



The articles on these pages are from *From statistics on abandoned babies to tenders that topple governments: Investigative journalism in Africa* which include the keynote speech, lectures and case study presentations by Africa's foremost investigative journalists meeting at the pan-African Investigative Journalism Summit last year. See http://www.fairreporters.org/portal/fairnew/docs/FAIR_Summit_2008_proof5.pdf



TRAFFICKING INVESTIGATION

From 2000 about eight million African men, women and children have been trafficked to Europe, America and the Middle East. They have ended up as unpaid labourers in construction sites, in food processing plants, in brothels, as household slaves, on plantations, in the criminal underworld, in prisons, dead, or simply on the streets. Many have paid large amounts of money for this "privilege". Last year between May and December 2008, FAIR conducted an investigation into human trafficking involving eight African investigative journalists from seven countries, led by Ghana-based investigative editor Edem Djokotoe. The team concluded that the combination of victims' despair, criminal intent, trickery and official collusion are the reasons why human trafficking is the third most lucrative criminal enterprise in the world today. *A better life elsewhere: human traffic in and from Africa* is available at www.fairreporters.org/portal/fairnew/UserFiles/SysDocs/bb_content/1063/FAIR_2008_proof4.pdf

RADIO ECCLESIA TO THE RESCUE

By Manuel Vieira

Angola has almost 15 million inhabitants, but since many years have passed without a population census, it may be much more than that. According to some studies, six million people, hailing from a total of 18 provinces, live in our capital, Luanda. Angola is poor: 70% of my compatriots live on less than US\$1 per day.

The media, at least the private media, are poor too. The sector receives no state support and depends on the sale of publications as well as the sale of space and (in the case of broadcast media) airtime to advertisers. Foreign donors assist some of these private media institutions. This is also the case with Radio Ecclesia.

State-funded official media do not provide for the information needs of Angolan citizens. People in areas that are far from the capital do not even get to know what the state policies, in relation to the needs of these areas, are. When the Cabinet approves a plan for a certain community, no one broadcasts the news in an intelligent manner: asking what is being done, what is planned and what is needed.

This is why alternative media, like Radio Ecclesia, work hard to investigate policies, compare them with needs, and look for manners to pressurise the authorities to ensure that needs are addressed and plans are properly implemented in the communities.

Often, however, it is difficult for us to cross-check the information. The big problem here is that, as a rule, our leaders do not speak to the private media. It is only occasionally that we receive responses to our questions.

This is not the only difficulty. Often, authorities get really upset with the activities of the alternative media, and as a result many investigations are left unfinished. Some journalists are pressured psychologically, are threatened or lose their jobs. The unsolved murder of Ricardo de Melo, editor of *Imparcial Fax*, in 1995, is still fresh in our memories.

Journalistic investigation is still an uncertain adventure here in Angola. Corporate interests of media houses, prescribed political editorial lines, interference by political power, lack of press freedom, lack of money, the nonexistence of freelancers, lack of training and a culture of fear stop journalists from looking for truth.

In the face of these challenges, Radio Ecclesia particularly focuses on the following three areas, that represent three principal aspects of present day Angolan society:

1. National reconstruction: investments in civil construction is important, since Angola is at a stage of accelerated reconstruction and many tenders, projects and contracts materialise as a result. After the war ended five years ago, the president of our country promised the construction of 20 houses per day. The public was elated when the news was broadcast in the state media, but the reconstruction did not happen.
2. The HIV/Aids epidemic: This is a national emergency.
3. Police violence: Recently, there have been

THE 'AFRICAN PULITZER'

By the time you read this, the advisory council of the Forum for African Investigative Reporters, consisting of eminent journalism professionals with impressive track records in investigative journalism themselves, will be considering the submissions of their peers for the first-ever African Investigative Journalism Awards.

The main award, nicknamed the "African Pulitzer", will go to the African journalist who has published or broadcast the best investigative story on this continent in the past year. Submissions will be judged on investigative quality and newsworthiness, relevance and importance of the subject.

A second award, the Editors' Courage Award, will go to the editor who, despite the risks to themselves or their positions, resisted pressure to kill a good story or programme and broadcast or published it anyway. This award has been initiated as a response to the very real pressure editors in Africa face from powerful forces in society to censor information.

