

MEDIA, CONFLICT AND THE STATE IN AFRICA

Countries emerging from violent conflict face difficult challenges about what the role of media should be in political transitions, particularly when attempting to build a new state and balance a difficult legacy. *Media, Conflict and the State in Africa* discusses how ideas, institutions and interests have shaped media systems in some of Africa's most complex state- and nation-building projects. This timely book comes at a turbulent moment in global politics as waves of populist protests gain traction and concerns continue to grow about fake news, social media echo chambers and the increasing role of both traditional and new media in waging wars or influencing elections. Focusing on comparative cases from a historical perspective and the choices and ideas that informed the approaches of some of Africa's leaders, including guerrilla commanders Yoweri Museveni of Uganda and Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia, Nicole Stremlau offers a unique political insight into the development of contemporary media systems in Africa.

NICOLE STREMLAU is head of the Programme in Comparative Media Law and Policy, Centre for Socio-Legal Studies, at the University of Oxford and research professor in humanities at the University of Johannesburg. She has conducted extensive research in Eastern Africa and previously worked for a newspaper in Ethiopia. Nicole is the recipient of a European Research Council grant that examines the role of social media in conflict and migration, with a specific focus on the Somali territories. Her work has appeared in journals such as *African Affairs*, *Third World Quarterly*, *Review of African Political Economy* and the *International Journal of Communications*. She is also the co-author, with Monroe Price, of *Speech and Society in Turbulent Times* (Cambridge University Press, 2018).

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Media, Conflict and the State in Africa

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Acronyms

AAPO	All Amhara People's Organisation (Ethiopia)
AAU	Addis Ababa University
ADF	Allied Democratic Forces (Uganda)
AU	African Union
CAFPADE	Council of Alternative Forces for Peace and Democracy in Ethiopia
COPWE	Commission to Organize the Party of the Workers of Ethiopia
Derg	'Committee' (The group within the military that assumed power under Mengistu Haile Mariam)
DP	Democratic Party (Uganda)
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
EAEC	East African Economic Community
EC	Ethiopian Calendar
EFPJA	Ethiopian Free Press Journalists Association
ELF	Eritrean Liberation Front
EMMTI	Ethiopian Mass Media Training Institute
ENA	Ethiopian News Agency
EPA	Ethiopian Press Agency
EPLA	Eritrean People's Liberation Army
EPLF	Eritrean People's Liberation Front
EPRDF	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
FDC	Forum for Democratic Change (Uganda)
FEDEMU	Federal Democratic Movement of Uganda
Frelimo	Frente de Libertacao de Mozambique
Fronasa	Front for National Salvation (Uganda)
FUNA	Former Uganda National Army
GCIS	Government Communication and Information Service (South Africa)
ICU	Islamic Courts Union (Somalia)
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army (Uganda)

MLLT	Marxist–Leninist League of Tigray
NEB	National Electoral Board (Ethiopia)
NIJU	National Institute of Journalists of Uganda
NRA	National Resistance Army (Uganda)
NRC	National Resistance Council (Uganda)
NRM	National Resistance Movement (Uganda)
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
OLF	Oromo Liberation Front (Ethiopia)
ONLF	Ogaden National Liberation Front (Ethiopia)
OPDO	Oromo People’s Democratic Organisation (Ethiopia)
PRA	Popular Resistance Army (Uganda)
RC	Resistance Council (Uganda)
REST	Relief Society of Tigray
SPLM	Sudan People’s Liberation Movement
TFG	Transitional Federal Government (Somalia)
TLF	Tigrayan Liberation Front
TNO	Tigray National Organisation
TPLF	Tigray People’s Liberation Front
TUSA	Tigrayan University Students Association
UEDF	United Ethiopian Democratic Forces
UFF	Uganda Freedom Fighters
UFM	Uganda Freedom Movement
UNC	Uganda National Congress
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNLA	Uganda National Liberation Army
UNLF	Uganda National Liberation Front
UPA	Uganda People’s Army
UPC	Uganda People’s Congress
UPDA	Uganda People’s Democratic Army
UPM	Uganda Patriotic Movement
USUAA	Union of the University Students in Addis Ababa
WPE	Workers’ Party of Ethiopia

Acknowledgements

This book is the result of a long journey and hundreds of conversations with people who shaped the media in Eastern Africa. In many ways it began in 2001 when I received a small grant from the Christopher Brodigan Fund at Wesleyan University that set me off on a path to learn more about the media in Ethiopia. Working for an Ethiopian newspaper in Addis Ababa, my curiosity and fascination grew for understanding how media cultures develop and change, with history always at the fore. As with many countries on the continent, many of the prominent journalists and media owners in Ethiopia were active in the guerrilla struggle – or were on ‘the other side’ of the defeated government. The legacy of how guerrilla governments have adapted to the challenge of governing, while negotiating their revolutionary values, has been an overlooked aspect of understanding media policy on the continent and one I have explored in this book. I since returned to Ethiopia many times, including for my PhD research, and also broadened my research to other countries in the region- Uganda, Somaliland, Somalia, Kenya, Sudan, Rwanda and Tanzania, among others. It is the generosity of leading journalists, and policymakers, civil society leaders, and former fighters, in telling their stories that has made this book possible. I am extremely grateful for all of their time and helping me try to make sense of why the media is the way it is in particular contexts. A special thank you goes to Amare Aregawi, Charles Onyango-Obbo, Daniel Bekele, David Mukholi, Drake Ssekeba, and several colleagues in Ethiopia that were particularly generous with their time but asked to remain anonymous. Kassahun Addis ably provided the translation of articles and documents from Amharic and I am also grateful to *Press Digest* and *Seven Days Update*, which provide weekly summary and analysis of a diverse selection of Ethiopian media. Both of the editors of these publications allowed me access to their archives which has been a great tutorial on media in Ethiopia.

Many journalists I interviewed several times, over the course of many hours, in some cases collecting their oral histories and attempting to piece together the

development of the media that, while traced in newspapers, has lacked a documented back story about why certain choices were made and what values, ideas, power relations and philosophies that informed them. These ideas were further developed during long conversations over the course of the Stanhope Centre-LSE East African Journalist Fellowship Programme that continued to meet over several years in London, Addis and Khartoum, with long lasting friendships. I am particularly grateful to Adil El Baz, Blen Fitsum, Ruth Nesoba, Fred Olouch and Ester Nakkazi. Yusuf Gabobe became a special collaborator over the years in Somaliland and always had critical reflections and insights. Fellow researchers and collaborators in the House of Freedom in Addis Ababa provided warmth, ideas and friendship during extended research, including Emmanuel Fantini, Valeria Pechoni and Stefano Rossi.

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Note

The Ethiopian calendar begins 11 September and is seven years behind the Gregorian calendar until 31 December. After this date it is eight years behind. I have referred to dates as documented – i.e. for Amharic newspapers the date will be as provided with (EC) for Ethiopian Calendar. All other dates unless noted otherwise are in the Gregorian calendar.

I have used the popular form for spelling Amharic and Tigrayan words in English rather than transliteration. In addition, it is typical for highland Ethiopians to go by their given names rather than their family names, so this norm has been followed in the book.

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