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*"Rummaging in the government's attic"*

Description of document: Five (5) most recent Monthly Reports to the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG) (2015)

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Source of document: BBG FOIA Office  
Room 3349  
330 Independence Ave. SW  
Washington, D.C. 20237  
Fax: (202) 203-4585

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*Office of the General Counsel  
Freedom of Information and Privacy Act Office*

June 13, 2017

**RE: Request Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act – FOIA #17-032**

This letter is in response to your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request dated January 25, 2017 to the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG), which the Agency received on February 6, 2017. In your request, you seek a copy, in electronic format, of the five most recent Monthly Reports to the BBG Board.

For tracking purposes, your request was assigned **Reference Number FOIA17-032**. Please refer to this number in all future correspondence regarding your request.

The agency has completed its search for and review of documents responsive to your request, which are on the CD-ROM enclosed with this letter. Certain information has been redacted from the enclosed documents pursuant to FOIA Exemption 6 to protect individual personal privacy interests and FOIA Exemption 7(F) to protect law enforcement information that could reasonably be expected to endanger the life or physical safety of any individual, and such redactions have been marked with the codes (b)(6) and (b)(7)(F). No other information was redacted or withheld, and all responsive documents have been provided to you. There were no chargeable fees associated with your request.

This concludes the Agency's response to your request and it is now closed. You may contact me or the Agency's FOIA Public Liaison at 202-203-4550 for any further assistance and to discuss any aspect of your request. Additionally, you may contact the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) at the National Archives and Records Administration to inquire about the FOIA mediation services they offer. The contact information for OGIS is as follows: Office of Government Information Services, National Archives and Records Administration, 8601 Adelphi Road-OGIS, College Park, Maryland 20740-6001, e-mail at [ogis@nara.gov](mailto:ogis@nara.gov); telephone at 202-741-5770; toll free at 1 877-684-6448; or facsimile at 202-741-5769.

Finally, if you are not satisfied with this response to your request, you may file an administrative appeal with the Agency by writing to: Chairperson, Access Appeal



June 13, 2017

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Committee, BBG, Suite 3349, 330 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20237. Your appeal must be postmarked or transmitted by fax to 202-203-4548 within 90 days of the date of this letter.

If there are any other questions regarding your request, please contact me at 202-203-4550 or the Office of the General Counsel at the above address. Currently, inquiries are not accepted via E-mail.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "A. T. Krog". The signature is stylized with a large, looped initial "A" and a smaller "T" followed by "Krog".

Andrew T. Krog  
FOIA and Privacy Act Officer

MEMORANDUM FOR: Broadcasting Board of Governors  
FROM: Interim CEO & Director, André Mendes  
DATE: May 20, 2015  
SUBJECT: IBB Monthly Report for April 2015

**GLOBAL OPERATIONS:**

Technology Services and Innovation (TSI)

- TSI has assembled an easily transportable **Fly-Away FM Transmitting System** and demonstrated it on April 28. The system can be readily transported on a commercial flight and then set-up in minutes for urgent broadcasts to critical target audiences.
- Tropical Storm Bavi passed south of the Mariana Islands on March 15 and impacted operations at both the BBG Tinian and Saipan Transmitting Station sites. The storm damaged five of Tinian's antennas but final repairs were completed by March 31.
- Because of safety concerns with the severely corroded guy wires, it was necessary to remove a number of antennas at the Sri Lanka Transmitting Station from service until a thorough inspection could be made of the antenna towers. We are arranging for a structural expert to travel to the station to undertake these investigations.
- The Agency received no notifications from the United States Computer Emergency Response Team (US-CERT) of any suspicious activity being directed towards or emanating from the Agency's computing infrastructure. However, four workstations were detected communicating with command and control centers through a malware infection. These infections may have been a result of drive-by infections due to visiting sites serviced by a malicious Russian advertising site. All systems were remediated. Forensic scanning tools identified five additional workstations having indicators of compromise (IOCs). The workstations were also remediated.
- The Senior Agency Official for Privacy coordinated a Privacy Breach Notification Team meeting to review the impact of a privacy breach with the Agency PIV card application form on the Agency's legacy SharePoint site. Only nine employees were potentially impacted by the breach, and the breach was remediated. The Breach Notification Team prepared a notification letter that described the nature of the breach and actions employees could take to protect themselves.

MEMORANDUM FOR: Broadcasting Board of Governors  
FROM: Interim CEO & Director, André Mendes  
DATE: June 22, 2015  
SUBJECT: IBB Monthly Report for May 2015

### Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey

The Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey closed on June 12. Preliminary results indicate BBG's response rate to be around 72%. Between August 2015 and December 2015, OPM will provide BBG with final response rates and employee satisfaction scores. We expect the final results to be a few percentage points higher than our current tabulation. As compared with this time in 2014, BBG's response rates were 65.9% and the final OPM number came in at 68.7%. The BBG's participation rates are 9% above last year and a remarkable 61% higher than the Federal Government at large.

### Technology Services and Innovation (TSI)

- BBG has provided ongoing updates with employees regarding the June 4<sup>th</sup> Office of Personnel Management (OPM) cyber intrusion to include messages from the Interim CEO and Director, the Chief Information Officer, and OPM. We will continue to monitor and follow up with stakeholders as necessary.
- TSI continues to work with the embassy in Amman to direct officials of **Jordan** Radio and TV to fulfill their contractual obligations to us to restore BBG's leased FM sites at **Amman** and **Ajloun** to full operating power.
- TSI added additional shortwave transmissions of VOA Kinyarwanda/Kirundi in response to the turmoil in Burundi. TSI also extended the VOA shortwave Amharic, Afan Oromo, and Tigrigna transmissions to cover the Ethiopian general elections.
- U.S. Ambassador Cynthia Akuetteh (U.S. Embassy Gabon) visited the Sao Tome Transmitting Station in early April. She was favorably impressed by the station's operation and friendly team who worked several days to prepare the building and grounds for her first visit to Sao Tome. André Mendes also visited Sao Tome in early May to meet with station staff and to visit local officials and institutions.
  - In April, Sao Tome station staff members promptly responded to an urgent distress call to help a stranded fisherman caught in turbulent waters well offshore. They launched the Station's Zodiac boat in heavy seas and brought the stranded fisherman and his dugout to shore. This type of community service is priceless and reflects well on the entire staff and operation of the station in Sao Tome.
- The agency received no notifications from the United States Computer Emergency Response Team (US-CERT) in the past month of any suspicious activity being directed toward or emanating from the agency's computing infrastructure.

Office of Digital & Design Innovation (ODDI)

- **VOA ‘Audio Streamer’ Application Submitted to the iOS and Android App Stores on June 17**

The free, official VOA Mobile Streamer application serves broadcast audio news in more than 30 different languages to your Android devices, iPhone, iPod Touch, and iPad. The VOA Mobile Streamer allows users to:

- Listen to **hundreds of radio news programs on-demand** in more than 30 different languages
  - Hear **live radio broadcasts streaming** in dozens of languages
  - **Save download time and data costs** with the Low-Bandwidth Mode in the settings
  - **Share your favorite audio** by e-mail, Twitter, Facebook, Google+ and other social media services
- 
- **What is the Unique Value of the Mobile Streamer for VOA & Its Audiences?**
    - It allows VOA to better serve and **connect with audiences in low-bandwidth countries using click-to-call cellular/voice** minutes to get our audio content, instead of having to stream it over costly data connections.
    - It offers a new way to experience VOA audio content through a unique and refreshing design offering a non-traditional news app experience, especially **for younger audiences that might be turned off by the more traditional news approach.**
    - It **offers a passive, hands-free way to consume VOA’s content** while commuting to work or doing other tasks.
    - It helps **showcase the depth and breadth of all the thousands of hours of VOA audio programs** we produce each week.
    - It allows us to leverage **AudioNow’s international IVR infrastructure.**

MEMORANDUM FOR: Broadcasting Board of Governors  
FROM: Interim CEO & Director, André Mendes  
DATE: August 20, 2015  
SUBJECT: IBB Monthly Report for July 2015

## **Global Strategy**

- BBG Editorial Retreat on Extremism

One of the most persistent issues facing the United States and the world is violent extremism on a global scale. U.S. international media (USIM) has been deeply involved in covering the growth of extremism. Drawing on its high credibility and trust, and on its deep understanding of history and culture of the affected societies, USIM has helped global audiences to understand the nature of the rising threat. On July 23, over forty editorial leadership and staff from around USIM gathered for a one-day discussion on the role and practice of our journalism to audiences in markets experiencing a rising tide of extremism. Please see attached summary report.

- Marketing

Office of Strategy and Development (OSD)/Marketing is in the midst of a series of affiliate conferences scheduled to take place in Tanzania, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Cambodia, Indonesia, Ecuador, and Peru. These conferences are an important reward and recognition for partner stations, as well as a key source of information on how we might work better with them in the future. Representatives from the relevant USIM networks are also attending the conferences. In Lima, Peru, VOA's leading partners in Latin America will come together to discuss the joint creation of a Spanish-language channel for the hemisphere.

- Development

OSD/Development is working fast to bring in a significant amount of money for special programming from outside funders before the fiscal year ends. Deals in the works should bring in at least \$1 million for projects in the Baltics, Afghanistan, the DRC, Nigeria, Senegal, Burundi, Cote d'Ivoire, and elsewhere.

The VOA documentary on women's rights, created in partnership with Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU), has been completed. Its release will be timed for the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Beijing UN World Conference on Women. The documentary will be shown at ABU and possibly the UN and other forums. It is intended to be part of an ongoing series produced with ABU colleagues, and represents a new model of collaborative content creation.

- Performance Review

Office of Performance Review (OPR) conducted a spot analysis following a query from State Department regarding VOA's policy in using the term Rohingya for Muslims in western Burma. OPR found VOA's usage and reporting is consistent with State's policy in respecting self-identification by this group, and recommended VOA incorporate its guidelines into its VOA Newsroom Stylebook and hold a workshop for its writers on the subject.

