

## South Sudan Presidency, lift a ban on foreign newspapers

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By Isaiah Abraham

October 25, 2012 - Foreign newspapers, especially the ones from East African countries are banned from operating in the Republic of South Sudan. Nearly six months now no single paper is allowed into the country. Security is hard on them. A word has it that the presidency ordered the banning of all newspapers coming from anywhere on the ground that Ugandan's and Kenyan's newspapers have gone too far and were critical of Kiir regime in Juba. The presidency is reported to have been irked by some stories touching its performances. Whether that story was true or not we have this situation of foreign newspapers prohibited from entering into the land. That simple act has caused unnecessary relations damage with our friends from East Africa.

When a country closes its doors to others, it shows belligerency and in fact it is an act of war. We aren't at war with anyone from East Africa so for our government to stop reporting from this region. People in the region of East Africa are our real brothers and sisters in the true sense of the world. They have shown that relation during our trying times, and no right minded man/woman could have this short memory to forget what Uganda and Kenya has done during the time of our liberation. In fact we could have allowed them the Four Freedoms not the North alone.

We can't close them out from informing the world about us. Information is power, they say; it would be good for someone to say something about us, than us doing it for ourselves. Our local newspapers aren't at the standard, at least at the moment. We would have benefited from media fraternity of our brothers from East Africa. An outsider who is established is better a novice. In fact the East Africa media is fairer and judicious in many way. It is a mirror for someone to write about your progress, and our leadership should not have gone out of the way to do just that.

Six months down the line is a long time indeed; our sister countries are exercising patience against the republic of South Sudan ill calculated decision to ban newspapers operating in the country. This clearly shows our immaturity to international cooperation we have heard about. Even China with her wide circulated and alleged hostility against external media has no problem with newspapers from the West. What do we think we are doing by banning the newspapers from entering our country? East African media houses in fact have played an important role throughout our liberation period. Ugandan media is doing a professional job for the East African Community and this is true with Kenyan media houses. Each country reports anything from either side; but no furor has been reported, such as what our presidency has done to East African media operations.

If the intention of banning foreign newspapers was to protect the Government of the Republic of South Sudan from deserved criticism, then we have missed it wide. Republic of South Sudan administrative and political ills are well documented, no amount of futile information shield would keep them from anyone out there. Kiir Regime has failed his people and this is not any secret anymore. He continues to embarrass his own people and even the region; one miscalculation after another. People are tired of this regime and would have loved it expose much clearer to those who are still hanging on to Kiir-Machar Government. Even the East African newspapers did their job cautiously and responsibly against Juba worse performance for the past seven years. There is no incentive therefore for Juba regime to panic by attempting to gag voice of the voiceless.

Whoever that decided to stand between the people and the information is an enemy of the people. I doubt whether advisors have anything concrete to offer our people if they keep quiet at this point in time. I personally pursued this matter through visits to one of the senior Government officials whom we shared a lot in this field of information, and we were all in disbelief as to why should the presidency do such a primitive thing in the name of protection. In Zimbabwe president Robert Gabriel Mugabe tried to do the same by stopping any Western reporters including the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), but his action backfired soon after against his regime. Isolation is what our presidency leading our country into. We can't operate without others. You wonder what country is this that is waging war against media.

Our country has become so intolerable. Security is hard with vendors who are trying to smuggle newspapers inside the country. My eyes caught a foreigner running for her life with car behind in hot pursue. Stop it! Please this is a twenty so century where the whole world has become a village. Anything done on one side of the world will be radiated immediately to any other part of this 'village'. If the issue is with the security, someone must intervene and tell us what specific crime did these vendors or newspapers do against the state. It doesn't work like. Media reports issues so long as this is for the people and about people. I humbly request the personality of our president to lift the ban on the newspapers from Kenya and Uganda. Mr. Kiir is a good man, but he is equally a bad manager!

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