionals etc.

- ***Avoiding the dissemination of hate speech***

Another important topic was the dissemination of hate speech in social media networks and the lack of media literacy among local populations. For this reason, IPGL recommends the provision of trainings on digital and critical media literacy for the civil society (training of the trainers), media professionals and local populations to increase the knowledge on Internet and social media use and to raise the awareness about hate speech. Media literacy also needs to be enshrined in school and university curricula.

- ***Strengthening a truly independent regulatory body***

Due to the lack of understanding of fundamental media rights, IPGL also supports the idea to provide legal advice on media regulation including media bills and laws. Media regulatory bodies should be supported during elections in particular.

- ***Empowering female journalists***

The role of women, their specific needs and the challenges they face were a major issue at the conference in Gisenyi. Empowering female media professionals through specific training courses addressing their needs should be at the heart of each media assistance strategy.

- ***Stimulating a dialogue between all the stakeholders of the media landscape***

Last but not least, IPGL suggests the establishment of a mechanism for regular meetings, conferences and debates with researchers, policy makers, journalists and members of civil society in order to stimulate a dialogue between these actors and to identify opportunities for collaborations contributing to a joint conflict management and resolution. This includes regular updates on the state of media legislation regulating the production and circulation of information in times of conflict as well as knowledge and data sharing between journalists, researchers as well as civil society organizations.

## **Annex 1 - Programme**

**Wednesday 28 September**

### **Panel 1: The role of the media in conflicts: What are the objectives of INFOCORE ?**

- Presentation by Eric Sangar (King's College London). Moderation: David Kalenda (Pole Institute)
- Discussion

### **Panel 2: Journalistic practices in conflicts**

- Presentation by Abit Hoxha (LMU Munich)
- Roundtable with Burundian and Congolese journalists: Tuvur Wundi (DRC, Journaliste en danger), Jules Ngala (DRC, Radio Okapi), Christian Bigirimana (Burundi, Iwacu) and Alexandre Niyungeko (Burundi, Union burundaise des journalistes). Moderation: Agathonique Barakukuza (Burundi, President of l'Association burundaises des femmes journalistes and Journalist, Burundian Press Agency)
- Discussion

### **Panel 3: Interactions between the media and political leaders in conflicts**

- Presentation by Marie Fierens on behalf of Marie-Soleil Frère (Université libre de Bruxelles)
- Roundtable with political leaders: Alain Cuma (DRC, Spokesman, UNC), Kizito Mushizi (DRC, RDC Deputy), Emmanuel Nkengurutse (Burundi, Former Senator), Catherine Mabobori (Burundi, Former Deputy). Moderation: Alexis Ndalihoranye (DRC, City Council of Goma)
- Discussion

### **Panel 4: The intervention of NGOs in conflict news coverage**

- Presentation by Eric Sangar (King's College, London)
- Roundtable with local and international NGO representatives: Me Jean-Claude Katende (DRC, ASADHO), Jean-Pascal Mugaruka (DRC, President of the Civil society of Goma), Libérate Nakimana (Burundi, Conflict Alert and Prevention Centre), Déogratias Nzunogera (Burundi, Observatoire de l'action gouvernementale). Moderation: Cyprien Ndikumana (Director, Institut Panos Grands Lacs)
- Discussion

**Thursday 29 September**

**Panel 5: Media and publics: Mutual influences in conflicts**

- Presentation by Igor Micevski (School of Journalism and PR, Skopje)
- Roundtable with Burundian and Congolese journalists: Aloys Batungwanayo (Burundi, La Benevolencija), Jacques Bukuru (Burundian public broadcaster, RTNB), Benx Katondji (DRC, Observatoire des médias congolais) and Marie Noël Kabuya (DRC, RadioTV Mishapi Voice). Moderation: Pierre N'Sana (Université libre de Bruxelles)
- Discussion

**Panel 6: The role of social media in conflict news dissemination**

- Roundtable with Samson Maniradukunda (Burundi, Radio Isanganiro), Simon Kabamba (DRC, Radio Télé Groupe l'Avenir), Charly Kasereka (DRC, Voice of America), and Anschaire Nikoyagize (Burundi, Ligue Iteka). Moderation: Thomas Kubuya (DRC, Virunga Business Radio)
- Discussion

**Panel 7: Discourse analyses of conflict news coverage: Media content, NGOs and political sources**

- Presentation by Marc Jungblut (University of Munich)
- Roundtable with Pierre N'sana, Fidèle Sebushahu et Marie Fierens, Researchers at the Université libre de Bruxelles. Moderation: Alexandre Hatungimana (Professor, University of Burundi)
- Discussion



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