## **Operations**

- VOA Indonesian Video Migration to Prague

All VOA Indonesian video streaming content was migrated to Prague on July 9, a major milestone for the Streaming Migration Project. At this time, all VOA audio and video streaming content has now been successfully migrated to Prague. The Network Control

Center (NCC) in Washington is feeding all VOA streaming content via the MPLS terrestrial fiber network to the Prague Pangea Team, which then encodes and uploads the programming to Akamai for use on web pages, mobile devices, etc. The entire project team is participating in an ongoing series of project close-out meetings to ensure that all punch-list items are addressed and that the responsibilities of each element (VOA, NCC, RFE/RL) are clearly defined and documented.

- Threat Messages

Numerous “threat messages” (non-specific) towards our correspondents were recently received through the agency network and social media(YouTube), most recently by VOA PNN and Azerbaijan Services and are being investigated by the agency’s IT and security offices.



To: Board of Governors  
From: Robert Bole, Director of Global Strategy  
Through: André Mendes, Interim Chief Executive Officer and Director  
Date: August 11, 2015

Subject: **REPORT - BBG Editorial Retreat on Extremism: Insights/Ideas**

One of the most significant issues facing the United States and the world is growth of violent extremism on a global scale. U.S. international media (USIM) has been deeply involved in covering extremism; drawing on its established credibility and trust, and on its deep understanding of history and culture of the affected societies, we have helped global audiences to understand the nature of this rising threat.

On July 23, 2015, *editorial leadership from around USIM gathered for a one-day discussion on the role and practice of our journalism in markets experiencing a rising tide of extremism.* The afternoon focused on the management of the editorial challenges raised by actively addressing those issues. As an initial framework, **two critical editorial insights/questions** helped drive the conversation on the role of USIM in responding to extremism.

- *How does our journalism expose the true nature of violent extremism and how can USIM be effective in engaging audiences, especially online, exposed to extremist propaganda?*
- *While in the long-term our content can alter the trajectory of radicalization, what is our role in the short-term in exposing the violent extremism targeting our audiences?*

### **Overview of the Policy Environment**

The 2015 National Security Strategy focused on “combatting the persistent threat of terrorism,” most notably the information space to “[support] alternatives to extremist messaging...” Government Agencies received direction in its FY 2016 Global Engagement Guidance that “...the United States Government’s approach must continue to shift to longer-term, results-driven programs focused on countering recruitment and radicalization, and shifting the discourse away from violent extremism.”

Specifically, the BBG has a role in the Administration’s strategy to counter the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) within Line of Effort #6, “Exposing ISIL’s True Nature.” In FY 2015, BBG received funds (\$6.3M) to implement an expansion of our work in Iraq, Turkey, the Kurdish region, as well as in global content; in FY 2016, proposals are to renew this funding (Senate at \$6.3M and the House at \$8.8M).

### **USIM Role in Responding to Closed Media Environments/Propaganda**

A central mission of USIM is exposing propaganda by leveraging fact-based, high-quality journalism that presents and explains U.S. policy and assists audiences in understanding democratic values, civil society and human rights. USIM also has a traditional role in using its

distribution capabilities to penetrate denied/closed information environments, such as North Korea, Cuba, China and Russia.

Extremist groups have excelled in creating new forms of propaganda/conspiracy theories that obscure U.S. policy and actively undermine western values, human rights and civil society. They are closing information environments and denying those audiences access to a full range of information.

USIM has different capabilities that fulfill our mission and present a robust response to the growing threat of extremism. IBB works with fellow government Agencies to ensure that the Agency fulfills its role within public diplomacy. VOA is a worldwide platform that provides audiences with a clear, fact-based understanding of the impacts of extremism in all of its global complexity, while presenting the policies of the U.S. clearly and effectively. BBG networks (and VOA in select locations) directly unmask extremist propaganda and engage local audiences with news and information that exposes the fallacy of extremist groups' messaging of their invincibility and infallibility.

### **Retreat Logistics & Background**

Approximately forty staff members from VOA, RFE/RL, RFA and MBN participated.<sup>1</sup> The one-day retreat was structured around four panels, three case studies and one keynote. The keynote speaker, Ambassador Husain Haqqani (former Pakistan Ambassador to the United States), was introduced by Governor Weinstein.

The panels were as follows: *The Role of Information in Extremism* (moderator IBB Bill Bell), *BBG's Role & Establishing Redlines* (moderator IBB Gary Thatcher), *Best Practices for Establishing the Credibility of USIM on Extremism* (moderator IBB Jeff Trimble), and *Editorial Challenges when "Countering" Violent Extremism* (moderator RFA Libby Liu).

The case studies included presentations of *Dandalin VOA*, a Hausa mobile content stream, MBN's forthcoming *Delusional Paradise* program, and RFE/RL's Russian digital media response team, DIGIM.

### **Key Insights/Questions**

The following are a series of insights/questions that resonated with the editorial leaders during the retreat.

- USIM has a role in 'the clash of ideas' by covering voices of moderation and 'free thinkers' of the Muslim world, by reaching wider audiences in highly partisan media environments, and using fact-based reporting to debunk conspiracy theories about U.S./western policies and actions.
- Extremism thrives where there is a lack of complexity or curiosity about the world, its people and how modern societies face their challenges. The beginning of extremism starts with closing of the mind to the possibility of a non-violent vision of the future.

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<sup>1</sup> OCB Director Carlos Garcia was planning to attend, but had a last minute conflict.

- Even while media availability grows, much of the world’s news space is highly partisan and interest-based. Digital channels can be highly radicalized (“digital ghettos”), where potential recruits have a higher chance of connecting and interacting with an extremist.
- Within these ‘digital ghettos’ radicalized individuals are mobilized to take action (i.e. recruitment, lone wolf acts), generally, through a ‘personal touch’, a specific message(s) crafted by a real person, either through social media or physical meeting.
- An important outcome of USIM’s news and information is in exposing the fallacy around the air of invincibility and infallibility of extremists; especially within the ‘digital ghetto’, and regions where extremists are controlling physical territory.
- A sense of those attending was that USIM’s role is most powerful and effective in preventing radicalization through the support of open media environments and the growth of civil society. The clear sense was USIM is not the most effective platform for ‘converting’ extremists already committed to the ideology, though we can introduce doubt into extremist minds.
- A secondary outcome is that through its media USIM prompts governments and communities to confront the radicalization and growth of extremists.
- While coverage of news events are essential, USIM must be aware that there is danger to extend and even support the distribution of violent extremist propaganda or the stories that the extremists entice USIM to cover. USIM must exercise thoughtful editorial control.
- USIM editors are aware of and must continue to guard against the danger of ‘false equivalency’ in coverage of extremists through the practice of giving equal media time and space to their demonstrably invalid position for the sake of supposed reportorial balance.
- In a crisis, audiences tend to consume media that reinforces their own opinions. In markets where there are high levels of association with extremist ideology, USIM credibility is not assured. USIM will grow its credibility by engaging audiences and by ensuring it has an authentic understanding of audiences’ culture, history, outlook, language, as well as grievances.
- While every USIM entity has their own set of core rules with regard to commenting, trolls, hate speech, and etc., there is more opportunity for editors and journalists to trade best practices.
- Overall, many participants pointed out that this type of pan-USIM editorial meeting is beneficial and highly necessary to grow a more collaborative and engaged culture within the BBG. Many editorial leaders met each other for the first time leading to new relationships and contacts.

### Next Steps

Global Strategies is working on a number of follow-up steps to advance the BBG’s role in responding to extremism, including the IBB’s participation in policy development and execution.

In short:

1. Develop a short (2-3 page) **policy paper for the interagency to provide a clear statement on the role, capabilities and firewall redlines of USIM within the U.S. government’s countering violent extremism (CVE) policy.** Working with the

- CEO/Board, we will brief the Administration (NSC, State), interagency partners, and Congress – a formula we followed successfully with Countering Revanchist Russia.
2. Request all entities to provide their **internal policies in engaging and responding to extremism commenting, use of materials/content generated by extremists, and other related editorial policies**. We will compile and do a light analysis of best practices for potential improvements.
  3. Organize **three to five small group editorial best practice discussions** with retreat participants to address specific questions, such as “best methods for monitoring and eliminating trolls,” or “engaging in delicate conversations” that may attract extremists in civil discussions.
  4. Convene small group of entity/editorial leadership to **plan for increased collaboration, especially editorial planning for USIM-wide enterprise reporting**, such as our ability to covering the Middle East from all perspectives.
  5. Propose **the development of a *USIM Global Extremism Coverage Report***, a weekly email newsletter of select USIM published (translated) analysis and articles to be distributed to U.S. government, Congress, think tank staff, journalists, and other key stakeholders/influencers around the world.

To: Broadcasting Board of Governors  
From: Brian Conniff, President  
Subject: Monthly Report for May 2015  
Date: June, 18 2015

**A. Firewall**

Nothing to report.

**B. Challenges/Issues**

*Alhurra Correspondent Bashar Fahmi Still Missing*

Alhurra Correspondent Bashar Fahmi continues to be missing in Syria. Fahmi was last heard from on Aug. 20, 2012 when he was caught in a firefight in Aleppo, Syria. Since then there has been no word as to Fahmi's status.

*RFI Integration with MBN*

Plans to consolidate RFE/RL's Radio Free Iraq Service into MBN's Radio Sawa are progressing. Selected RFI staff will transfer into Radio Sawa during the summer and new programming will start in September.

*Alhurra and Radio Sawa Transmitter Issues*

Alhurra and Radio Sawa's transmitters in Mosul and Ramadi continue to be off the air due to security concerns, while Radio Sawa's FM transmitter in Basra continues to be off the air for repairs.

Radio Sawa's Ajloun transmitter in Jordan went off the air and is now operating at an auxiliary site (near Amman) at 1kw. When the transmission moved to the auxiliary site, it reaches northern Amman, but not the Syrian border.

Radio Sawa's Amman FM transmitter is at 10 percent of the power due to damage to the transmitter. Additionally, JRTV says the transmitter site will be closed in less than six months. The BBG is exploring whether the new equipment will be suitable for the new site.

*Raise Your Voice Campaign*

MBN continues to move forward on several new programs (TV and radio) and digital properties for the Raise Your Voice Campaign. This campaign is designed to encourage Iraqis to speak out and be a part of the discussion and debate about the fight against extremism and the underlying causes of terrorism. MBN is currently in the process of recruiting staff and securing studios/sets for the new programs.

