

PRESS RELEASE

The UN Emergency Ebola Response Coordinator inaugurates the Okapi Radio station in Butembo and pays tribute to the journalist murdered in Lwemba on 2 November, 2019.

Butembo, November 4, 2019: The opening ceremony of Radio Okapi in Butembo, North Kivu Province, began in silence. The representative of the mayor of the city, the UN Emergency Ebola Response Coordinator (EERC) and twenty journalists from the region observed a minute of silence in memory of Mr. Papy Mahamba, a journalist killed in Lwemba 48 hours before.

The ceremony continued in full respect of the Congolese traditions, with the Mayor's representative, Mr. Jean Pierre Kasereka and the UN Emergency Ebola Response Coordinator, Mr. David Gressly, cut the ribbon and poured a soda on the steps of the brand new Radio Okapi studio. This antenna is intended to disseminate news of general interest and to support the efforts of Ebola response teams.

"We can not stress enough the vital role played by community radios in informing communities and in the fight against Ebola. We are very pleased to have this new antenna that broadcasts in three languages: Kinande, Kivahili and French which will help reach even more people," David Gressly said.

From Monday to Friday, from 5 pm to 6 pm, residents of Butembo town and its surroundings will be able to listen to a local stall of news and programs on 92.9 FM. In order to reach a large audience, the content of this stall is rebroadcast from Tuesday to Saturday from 6.30am to 7am.

The schedule of the programs of the Okapi Butembo Radio station is developed according to the Radio Okapi editorial line, which is grounded in the full respect of professional rules and independence. This editorial line also relies on the verification of sources, the professional rigor and the diversity of opinions.

"We were really excited to hear that Radio Okapi Butembo will continue even after Ebola. The first day we opened the Q&A line, people had called us from the center of Lubero, some 40 kilometers from Butembo. Most of us asked if the radio would really remain after the outbreak is over and with Mr Gressly's guarantee that it will, it is our pleasure to share the news with our audience," M. Sadiki Kambale, one of the two Radio Okapi journalists said.

It is a well-known fact that the North Kivu and Ituri provinces have been experiencing an Ebola outbreak since 1 August 2018. Radio Okapi Butembo will identify and collect all the questions and doubts related to this disease so that doctors, experts, community and religious leaders can provide appropriate answers and recommendations.

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