



Radio Tamazuj: ‘Part of the **solution**’

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DONATE

In 2015, a horrific civil war and crackdown on independent media forced the entire editorial staff of Radio Tamazuj to flee South Sudan, leaving everything behind. Today, the radio station completely operates from exile and plays a vital role in the daily lives of South Sudanese people. The editor in chief of Radio Tamazuj tells us more about the impact of their work and the personal sacrifices that were made in order to keep delivering independent news, every day.

***'What drives me is to be a part of the solution in our country.'* - Editor in chief (*), Radio Tamazuj**

Success in exile

Radio Tamazuj delivers independent news to approximately 500,000 South Sudanese daily listeners from a neighbouring country, it's something the editor in chief could not have envisioned a few years ago.

'At some point, the security situation in South Sudan made it impossible for us to work in South Sudan without government interference,' he explains. 'When we left South Sudan in 2015 and continued reporting from exile we knew it could mean there was no way back.'

Although staff members hope to return back to South Sudan one day, the situation looks grim for now. 'Back home we have no guarantee for our safety. The government sees us and all independent media as a threat. To protect ourselves and to keep Radio Tamazuj alive, it's best to keep operating in exile,' the editor in chief says.

Importance of information

Today Radio Tamazuj is the only independent source of information in South Sudan, making the radio station more important than ever. The large volume of calls the staff receives on a daily basis reminds them exactly how vital their work is, the editor in chief explains.

'Most people in South Sudan go hungry because they are too poor to afford food. Yet they still go to the stores to buy credit and call us to report issues and share their stories. Their need to share and

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receive reliable information is what keeps us going,' he says.

Radio Tamazuj aims to be a voice for all people in South Sudan, especially those in remote rural areas who feel like their issues are not being heard. Using shortwave radio frequencies Radio Tamazuj broadcasts their programmes to places without internet and out of reach of phone networks. But, 'to give the people a voice you first have to listen,' the editor in chief explains. By listening to people from all backgrounds and hearing more sides to a story, Radio Tamazuj aims for the most complete and objective reporting possible. This way the listeners of Radio Tamazuj are well-informed when dealing with issues which they hope will bring the different communities in South Sudan closer together.

Personal sacrifices

The Radio Tamazuj staff members are some of the millions of South Sudanese people who fled their country amid a brutal civil war. Hundreds of thousands are thought to have been killed in the country since 2013.

The current South Sudanese government treats independent media as a threat. Journalists who refuse to keep in line with the government agenda risk harassment, detention, torture and even murder. The Radio Tamazuj staff have no clear indication if and when they can return. But when asked if he ever regrets leaving everything behind for Radio Tamazuj, the editor in chief's answer is very clear: 'Not one day.'

He adds: 'leaving your country and family behind is not easy, but what drives me -and I think all of us- is seeing that with Radio Tamazuj we are part of the solution in our country and not the problem.'

Free Press Unlimited supports Radio Tamazuj both financially and operationally. Together we now work hard towards a professional, independent Radio Tamazuj that can continue to provide the South Sudanese population with reliable, uncensored information. We hope to have achieved that by the end of 2020 . For more information on our work with Radio Tamazuj [view the project here](#) .

(*) For safety reasons the name of the editor in chief is not used in this article.

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