### MBN Working With State Department

MBN President Brian Conniff and Vice President of Network News Daniel Nassif met with the PAO officer for Yemen. During the meeting they discussed MBN's efforts in covering Yemen and opportunities to work with the Embassy (when it reopens).

In a separate meeting, Conniff and Nassif met with representatives from the State Department's Near Eastern Affairs Bureau to discuss MBN's efforts in the Maghreb and opening of MBN bureaus in the region.

On May 12, the State Department's Dubai Regional Media Hub used MBN's studios for PAO media training. Recipients of the training stated that they found the use of an actual TV and radio studios very useful as part of the curriculum.

### Awards

Radio Sawa won the Silver Award at the New York Festival awards honoring the World's Best Radio Programs. The report highlighting the plight of Syrian children was honored in the Best Human Interest category. Two other Radio Sawa reports were named as finalists including:

- *Sawa Magazine* report on a Trifaith Center for Best Human Interest story.
- Sawa news report on Underage Marriage in Sudan for Best Investigative Reporting.

Winners will officially be announced at a ceremony on June 22nd.

### **C. Legal and Personnel**

MBN is currently recruiting for a new Chief Financial Officer. After nearly five years of service, MBN's CFO has moved on to a new position closer to his home in Florida.

### **D. Cyber Security/Security**

New protective vests and helmets were shipped via DHL to Baghdad on May 29 with facilitation support by the Department of State. The equipment was received in Baghdad on June 15.

To: Broadcasting Board of Governors  
From: Brian Conniff, President  
Subject: Monthly Report for June 2015  
Date: July 17, 2015

**A. Firewall**

Nothing to report.

**B. Challenges/Issues**

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*Alhurra and Radio Sawa Transmitter Issues*

Radio Sawa's transmitter in Ramadi is back on the air. Alhurra and Radio Sawa's transmitters in Mosul continue to be off the air due to security concerns, while Radio Sawa's FM transmitter in Basra continues to be off the air for repairs.

Radio Sawa's Amman FM transmitter is off the air, IBB is looking into this. Radio Sawa's Ajloun transmitter in Jordan went off the air and is now operating at an auxiliary site (near Amman) at 1kw. When the transmission moved to the auxiliary site, it reaches northern Amman, but not the Syrian border.

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The first program of the Raise Your Voice campaign, Radio Sawa's *What is Your Opinion*, is scheduled to launch on July 26<sup>th</sup>. The program is a daily call-in show that will air on Radio Sawa's Iraq stream during evening drive time. The program's two Iraqi hosts will field calls and social media interaction throughout the program. *What is Your Opinion* will discuss topics that serve as the root causes of ISIL.

*MBN President Brian Conniff Travels to Dubai*

MBN President Brian Conniff visited MBN's production facilities in Dubai at the end of June to meet with the staff. He also observed the filming of Alhurra's two new programs *DardechTAG* and *You and Nabila*, as well as Alhurra's flagship program *Al Youm*.

*Alhurra's Facebook Page Reaches 6 Million 'Likes'*

Alhurra's Facebook page hit 6 million 'likes' at the end of June and continues to grow. This is due to story selection and using engagement techniques to facilitate discussion. Other MBN properties on Facebook include Radio Sawa's Facebook page, which has 5.4 million 'likes'; Alhurra's *Al Youm* page has 1.5 million 'likes'; and Alhurra's *Free Hour* has just over 1 million 'likes'.

**C. Legal and Personnel**

Nothing to report.

**D. Cyber Security/Security**

Nothing to report.



To: Broadcasting Board of Governors  
From: Brian Conniff, President  
Subject: Monthly Report for July 2015  
Date: August 14, 2015

**A. Firewall**

Nothing to report.

**B. Challenges/Issues**

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Plans to consolidate RFE/RL's Radio Free Iraq Service into MBN's Radio Sawa are progressing. Select RFI staff are scheduled to start working at MBN next week and new programming will start in September.

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Alhurra and Radio Sawa's transmitters in Mosul continue to be off the air due to security concerns, while Radio Sawa's FM transmitter in Basra is back on the air.

Radio Sawa's Amman transmitter is on the air, but at 1/10<sup>th</sup> power and services northern Amman. The Ajloun transmitter in Jordan is operating at 1/20<sup>th</sup> power from a low tower and so it is basically considered off the air. The reach is just a few kilometers from the auxiliary site.

*Raise Your Voice Campaign*

The first program of the Raise Your Voice campaign, Radio Sawa's *What is Your Opinion* launched at the end of July. The program is a daily call-in show that airs on Radio Sawa's Iraq stream during evening drive time. The program's two Iraqi hosts field calls and social media interaction throughout the program. *What is Your Opinion* discusses topics that serve as the root causes of extremism.

MBN continues to move forward on several new television programs and digital properties for the Raise Your Voice Campaign, many of which are scheduled to launch in September. This campaign is designed to encourage Iraqis to speak out and be a part of the discussion and debate about the

fight against extremism and the underlying causes of terrorism. MBN is finalizing the recruitment of staff and securing studios/sets for the new programs.

*MBN President Brian Conniff Meets with PAO Algeria*

MBN President Brian Conniff met with Ana Escrogima, the new Public Affairs Officer assigned to the U.S. Embassy in Algeria. During the meeting they discuss MBN's work in Algeria and ways MBN can work with the U.S. Embassy.

*MBN Hires New CFO*

MBN hired Jim Moghadam to be the new CFO, he started in July.

*Egyptian Journalists Visit MBN*

MBN hosted a group of Egyptian journalists out to MBN headquarters for an in-depth visit and meeting with key managers. Representatives from Watani newspaper, RTV in Egypt, Elbadil newspaper, October Weekly magazine and Al Hayat newspaper were among those that came out to Springfield. They discussed MBN's operations in Egypt and shared their thoughts on Alhurra and Radio Sawa.

**C. Legal and Personnel**

Nothing to report.

**D. Cyber Security/Security**

Nothing to report.



June 17, 2015

MEMORANDUM FOR: Board Members

FROM: OCB – Carlos A. García-Pérez, Director

SUBJECT: Monthly Report for June, 2015

This month's programming attention on the most important news pertaining to Cuba focused on: Cuba's agreement to repay debts to Western countries, Cuba's removal from the State Department's terror list, the executive-legislative divide in U.S. Cuba policy, and the opening of full-fledged embassies in Washington and Havana. Special interviews on U.S.-Cuba relations included Cuban exile writer Carlos Alberto Montaner, U.S. progressive icon Tom Hayden, Michael Lavers, reporter for the Washington Blade who recently travelled to Cuba, Cuban American political analyst Julio Schilling and Jose E. Valiente of the Tampa Bay Chamber of Commerce. We also covered the increase in aggressive actions towards (and detentions of) members of the civil society in Cuba.

Other programming highlights included coverage by all Marti platforms of the Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom ceremony where Guillermo Fariñas, 2010 Sakharov Award recipient, received the award. We also reported on Cuban "cuentapropistas" (self-employed people) as possible agents of cholera in Cuba by virtue of their travels to Haiti to buy cheap goods that are later resold in Cuba for profit. In addition, we interviewed, directly from the Biennial Art Expo in Havana, the controversial Cuban artist Frank Ernesto Martinez. We also interviewed young Cuban academics Walfrido Dorta Sánchez and Michael Hernández Miranda, both of whom made presentations at the Latin America Studies Association (LASA) forum held in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Radio Marti dedicated special programming to the celebration of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Radio Marti. The accomplishments of 30 years of Radio Marti broadcasts and discussion of how we would continue to serve our audience into the future were incorporated into most of our programs during the week of May 20<sup>th</sup>. Reactions from Cuba as to the importance of Radio Marti, interviews, and web page articles from founding members etc. were all incorporated into the programming and featured in a special webpage as part of martinoticias.com.

In addition, we covered the introduction in Congress of bills that would prohibit exports to companies owned or managed by the Cuban military or their relatives, deny funds to open the U.S. Embassy in Havana, and restrict funding for new trips to Cuba. Additionally, new

Congressional measures would prohibit docking at ports or properties that were confiscated by the Cuban government from American owners.

Other important events covered during this reporting period included the fourth round of negotiations between delegations of both countries in Washington, D.C. and several trips to Cuba from U.S. Congressional delegations, Republicans and Democrats; the trip of Pittsburgh's Mayor Bill Peduto; and several trips by U.S. business and investor delegations and Chambers of Commerce, and a delegation of the Florida Bar Association. We also reported that more airlines are announcing service to Cuba, including Eastern Airlines and Iberia, and that Sprint and T-Mobile began to compete for the Cuban market, and TelcoCuba wants to provide telecommunications services between the U.S. and Cuba.

We continued to broadcast live play by play coverage of the NBA playoffs and finals. Our coverage of the MLB season continues with three weekly play by play broadcasts, one of which featured a rare pitching duel by two Cuban starting pitchers, Raisel Iglesias of the Cincinnati Reds vs. Gio Gonzalez of the Washington Nationals.

### **May 2015, Digital Media and Social Strategy Monthly Report**

During the month of May the website had 580,040 visits that produced 1,543,685 Pageviews.

Piramideo continues to grow, now connecting 663,274 Cubans on the island.

Martí Noticias Facebook page continues to attract more fans at a daily rate of 114 new followers daily. This equates to approximately 800 new followers each week, currently totaling 15,000 fans.

Our YouTube channel has more than doubled the # of views and visits in comparison to last year:

<u>Jan 1-May 31st 2014</u>	<u>Jan 1-May 31st 2015</u>
Views 423,367	Views 918,462

Estimated minutes watched on YouTube:

<u>Jan 1-May 31st 2014</u>	<u>Jan 1-May 31<sup>st</sup> 2015</u>
814,931	1,949,712

We continue to send our biweekly newsletter to 361,068 email recipients and more than 50,000 SMS texts with news headlines to cellphone users.

#### TV Marti

During this period TV Marti has continued with the production of Specials, *Antena Live* and *7N30*, covering the most important news and information related to our audience and broadcasting at least two daily packages of video content received from Cuba.

