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.

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Media, Conflict and the State in Africa

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For Iginio
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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)
## List of Acronyms

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