The awards ceremony will be held as part of the African Investigative Journalism Conference, to be held from 25 and 28 October in Johannesburg by FAIR and the University of the Witwatersrand. – Evelyn Groenink

For more on FAIR and the awards, visit www.fairreporters.org

many unexplained murders of young men in Sambizanga, considered Luanda's most violent area. These are attributed to a police death squad. Groups of national policemen are accused of "fighting crime" (mostly muggings and armed robberies) by simply and randomly shooting young men.

The following community radio work by Radio Ecclesia in these three areas can be reported.

National reconstruction

We found that house construction programmes continued at the same slow pace as before, with no acceleration. In the electoral campaign in 2006, our leaders promised that one million houses would be built during the next four years. Again, until today, this has remained an empty promise. Building is slow and all the enterprises that got contracts belong to people who are connected to those in power, and to army generals in particular. Even the Minister of Housing is a general. This very fact makes it difficult for us to investigate the contracts and the implementation. Suspicions of corruption abound, but as yet we have been unable to find evidence.

HIV/Aids and antiretroviral roll-out

A few months ago we discovered that about a hundred children, in the biggest paediatrics hospital in Luanda, were in need of second-line antiretroviral medicine, but were not receiving it. We went to the hospital and listened to doctors, parents and children; we reported on their trauma, their dreams, their agony and much more. We contacted the government but, as usual, they didn't want to talk to us. We published the

recordings in a series, broadcasting our findings: that the Angolan state spent US\$5-million per month buying the needed drugs, but that the principal hospital of reference in the capital did not receive any. Finally we succeeded in contacting the minister of the sector, who had been the vice-minister in the same health portfolio for the past five years, and he said that he didn't know. He only announced an enquiry, which is still underway. During this investigation, the national director for the fight against poverty verbally attacked one of our reporters, accusing her of "poking her nose in his business". Radio Ecclesia continues to investigate its suspicions that there is large-scale embezzlement of medicines for the purpose of fraudulent sales to private clinics.

The killings in Sambizanga

The Sambizanga area is one of the poorest, and most crime- and violence-ridden in Luanda. According to inhabitants of Sambizanga, for the past few months, groups of men in civilian clothing have entered the area in the evening, looking for "criminals". They then shoot young men they seem to suspect of being criminals, often close to their homes. In one incident, an armed group in civilian clothes, which had arrived in a civilian car, murdered some actors who had been in Sambizanga to film a scene for an action film about juvenile robbery. Clearly, this death squad was not aware that these were actors working for a film, or that the making of the film even had received permission from the authorities. Some time before that, a musician called Amizade, who was a member of the group Os Lambas, was shot by armed men, who had confused him with someone else. Another supposed "delinquent" was killed near his home. In the same municipality, near the Roque Santeiro market, excessive police shooting caused the death of a youngster and a woman who had been selling her wares.

Our investigation of these incidents accelerated when, on 23 July 2008, four armed men ambushed eight young men at a meeting. They shot them at point blank, many times. Witnesses said they referred to their actions as "a frescura" – a breath of fresh air. The witnesses identified the men as policemen of the Sambizanga division. Though police for a long time refused to entertain the issue, or to answer any questions, eventually the social pressure through Radio Ecclesia led to the arrest and the prosecution of seven men thought to be involved in the massacre. What we did was the following. Our reporter went to the terrain, and gathered and counted the bullet casings. There were 57 bullet casings of the same calibre as used by the men, proving that this had really been a massacre. We then approached some witnesses, and with their help, were able to produce a reconstruction of the crime. A specialist also assisted us and, in the end, we were able to prove that this had been an organised group, and an organised and premeditated action. We then opened the microphones to the public. Many people demanded the death sentence for those responsible.

It is a difficult investigation, since we are dealing with the police here and we ourselves are not safe. In spite of all the evidence, and the concern of many experts and academics about the goings-on in Sambizanga, police still refuse to admit that a death squad with police links is operating in the area. However, we have established, through many chronological reports and statements, that about 25 policemen have been involved in these events. So far none have been brought to justice.

The investigation continues.