Amongst the most important topics on *Antena Live* were:

1. Cuba Stories - We continue to use at least two packages with original content from Cuba. The most important for this period were reactions from Cuban citizens on the future of U.S./Cuba relations and exclusive video on the activities of Cuban police to detain and impede an independent journalist from going out and doing his job, and also on the reports of irregularities in the trial of a man accused of assaulting a member of the Ladies in White.
2. Cuba (cont.) - We covered all news stories and events dealing with the future of U.S./Cuba Relations including a conference at the Brookings Institute in Wash. D.C. where we interviewed the Assistant Secretary of Commerce Stephan Selic, and some scholars from Cuba. We also continued working on stories of various epidemic situations like cholera and syphilis so we can inform and create awareness amongst Cubans.
3. Farinas - Coverage of the Truman-Reagan Medal of Honor for Victims of Communism Award Ceremony for Guillermo Farinas in Washington D.C. on June 11 and 12, 2015 with live reports from Washington.
4. International Coverage:
  - Venezuela- packages with all topics including the recent updates on political prisoners like Leopoldo Lopez and Ceballos.
  - Spain- Package on various topics related to Cuba

#### Specials

- Miami Miami - a new edition of this monthly special to feature Key Biscayne
- We continue contributing with VOA in the production of segments for their programs at our studios and in the exchange of stories and videos. Stories are also shared with various local TV stations and have been used by some blogs.



July 21, 2015

MEMORANDUM FOR: Board Members

FROM: OCB – Carlos A. García-Pérez, Director

SUBJECT: Monthly Report for July, 2015

All Martí platforms thoroughly covered one of the most important news events pertaining to the Cuba-U.S. bilateral relationship in over fifty years: the announcement for full diplomatic relations and the upgrading of the Interest Sections to full-fledged embassies, which took place on July 20, 2015.

[Radio and Television Martí](#) broke programming in order to present live statements, with in-house simultaneous translations of the announcement by U.S. President Barack Obama and Secretary of State John Kerry. Additionally, expert analysis was provided by former Cuba Interest Section Chief [John Caulfield](#) and also the Washington-based President Emeritus of the Inter-American Dialogue, [Peter Hakim](#). Online, [martinoticias.com](http://martinoticias.com) received over 6,000 views in the one hour of special live coverage.

On July 20<sup>th</sup> we broke programming across platforms and livestream to report live from Washington, D.C. on the Cuban [Embassy opening ceremony](#) followed by the [joint press conference](#) by Secretary of State John Kerry and Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez, and reaction from the island from [journalists](#) and [everyday Cubans](#), as well as the [Cuban American exile community](#), Spain, and the European Union.

Particular attention was given to the [six-month anniversary](#) of the joint U.S./Cuba announcement of reestablishing diplomatic relations.

We also covered the continuous harassment and arrests of dissidents and activists such as this report on [Rodiles: "The situation in Cuba can get worse."](#) Antonio Rodiles, coordinator of several independent forums and civil society projects inside Cuba, made declarations to [martinoticias.com](http://martinoticias.com) on his attack which drew the attention of U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations [Samantha Power](#) and of Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs, [Roberta Jacobson](#) who [met Rodiles in Havana](#) on January 23, 2015.

Also this month, very likely Cuba's most popular sportscaster Julia (Julita) Osendi, visited our studios and participated in our popular 1800 Online program, hosted by Juan Juan Almeida and Lizandra Diaz.

In addition, a memorable moment for Radio Martí occurred this month when our station broadcast its first ever no hitter, as the Detroit Tigers' Max Scherzer beat the Pittsburgh Pirates in an

interleague MLB matchup. Radio Marti also broadcast the deciding game of the NBA Playoffs where the Golden State Warriors defeated the Cleveland Cavaliers, led by superstar LeBron James.

### Digital Media and Social Strategy Report

In the month of June, martinoticias.com received 566,800 visits producing 1,504,837 Page Views. The average time spent on site was 12 minutes and 29 seconds.

Piramideo had 9,196 new subscribers, increasing the number of Cubans connected through this platform to 673,703.

### TV Marti

During this period, TV Marti has continued with the production of Specials, *Antena Live* and *7N30*, covering the most important news and information related to our audience and broadcasting at least two daily packages of video content received from Cuba.

Amongst the most important topics in *Antena Live* were:

1. Cuba/U.S. Embassy – TV Marti did live reports on July 1st on the announcement of the reopening of the embassies and on July 20th on the raising of the Cuban flag at the Cuban embassy in Washington D.C. and later on the press conference with U.S. Secretary of State Kerry and Cuba's Bruno Rodriguez. Our anchor, Karen Caballero, gave us live reports from Washington, D.C. for Radio and TV coverage. Later a special edition of this report was re-transmitted at 12:30 and a special edition of *Antena Live* and *7N30* were produced.
2. Cuba Stories – We continue to use at least two packages with original content from Cuba. The most important for this period will be reactions from Cuban citizens on the future of U.S./Cuba relations and exclusive video on the images of the collapse of various buildings in Havana with interviews with the family victims. We also obtained an interview with Tania Bruguera, the performer that was detained in Cuba for attempting to do an anti-government theater play in Havana.
3. Cuba – Covered all news stories and events dealing with the future of U.S./Cuba Relations including conferences at the University of Miami and Florida International University on the subjects of tourism, business, technology, and specific conferences with the Florida Bar Association on their return trip from Cuba.
4. International Coverage – **Venezuela** - packages with all topics including the recent updates on Political Prisoners like Leopoldo Lopez and Ceballos, and **Spain** - package on various topics related to Cuba

### Specials

1. Rosa Maria Paya – A new special was produced with the daughter of deceased Cuban leader Oswaldo Paya, on the anniversary of his death and on the continuous search for an autopsy and other incongruencies on his death report given by the Cuban government.

We continue contributing with VOA in the production of segments for their programs at our studios and in the exchange of stories and videos. Stories are also shared with various local TV stations and have been used by some blogs.



August 17, 2015

MEMORANDUM FOR: Board Members

FROM: OCB – Carlos A. García-Pérez, Director

SUBJECT: Monthly Report for August, 2015

Despite being denied press access to the ceremonies, Radio & TV Martí provided comprehensive coverage of the historic U.S. Embassy opening ceremony and joint press conference with Secretary of State John Kerry and Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez in Havana. The Martí broke into regular programming to bring live coverage (including live streaming on the web), and continuous updates were sent via social media alerts as well as push notifications to mobile phone users of the Martí App. Live coverage included reports by Voice of America's Celia Mendoza, independent journalist and Martí contributor Ivan Garcia Quintero, and Reinaldo Escobar, journalist and editor of *14ymedio*, a Cuban independent online publication from Havana.

In addition to the live coverage, the Martí provided reports and updates throughout the day with political analysts on both sides of the issue, reactions from Havana and from the exile community in Miami as well as events in Puerto Rico where Cuban dissidents and activists met on the future of democracy in Cuba.

The Martí had **28,863 visits** to their digital sites (desktop, mobile and app) on August 14 alone, that produced **73,256 Pageviews**. A special edition of our newsletter, *El Pitirre* was devoted to the historic day and **30 thousand SMS were sent** with the news headlines. A special edition of the TV program *7N30* was devoted to the day's events. In addition, a special emphasis was given to our social media reporting, producing an organic reach on facebook as follows: Friday August 14th: 115,577 people; Saturday August 15<sup>th</sup> 148,786 people.

All platforms also thoroughly covered the announcement of the restoration of full diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Cuba, and the upgrading of the Interest Sections to full-fledged embassies, which took place on July 20, 2015. [Radio and Television Martí](#) broke programming in order to present live statements, with in-house simultaneous translations, by U.S. President Barack Obama and Secretary of State John Kerry. Additionally, expert analysis was provided by former Cuba Interest Section Chief [John Caulfield](#) and also the Washington-based President Emeritus of the Inter-American Dialogue, [Peter Hakim](#).



On July 22, Radio Marti produced special programming throughout the day for the third anniversary of the death of Cuban opposition leader Oswaldo Payá Sardinás and another young peaceful opponent of the Cuban government, Harold Cepero, an event which is still clouded in ambiguity. We also reported on the job application process at the new U.S. Embassy in Havana where a Cuban government employment agency, PALCO, seems poised to have the final say as to who gets hired. Meanwhile, we also discussed important topics such as reports suggesting that visiting U.S. legislators are forgoing contacts with the Cuban dissident community and meeting only with Cuban government officials. Our *Cuba al Día* program analyzed what is likely the first acknowledgment by official Cuban media of theft, corruption and general indiscipline inside Havana's mega port of Mariel project.

This month we also explored, from a Cuban vantage point, the meaning and reach of the term "middle class," after U.S. diplomat Anthony Blinken used the phrase to explain U.S. policy towards Cuba, which was, as stated, to strengthen the middle class in the island. We travelled to the annual conference of the Association for the Study of the Cuban Economy (ASCE) where several programs were recorded featuring an ideologically diverse representation of international scholars from the U.S., Cuba, Venezuela, Mexico and Norway, all of whom discussed various issues relating to the Cuban economy and the Washington-Havana normalization process.

The Radio Marti program "Puente," dedicated to the historic normalization process between the U.S. and Cuba, featured several original interviews including one with media consultant Giancarlo Sopo, who wrote in the Huffington Post about the perceptions of Cuban youth on the normalization process, another with Nicholas Sarwark, Chairman of the Libertarian Party, who shared his views on the important changes taking place in the bilateral relationship, basically endorsing President Obama's Cuba policy and former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's pledge to work hard against the embargo if she were elected President, and another with Cuban American researcher Richard Cores of the Council of Hemispheric Affairs. We also aired fragments of Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton's speech on what U.S. Cuba policy would be like under her presidency.

We took a look back in history, recalling the 21st anniversary of the August 5, 1994 protests known as the "maleconazo" and in fact provided live coverage of peaceful protests which took place inside the island marking that date.

We interviewed Elizardo Sánchez Santa Cruz, head of an independent human rights entity inside Cuba, on his most recent monthly report which documents more than 600 short term arrests inside Cuba during July, a record. Former USAID official for Latin America, Adolfo Franco, was also featured in an analysis of a New York Times editorial calling for an end to the U.S. embargo on Cuba. Finally, opposition figure Manuel Cuesta Morúa was interviewed on his recent call for the Cuban government to "normalize" its relationship with the Cuban citizenry.

Radio Marti continues to broadcast three live play by play games of Major League Baseball every week.

## Digital Media and Social Strategy July 2015 report

In July 2015 martinoticias.com had 723,021 visits that produced 1,802,201 Page Views. The average time spent on the site was 11 minutes and 36 seconds.

During this reporting period, martinoticias.com launched a responsive mobile site that accommodates the site navigation to the users' device *m.martinoticias.com* with a different layout for desktop, tablet and mobile. This allows for a more user-friendly interface and speeds up the loading time.

We also launched a new version of Marti Noticias App for Android and iTunes that includes the LIVE streaming of Radio Marti programming.

In July we delivered 1,673,623 emails with our newsletter to 361,068 email addresses.

We reported on the collapse of a residential building in Havana due to heavy rainfall and [efforts by an independent reporter](#) to document the tragedy.

We also commemorated the [anniversary](#) of the victims of the tugboat tragedy, *13 de marzo*, on the 21st anniversary of the event (July 13, 1994) that resulted in the death of 37 people, 10 of them below the age of 12, who died when the Cuban Coast Guard sank the tugboat that was trying to flee Cuba.

Some original / exclusive stories include:

[Cause 1, 1989, unfinished page from Cuban History](#). [Arnaldo Ochoa:] From pampered and decorated general of the regime, to pariah for having links with the cartels according to Havana, and behind the backs of Fidel and Raul Castro.

[Rodiles: "The situation in Cuba can get worse."](#) Antonio Rodilles, coordinator of several independent forums and civil society projects inside of Cuba, made declarations to martinoticias.com on his attack which drew the attention of U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations [Samantha Power](#) and of Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs [Roberta Jacobson](#) who [met Rodilles in Havana](#) on January 23, 2015. [U.S. diplomats concerned about the attack on Cuban dissident Antonio Rodiles](#).

[Exclusive: Cremata talks about censorship of his work, branded as a mockery of Castro](#). On July 4 in front of a full theater, he released "The King Dies," days after the National Council for Performing Arts in Cuba (NACE) takes it out of the circuit claiming that it is a "political leaflet against Fidel Castro."

[Exclusive: Cuban writer Angel Santiesteban speaks at leaving prison](#).

During this period, TV Marti has continued with the production of Specials, *Antena Live* and *7N30*, covering the most important news and information related to our audience and broadcasting at least two daily packages of video content received from Cuba. Amongst the most important topics covered on *Antena Live* were:

1. Cuba/U.S. Embassy - TV Marti has continued with the coverage of all topics pertaining to the opening of the U.S. Embassy in Cuba on August 14th.
2. Cuba Stories - We continue to use at least two packages daily with original content from Cuba. The most important for this period will be reactions from Cuban citizens on the future of U.S./Cuba relations and exclusive video of Manuel Cuesta Morua, a dissident on a future platform towards the normalization of relations with the U.S. and the democratization of the Island.
3. Cuba - Covered all news stories and events dealing with the increase of arrests and detentions of the Ladies in White and the peaceful demonstrators that march every Sunday in Cuba, and with the increase of dengue and other diseases.
4. Cuba- Embargo- Various stories related to the embargo
5. Cuba- Human Trafficking Report- Various stories related to the revealing of this report by the U.S. State Department including an interview via Skype with Sen. Bob Menendez.
6. International Coverage-
  - Venezuela- Packages with all topics including the recent updates on political prisoners and the increase of violence
  - Spain- Package on various topics related to Cuba
  - Colombia- We have received various packages from Bogota on the situation of hundreds of Cuban doctors that are in "limbo" due to a visa issue.

#### Specials

1. Deportes Marti- A special that will eventually become a weekly sports program showcasing the best of Cubans in all sports like baseball, boxing, basketball, volleyball, etc. Presented by Bobby Salamanca  
We continue contributing with VOA in the production of segments for their programs at our studios and in the exchange of stories and videos. Stories are also shared with various local TV stations and have been used by some blogs.

**TO:** Broadcasting Board of Governors **FROM:** Libby Liu  
**DATE:** June 12, 2015 **SUBJECT:** Monthly one-page report to the Board for June meeting

#### Issues/Events of Note

**China Initiates Broadcasts into Burma** - Xinhua has entered the news business in Myanmar with publishing a news website in Burmese which carries domestic news about Myanmar & China. <http://xinhuanews.com/>

**Cyber Security** - On June 4, news broke that the OPM Government database was stolen. Although difficult to give specific attribution in hacking cases, there is strong indication that the hacking team, called "Deep Panda," was of Chinese origin - is very troubling for RFA & many of their employees who have been living pseudonymous lives here in the USA. Of serious concern: RFA was not informed before the news was made public two months after the incident was confirmed.

#### Editorial/Around our Region

**RFA Cantonese** reported, in her first-ever interview with Radio Free Asia, that former Chief Secretary of Hong Kong Anson Chan urged Beijing to heed the voices of the city's democracy advocates. She stated that "if the Central Government really cares about maintaining Hong Kong's long-term prosperity & stability, it would be well served by granting Hong Kong citizens a general election in which they have a real choice." Anson Chan is the former Chief Secretary in both the British colonial government of Hong Kong & the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region under Chinese sovereignty. She was also an elected member of the Legislative Council of Hong Kong between 2007 & 2008.

**RFA Mandarin** launched its multi-media series on China's geopolitical ambitions in financing the Nicaragua Canal - a \$50 billion waterway that will be three times as long & twice as deep as the U.S.-built Panama Canal. Renowned Tibetan writer Woeseer promoted the video on her Twitter & Facebook accounts. The documentary, presented on satellite TV & as an online video & audio report with script, exposed many potential problems facing the planned canal. Nicaragua's government hopes that the new canal will successfully compete with the Panama Canal, 500 miles to the south. Many suspect that China is quietly backing the project to boost its power & influence in the Western Hemisphere, but it could have a major negative impact on Lake Nicaragua, Central America's largest body of fresh water, & the livelihood of tens of thousands of people. Reporter Laura Huang got wide-ranging interviews with experts & ordinary people in both Nicaragua & Panama.

Popular Chinese-language Web portal boxun.com also carried it: <http://news.boxun.com/news/gb/intl/2015/05/201505271126.shtml#.VWUqFM9Viko>

**RFA Tibetan** in May reported that two Tibetans self-immolated to protest Beijing's rule. On May 27, a 37-year-old woman set herself ablaze near a government building housing police & paramilitary troops stationed in Gansu to monitor the Tibetans in the area. Her body was taken away by Chinese authorities. She left behind a husband & two children. On May 20, a 35-year-old man self-immolated in the Kardze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture to protest Beijing's crackdown on celebrations of the 80<sup>th</sup> birthday of the Dalai Lama. He is survived by a wife & four children.

**RFA Uyghur** reported the ethnic Han Chinese head of a township in the XUAR was stabbed to death on May 15 by a Uyghur man, prompting a security clampdown in the area. Multiple local sources told RFA that the township head was attacked by a knife-wielding Uyghur as he ate dinner at a local restaurant, the official "died on the spot, & the Uyghur youth fled." RFA reported exclusively that the perpetrator was detained by police a few hours later.

**RFA Korean** reported the details of the execution by anti-aircraft fire of North Korea's defense minister that shocked neighboring South Korea, but have left North Koreans undisturbed, according to Korean Service sources. According to a source living in North Korea's Hamgyong province, "North Korean residents were never concerned at the news that an official had been executed." Another source, speaking on condition of anonymity, told RFA, "Central government officials could be executed one by one every day, but this has nothing to do with our lives." He concluded by saying, "Instead, many would regard these events as a case of 'good riddance.'"

From **RFA Khmer** - Cambodian Opposition CNRP President Sam Rainsy announced on RFA's Call Show that they plan to have their new TV station on the air by the end of the year and that they would like to carry RFA (and VOA) programs.

**RFA's Lao Service** reported on the arrest of a woman for posting a picture on Facebook showing police extorting a bribe. Two weeks later, she is still being held in jail without being charged.

**RFA Language Service May Highlights** at: <http://a9.g.akamai.net/f/9/9391/6h/rfa.download.akamai.com/21309/ENG/highlights/may-2015.html>

#### Special Coverage

**RFA's Mandarin Service** covered Taiwan's ruling Nationalist Party (KMT) chairman Eric Chu's visit to Shanghai and Beijing from May 2 to 4. RFA staff in Taipei and a Mandarin field reporter in China filed reports, video clips, photos, and soundbites in real time. Materials were immediately uploaded to the RFA website. Coverage included Eric Chu's forum at Fudan University in Shanghai on relations across the Taiwan Strait, and talks between Chinese President Xi Jinping with Chu in Beijing on May 4, marking the first meeting between the leaders of the two political parties in six years. Xi offered to endorse greater participation for Taiwan in international organizations. Chu returned home on May 4 to protests at Taipei Airport by members of the pro-independence group Taiwan Solidarity Union (TSU) Youth Corps and other pan-green groups, which are informal political alliances in Taiwan.

In a six-part investigative report, **RFA's Korean Service** looked into North Korea's infamous political prison camps & the human rights violations the Kim Jong Un regime is committing inside them. Based on interviews with camp survivors, meetings with human rights activists, and visits to NGOs fighting for the abolishment of such camps, the special series detailed the injustices & abuses these prisoners are being subjected to on a daily basis. "Beyond a starvation diet, torture, beatings, & inhumane living/working conditions, this regime practices a form of collective punishment system through which three generations of a disgraced family are condemned to lifelong suffering while confined to the camps," the special reports revealed. Immediately following RFA's broadcast, Free North Korea Radio (FNKR), a radio station in Seoul transmitting news & information to the North Korean audience, posted the series on its website.

#### Administrative

**Emergency Action Plan** - Training for all staff was completed the week of June 8.

#### Cyber Security

On May 18, an RFA Mandarin user was exploited by APT malware. RFA mitigated the attack within 30 min. of infiltration, blocked the IPs & redirected the DNS to an internal server for continued monitoring & alerting.

On May 25, an RFA Uyghur service member was contacting a known APT exploit site after being infected by a drive-by exploit from a legitimate & popular Uyghur language website. RFA mitigated the attack within the hour, blocked the IP of the Uyghur website, informed their administrators & redirected the requests to the APT command & control server to an internal server for further monitoring & alerting.

**General Statistics:** 86.6% of all email sent to RFA in the last 30 days was detected as a "threat message"; this equals 1.4 million out of 1.6m messages.

#### RFA Online Highlights for May

- A new [hub page](#) was produced to aggregate & illustrate concerns between China & its neighbors in the South China Sea.
- On the 26th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre: [a new hub page](#) promotes all RFA's unique coverage & production.
- RFA received two honorable mentions at Min 's Best of the Web Awards for the "[Umbrella Revolution](#)" and its latest e-book ["It's not OK"](#)

**Communications Dept. - RFA's May 2015 pickups:** <http://www.rfa.org/about/inthenews>

**TO:** Broadcasting Board of Governors  
**FROM:** Libby Liu  
**DATE:** 14 July 2015  
**SUBJECT:** Monthly one-page report to the Board in lieu of July 2015 meeting

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### Issues of Note/Events

**Uyghur journalist family Update** - RFA Uyghur reporter Shohret Hoshur's brothers remain jailed in China. Two of the brothers' trial dates, scheduled for early July, have been postponed without any updates. Senators Mark Warner (D-Va.) and Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) sent a letter to Secretary of State John Kerry that Hoshur's case is a priority for the department in all its dealings with China. SLATE and also in [EFE](#)) wrote on July 9 "[China's War Against One American Journalist](#)"

In June 2014, Tudaxun Hoshur was put on trial in China's Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region for crimes against the Chinese state. Tudaxun, 39, hadn't spoken with his family in nearly two months and had no way to tell them about his charges or how he had ended up in a Chinese detention facility. But he had befriended another detainee who was later released and told Tudaxun's family why the Chinese government was holding him. Authorities weren't interested in anything Tudaxun had done. Rather, they were asking him questions about the work his brother Shohret Hoshur, a U.S. citizen, was doing in Washington as a reporter for **Radio Free Asia**.

Washington Post [http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/tyranny-beyond-borders/2015/06/09/39cb0344-0e96-11e5-aded-e82f8395c032\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/tyranny-beyond-borders/2015/06/09/39cb0344-0e96-11e5-aded-e82f8395c032_story.html)

**Myanmar religious conflict Update** - Thai Buddhists to help set up radio station supporting a network of hardline anti-Muslim monks in Myanmar where sectarian hatred is on the rise. "Radio and television plays an important role in preaching Buddhism in Thailand. It will help them preach Buddhism in Myanmar," the VP of the National Thai Buddhism and Culture Mass Media Association told AFP. Myanmar is facing growing Buddhist nationalist sentiment driven by hardline monks, who have urged boycotts of Muslim shops and proposed a raft of deeply controversial laws that critics say are discriminatory. Their rise has accompanied several bouts of religious violence between Muslims and Buddhists, mainly in Rakhine State. In recent weeks nationalist monks have been at the forefront of protests against the country's Rohingya, a persecuted Muslim minority from Rakhine who have fled in their tens of thousands since communal violence broke out there in 2012. In Myanmar, more than 100,000 displaced Rohingya live in fetid camps after dozens were killed by Buddhist mobs in the 2012 bloodletting.

**OPM Breach** - U.S. Intelligence Chief James Clapper signaled on 6/25 that Chinese hackers were behind the theft of unknown millions of personnel records from the federal government. This breach places RFA journalists who live pseudonymous lives and their families in their home countries in danger. RFA is working with each compromised individual to securely warn their family and friends of their exposure.

### Double Awards for RFA Cantonese Investigative Reporting

- **New York Festivals International Radio Programming Award** – RFA's Cantonese Service Director accepted a Bronze medal at the annual award event in New York City on June 22 for their investigative series: [A Citizenry Left in the Dark: China's Nuclear Power Industry](#).
- **Sigma Delta Chi Award** RFA's Cantonese service director accepted the SDX award at the Society for Professional Journalists' National Press Club award event on June 26 for the same investigative series on nuclear power.

### Programming Highlights

**Cantonese:** Umbrella Movement student leader Joshua Wong and his girlfriend were assaulted on Hong Kong streets by an unknown assailant, ahead of a planned mass demonstration to mark the return of Hong Kong's return to Chinese rule. The attack left Wong, 18, with visible injuries to his face, and also embroiled his girlfriend and fellow activist Tiffany Chin in the melee. But in an **exclusive interview** with RFA/Cantonese after the attack, Chin said they had no plans to scale down their activism in the wake of the attack because "otherwise, they would be able to stop people opposing government policy and reduce the amount of activism in Hong Kong just by sending people to beat us up."

**Mandarin Satirical Cartoons:** Cartoonist Wang Liming, who draws under the nickname Rebel Pepper, launched his RFA page <http://www.rfa.org/mandarin/duomeiti/huandengtuji/biantailajiaomanhua> in June by serving up a spicy satire mocking Beijing's effort to salvage the tumbling stock market. Wang had close to a million social-media followers in China until he drew President Xi Jinping as a steamed bun. Now he is under threat at home and living in exile in Japan.

**Tibetan celebrations:** Worldwide celebrations observed the 80<sup>th</sup> birthday of the Dalai Lama. In the days preceding his birthday, in western China's Qinghai, Gansu and Sichuan provinces, thousands of Tibetans (monks and laypeople alike) gathered at monasteries in defiance of Beijing's ban to celebrate despite stepped-up security measures. "A portrait of the Dalai Lama was brought to the monastery and placed on a throne, and offerings were set out in front of it," a Tibetan source in Qinghai told RFA. Meanwhile, police in Qinghai detained Tsering Dondrub, 25, for disseminating material online marking the 80<sup>th</sup> birthday of the exiled spiritual leader.

RFA/Tibetan TV coverage of birthday celebrations in Dharamsala, India, the seat of the Dalai Lama: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BEDljH3b2U8>; in Los Angeles: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eBqwXS\\_islY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eBqwXS_islY); etc. Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region ongoing violence: On 6/23 RFA broke the news that at least 18 people had died in a Ramadan attack on a police checkpoint in Xinjiang: <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/attack-06232015182353.html>. This exclusive was picked up by a number of international media outlets, including: Reuters <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/06/24/us-china-xinjiang-attack-idUSKBN0P407H20150624> as well as, The Guardian, Newsweek Europe, Asia Times, International Business Times, Business Insider & Channel News Asia. DPRK issues: RFA reported on North Korea switching to diesel trains reserved for wartime use because of power shortage was cited in a June 21 Washington Post story on severe drought in North Korea. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia\\_pacific/north-korean-drought-is-hobbling-the-power-supply-and-the-economy-with-it/2015/06/21/65e51c02-14ff-11e5-8457-4b431bf7ed4c\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/north-korean-drought-is-hobbling-the-power-supply-and-the-economy-with-it/2015/06/21/65e51c02-14ff-11e5-8457-4b431bf7ed4c_story.html) Meanwhile RFA Korean continues to follow the execution of high officials by Kim Jong Un. On June 26, RFA cited exclusive sources inside North Korea as saying that a raft of recent executions and forced disappearances in the country linked to the secret wiretapping of high-ranking officials had prompted members of the leadership to abandon their homes. Several officials had gone so far as to send their children to stay with relatives or to live in areas outside of Pyongyang, according to RFA sources there. Lao Online Censorship: RFA Lao broke two stories about two different women being arrested after posting information about official corruption on Facebook. One of them had posted information on social media about a land concession granted by the Lao government in one of the country's most famous natural landmarks to Chinese investors, prompting a storm of criticism over the agreement from the country's netizens. The U.S. Embassy in Vientiane contacted RFA for more information. <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/laos/charges-07072015173727.html?searchterm=utf8:ustring=lao+woman+arrested> Myanmar media censorship: A protest by a media group over a government ban on journalists entering parliament sessions after photos of lawmakers sleeping were published online. Cambodia: RFA Khmer covered a tense standoff between 200 activists from northeastern Cambodia's Ratanakiri province led by opposition lawmakers and dozens of soldiers and villagers from Vietnam over the digging of irrigation ponds in a non-demarcated area along their common border. Khmer Service broke the story after being contacted by ethnic villagers in the area. RFA lead other media in covering this story.

**RFA Language Service June Highlights at:**

<http://a9.g.akamai.net/f/9/9391/6h/rfa.download.akamai.com/21309/ENG/highlights/june-2015.html>

#### **Legal/Labor/Administrative**

Bureau Update: RFA has given Notice to the Landlord of the RFA Bangkok office that RFA will not be renewing the lease which expires September 30, 2015. RFA has successfully concluded lease renewal negotiations its Hong Kong office landlord. The lease will be renewed for three years with a below market increase of 25%.

RFA and the Washington-Baltimore Newspaper Guild have concluded negotiations on a new three year Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). An Executive Summary of the main terms will be provided to the RFA Board. The Guild ratified the agreement on July 14, 2015.

#### **Cyber Security**

On June 25 RFA Sys Admins blocked the Taiwanese IP address: 111.243.101[.]120; it was running automated attacks in an attempt to exploit Ruby on Rails vulnerabilities on the Vietnamese podcast site:

<http://www.rfa.org/vietnamese/podcasts/>. Attack was unsuccessful but temporarily caused performance issues on the Vietnamese website, serving its web pages more slowly than usual for legitimate web traffic.

**General Statistics:** 86.5% of all email sent to RFA in the last 30 days was detected as a "threat message." This is equal to 1.2 million of 1.4 million messages. RFA fended off 25,000+ random brute force attacks over the last month.

#### **Research, Training and Evaluation**

On June 10 RTE Director Betsy Henderson presented results from this winter's Vietnamese national survey as part of the BBG-Gallup research series panel on "The Changing Media Landscape in Vietnam," highlighting how young people's news sources are more diverse & digital than their elders'.

RTE is working with BBG ODDI on usability testing for its Mandarin and Vietnamese websites and with IBB research on a mobile phone panel in Myanmar to provide quick feedback on programming there.

#### **RFA Online Highlights for June**

- A [hub page](#) on the occasion of the Dalai Lama's 80th birthday.
- A strongly worded analysis of China's policies in Tibet and their consequences was published as an [E-book](#)
- DVD of Tibetan music was also produced for distribution on the occasion of the Dalai Lama's 80th birthday celebration

**Communications: RFA's June 2015 pickups:** <http://www.rfa.org/about/inthenews>



**TO:** Broadcasting Board of Governors  
**FROM:** Libby Liu  
**DATE:** August 14, 2015  
**SUBJECT:** Monthly one-page report to the Board in lieu of August meeting

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### Issues/Events of Note

On August 1, the NY Times and Slate did major profile pieces on the RFA Uyghur reporter whose brothers are jailed in Xinjiang to pressure his relentless penetrating breaking stories on the ethnic and religious conflict in XUAR. The detentions are an apparent bid by Beijing to curtail free speech and coverage of the troubled Xinjiang region [http://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/01/world/asia/a-voice-from-chinas-uyghur-homeland-reporting-from-the-united-states.html?smid=tw-share&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/01/world/asia/a-voice-from-chinas-uyghur-homeland-reporting-from-the-united-states.html?smid=tw-share&_r=0)  
[http://www.slate.com/articles/news\\_and\\_politics/foreigners/2015/07/shohret\\_hoshur\\_s\\_brothers\\_are\\_being\\_disappeared\\_by\\_the\\_chinese\\_government.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/foreigners/2015/07/shohret_hoshur_s_brothers_are_being_disappeared_by_the_chinese_government.html)

As part of the CCP's latest efforts to censor online access and content, they have recruited 10+ million students and young adults to troll the internet and report any potentially controversial information. This has dramatically shortened the life span of proxy usage to circumvent the Great Firewall.

On July 31, as Beijing landed the 2022 Winter Olympics: Human Rights Watch commented:  
*"The Olympic motto of 'higher, faster, and stronger' is a perfect description of the Chinese government's assault on civil society: more peaceful activists detained in record time, subject to far harsher treatment."*

### Editorial

#### Impact examples– China Hotline callers:

Shandong Caller/Unknown/Male: "I discovered your Hotline and RFA in 2008 and have been addicted like using drugs since then." Shanxi First Time Caller/Unknown Male: "I am using Android app and desktop proxies to listen to RFA." A Cantonese listener advised that southern Chinese have been consuming RFA audio through satellite as internet censorship has been increasingly effective.

#### Highlights

RFA reported extensively on the Chinese government's unprecedented crackdown on human rights lawyers, some of whom have been key *sources* of RFA Mandarin and Cantonese reports on rights abuses. "I'm prepared if they want to arrest me. Let it be," a Beijing-based right attorney told the RFA **Cantonese Service** before he was detained with nearly 300 lawyers and associates held in the sweep. The initial focus of the crackdown was on Beijing-based Fengrui Law Firm, which has represented popular dissident artist Ai Weiwei and Uyghur scholar Ilham Tohti, who is serving a life term in prison on charges of separatism. <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Asia-Pacific/2015/0713/Crackdown-on-human-rights-lawyers-intensifies-in-China-video>

Veteran Chinese journalist Gao Yua is reeling from serious health problems in prison, including cardiovascular problems, an enlarged thyroid gland, inner ear disorder, chronic skin disorder and doctors have yet to rule out cancer, according to her family and lawyers. "We already requested parole, but have been rejected and now there is a new physical condition," one of her lawyers Shang Baojin told the RFA **Mandarin Service**. "We are continuing the application on her behalf."

RFA's **Tibetan Service** was among the first to report the death of imprisoned prominent monk Tenzin Delek Rinpoche in restive Sichuan province and violent protests by Tibetans demanding the return of his body to his family. [http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/15/world/asia/tenzin-delek-rinpoche-tibet-body.html&\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/15/world/asia/tenzin-delek-rinpoche-tibet-body.html&_r=1) "Chinese police informed his relatives that he was seriously ill and when they rushed to visit him, they were told he was already dead," one source inside Tibet told RFA's Tibetan Service. Tenzin Delek, aged 65, was serving his 13th year of a life sentence for "crimes of terror and incitement of separatism." Another Tibetan political prisoner, Lobsang Yeshe, also died in custody after his health deteriorated in a Lhasa prison. "None of his relatives and friends were allowed to see his body," an exile source told RFA.

Thailand has deported more than 100 ethnic minority Muslim **Uyghur** refugees back to China, where rights groups say they will face persecution and torture. The Thai military junta's action stemmed from pressure from China, Thailand's second-largest trading partner, the groups said, and triggered protests by Uyghur exiles in various capitals, including in Ankara in Turkey, which vowed to keep its doors open to those fleeing persecution in China. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/07/03/us-china-turkey-uyghur-idUSKCN0PD1UM20150703>  
<http://shanghaiist.com/2015/07/10/thai-pm-defends-sending-100-uyghurs-back-to-china.php> A report that several Uyghurs were shot dead for resisting deportation was described as "baseless" by Thai authorities to RFA. <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/thailand-uyghur-07092015140950.html?searchterm=utf8:ustring=thailand+rejects>

**North Korean** leader Kim Jong Un's politics of fear is apparently driving government trade officials stationed overseas to defect, and Pyongyang in response has ordered their return. "The order for these officials to return home in June was unprecedented," one source from inside North Korea told RFA's Korean Service, whose report was widely quoted by South Korean media outlets such as KBS, SBS, MBC and Yonhap as well as BBC Worldwide. <http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2015/07/07/94/040100000AEN20150707003800315F.html>

RFA's **Lao Service** broke the story of a missing Lao military helicopter carrying 19 passengers and four crew members that had crashed in Houaphan province in northern Laos. Authorities confirmed the report the next day saying that the helicopter had crashed and all the passengers were killed, saying local farmers told military officials that they heard an explosion before the mishap. A Lao Air Force official told RFA on condition of anonymity that the air control tower lost contact with the MI-17 helicopter shortly after it departed. "Higher level commanders will not allow us to confirm anything," he said.

[http://www.upi.com/Top\\_News/World-News/2015/07/29/Military-helicopter-in-Laos-carrying-23-remains-missing/4771438164540/](http://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2015/07/29/Military-helicopter-in-Laos-carrying-23-remains-missing/4771438164540/)

A man serving a prison sentence for stealing a cell phone was allegedly beaten to death a detention center in **Vietnam's** capital Hanoi, according to his sister, who said his body was in "terrible condition," highlighting killings in police custody. Vu Nam Ninh's sister told RFA's Vietnamese Service about this latest killing, adding that she only learned of his death after the authorities instructed her to go to a hospital. When she arrived at the hospital, authorities told her family that his death was the result of complications from an "illness." But Huyen said that inspection of her brother's body clearly showed that he had been killed.

**Myanmar Service** reported on the deluge of criticism from rights groups and citizens over a presidential pardon granted to 150 Chinese workers just weeks after being sentenced to life in prison for illegal logging. "If the government can free these foreign nationals who are illegally exploiting and robbing our natural resources, we want to ask why they can't release people of conscience who are working for reforms in the interests of the country," asked Aung Moe Kyaw of the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners.

**RFA Language Service Monthly Highlights** at:

<http://a9.g.akamai.net/f/9/9391/6h/rfa.download.akamai.com/21309/ENG/highlights/july-2015.html>

### **Cyber Security**

On 7/16/15 the Uyghur American Association website forums were compromised and redirected users to a site hosting malware. On 7/19/15 the Tibet Corps website ([www.tibetcorps.org](http://www.tibetcorps.org)) was compromised with a watering hole attack and served malware to visitors. RFA SysAdmins blocked both websites and redirected DNS queries for continued internal monitoring.

On 8/4/15 RFA detected an uptick in vulnerability scanning / Accunetix activity from two Korean and Hong Kong IP addresses. RFA SysAdmins immediately blocked these addresses. And on 8/10/15 RFA suffered a brief Internet outage lasting 15 minutes resulting a phishing email; the PC became infected and started sending spam messages to invalid email addresses. Between the millions of bounced messages returned to the RFA email server and the continuing outbound spam messages being sent RFA's Internet connectivity was overwhelmed. After null routing the influx of bounced messages and taking the user's computer offline, the Internet connectivity returned to normal. Mandatory additional cyber-security is being rolled out company-wide.

### **General Statistics:**

90.0% of all email sent to RFA in the last 30 days was detected as a "threat message." This is equal to 1.5 million out of 1.7 million messages. RFA fended off approximately 19,000+ random brute force attacks over the last month.

### **Research**

RFA Korean evaluation was held on 1 July.

Khmer's evaluation took place on 21 July.

RFA's Tibetan Uke evaluation is scheduled for 16 Sept.

### **RFA Online Highlights for July**

- RFA launched a second human trafficking series with the publication of an [info graphic](#)
- A new [hub page](#) in the Burmese language was launched, aggregating coverage of the upcoming general elections.
- The e-book '[It's not OK.](#)' is now available in print on Blurb.com
- A new e-book [in Korean](#) was produced using a collaborative tool developed by ODDI, PressBook – English version is in production phase - featuring former labor camp inmates' recollection of life in these dreaded prisons.



### **Communications**

RFA's July 2015 pickups: <http://www.rfa.org/about/inthenews>



**MEMORANDUM**

To: Broadcasting Board of Governors Date: July 17, 2015  
From: John Giambalvo and Nenad Pejic, Interim Managers Subject: Monthly Report for June 2015

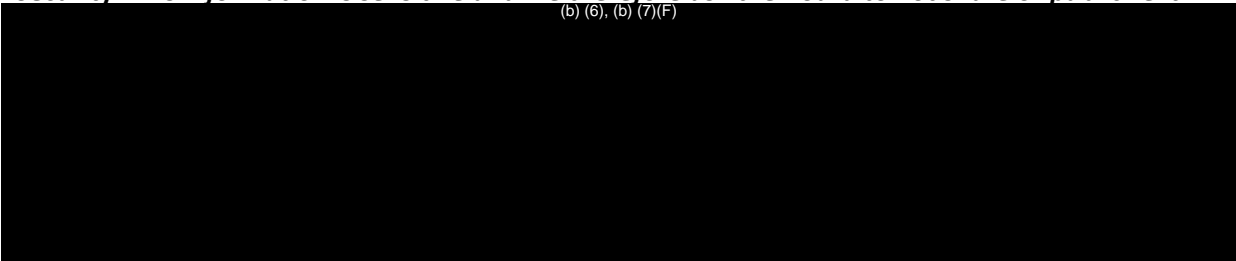
1. **Visits / Events / Awards:** From June 29 to July 1, RFE/RL welcomed four members of the BBG (Governors Armstrong, Crocker, Kempner, and Weinstein), the chief executives of all BBG networks, and senior BBG staff to Prague, where they participated in several in-house events, a [celebration](#) of the 20th anniversary of RFE/RL's move to Prague, and the bi-monthly BBG board meeting, which this time featured RFE/RL's annual "deep dive."

On July 4, RFE/RL welcomed 7 Members of Congress, led by Senator Roger Wicker (R-MS) to its Prague headquarters, where they were briefed on RFE/RL operations and how the company is combating Russian propaganda and combating extremism. Other Members in the delegation were Rep. Robert Aderholt, Rep. Steve Cohen, Rep. Michael Fitzpatrick, Rep. Ruben Gallego, Rep. Gwen Moore, and Rep. Richard Hudson.

Alexander Podrabinek, the host of the Russian Service program "[Déjà vu](#)", was awarded the Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom from the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation on June 12 in Washington, DC.

2. **Legal / Personnel Issues:** Nothing to report.
3. **Cyber Security / Jamming / Technical:** RFE/RL learned on June 11 that the website of its Ukrainian Service has been added to a group of websites blocked by the so-called "information and communications ministry" of the Donetsk Peoples Republic. RFE/RL has also confirmed that ISP's in Tajikistan are no longer blocking access to RFE/RL websites (as was reported in May).
4. **Security: *This information is sensitive and we therefore ask the Board to not share or publicize it.***

(b) (6), (b) (7)(F)



5. **Journalists in Trouble:** RFE/RL deeply appreciates the expression of support by 16 U.S. Senators, led by Sen. Richard Durbin (D-IL), for its Azerbaijani Service and demand for the release of RFE/RL contributor Khadija Ismayilova, in the form of a June 8 [letter to Azeri President Ilham Aliyev](#). Azeri authorities have scheduled a [court date](#) in Ismayilova's case for July 24.

In the morning hours of June 23, two RFE/RL Armenian Service correspondents were beaten by police while reporting on a standoff between protesters and police in the Armenian capital, Yerevan. Several other members of the RFE/RL crew working at the protest site were also roughed up by police, who broke at least one RFE/RL camera used to provide live streaming of the unfolding drama and damaged or confiscated other equipment used by RFE/RL correspondents.

On June 14, a Radio Mashaal freelancer in Karachi, Pakistan was detained and held for more than a day by Pakistani military forces, before he was released following inquiries by Radio Mashaal managers.

6. **Pangea Development:** Pangea Digital expects to have all Pangea-supported mobile websites moved to the new responsive-design platform by the end of July.

## MEMORANDUM

To: Broadcasting Board of Governors Date: August 14, 2015  
From: Nenad Pejic, Interim Manager Subject: Monthly Report for July 2015

- Visits / Events / Awards:** RFE/RL's Arabic Service to Iraq, Radio Free Iraq (RFI) aired its [final broadcast](#) on July 31. The resources of RFI are being merged with Radio Sawa Iraq to provide the audience with extensive Iraq-specific news and informational programming.  
RFE/RL Editor-in-Chief and Interim Manager Nenad Pejic visited Washington from July 22-30, to participate in the BBG editorial retreat on extremism and to accept, on July 29, the Washington-based [National Press Club's John Aubuchon Press Freedom Award](#) on behalf of jailed investigative journalist and RFE/RL contributor Khadija Ismayilova. During his visit, Pejic also took part (with Gov. Weinstein and IBB Deputy Director Jeffrey Trimble) in a meeting with Sen. John McCain (R-AZ), staffers with the House Foreign Affairs Committee and Congressional Ukraine Caucus, and senior managers at the National Endowment for Democracy.  
A bipartisan group of 16 Members of Congress visited RFE/RL's Prague headquarters on August 7, under the auspices of the Transatlantic Capitol-to-Capitol Exchange, sponsored by the Ripon Society and Franklin Center for Global Policy Exchange. The participants learned about RFE/RL and its work, specifically as it regards Russia, Ukraine, and Iran.
- Legal / Personnel Issues:** On July 24, John Giambalvo announced that he was withdrawing from his role as co-Interim Manager, expressing full support for Interim Manager Nenad Pejic and for the RFE/RL Board's efforts to find a full-time CEO based in Prague.  
Effective July 22, Sardy Bernard is RFE/RL's new Chief Technology Officer. Bernard will direct the overall technical support operations of RFE/RL, including broadcast engineering, project management, network/systems technology, voice communication, information technology, Pangea development and operations.
- Cyber Security / Jamming / Technical:** Nothing to report.
- Security:** Nothing to report.
- Journalists in Trouble:** The [trial](#) of RFE/RL contributor Khadija Ismayilova opened on July 24, with a preliminary hearing held in a small courtroom in Baku. The next hearing was scheduled for August 7.  
RFE/RL Turkmen Service freelancer Saparmamed Nepeskuliev has been unreachable since early July, and it is feared that he has been arrested by Turkmen officials. On July 28, family members told [Alternative News Turkmenistan](#) that Nepeskuliev had been arrested on drug possession charges, and that his "court process may start soon." The Service's director has contacted Nepeskuliev's family, including his mother, on several occasions, who first confirm, then deny that he has been arrested, saying "he has disappeared" -- an indication that his relatives fear to provide accurate information to the outside world, and of possible pressure on them from Turkmen authorities. Nepeskuliev's whereabouts and fate still cannot be conclusively confirmed. The [Committee to Protect Journalists](#), [Reporters Without Borders](#), and [Human Rights Watch](#) have all demanded that the Turkmen government immediately release Nepeskuliev.
- Pangea Development:** All Pangea-supported mobile websites have now been moved to the new responsive-design platform, with the first websites expected to move to the desktop version of the new, responsive-design platform by the end of December.





June 18, 2015

MEMORANDUM FOR: Broadcasting Board of Governors

FROM: Kelu Chao, VOA Acting Director

SUBJECT: VOA's Monthly Report for May

### **KEY ISSUES / CHALLENGES**

- VOA Burundi stringer Desire Hatungimana has fled to Rwanda following weeks of threats and intimidation from security and government officials. A pro-government blog identified Hatungimana as one of the reporters it says was inciting protests against the decision by President Pierre Nkurunziza to seek another term. The deputy spokesperson of the security ministry and police said that the media were to blame for the remaining pockets of protests. "It is a movement of some journalists - especially those sent by the international media - who... organize groups of people in remote areas, away from police, and ask them to sing, to exhibit placards," the spokesperson said.
- On May 17, VOA English launched its new *International Edition*. VOA's flagship English news radio program is much more conversational and features expert interviews and debriefers with VOA reporters around the world. The new format also allows hosts to provide instant analysis on breaking stories such as the FIFA scandal, the prisoner escape from New York's Clinton Correctional Facility, and Washington's decision to send more troops to Iraq.
- The English Division's partnership with Nigeria's leading television news station, Channels TV, continues to pay dividends in promoting the VOA brand across Africa's most populous nation. Last month, VOA provided the local affiliate live reports on the African Union summit, the terror attacks in Pakistan, and human-trafficking in Malaysia. English also enhanced VOA's exposure by adding weekly business reports from New York that are carried on Channels' most watched program, *The News at Ten*.
- VOA English is still jammed by China. In fact, any VOA English that can be received in China, even if it is officially meant for a region other than Asia, like VOA English to Africa, is jammed. This so-called "hash" jamming is used by the Chinese against VOA/English and other international broadcasters such as the BBC. It started back in mid-December, 2012. Initially was targeting Radio Australia, as well as VOA/Chinese/Cantonese/Tibetan/Uzbek. VOA/English frequencies 17895/15580/13590 kHz are constantly jammed, as well as 4930 kHz and sometimes 6080 kHz.
- TSI has identified a Chinese report that a Medium Wave transmitter site located near Yanbian close to the North Korean border is specifically broadcasting to jam VOA and FEBC signals on 1188 kHz and 1566 kHz with a TSD-25 transmitter. [The article](#) was published on China's electronic magazine website or "Technology Wind."



July 17, 2015

MEMORANDUM FOR: Broadcasting Board of Governors

FROM: Kelu Chao, VOA Acting Director

SUBJECT: VOA's Monthly Report for July

### **KEY ISSUES / CHALLENGES**

- BBG Governor Matthew Armstrong met with Burmese President Thein Sein in Naypyidaw June 24 to discuss VOA and public diplomacy. President Sein told Governor Armstrong that he has been a VOA listener since he was a student and thanked him for BBG efforts to train Burmese journalists. They discussed the role of the media in Myanmar's transition, and Governor Armstrong thanked the President for allowing VOA to establish one of the first foreign news bureaus. U.S. Ambassador Derek Mitchell, Burmese Foreign Minister Wunna Maung Lwin, and VOA EAP Director Bill Baum joined those talks. Baum and Armstrong also visited the country's second-largest station, Myawaddy TV, where Director Major Thuta said the military-run station welcomes more VOA news and learning English programs.
- VOA Kirundi reporter Diane Nininahazwe survived a grenade attack on her home in Bujumbura after reporting on a series of unexplained nighttime abductions north of the capital. Nininahazwe fled to Rwanda as did VOA Kirundi reporter Desire Hatungimana who received a series of death threats following a pro-government website naming him among a group of journalists allegedly organizing protests against President Pierre Nkurunziza running for a third term. "The authorities must ensure the safety of journalists especially during the current political turmoil in Burundi," says Committee to Protect Journalists Africa Coordinator Sue Valentine. "The state must investigate all threats against the press and bring the perpetrators to justice."
- VOA Mandarin service saw a serious backlash against its contributors and guests. Well-known Beijing human rights lawyer Wang Yu disappeared two days after she participated in VOA Mandarin's *Issues & Opinions* show to discuss rule of law. The authorities later revealed that she was detained as part of a wider round up of human rights lawyers suspected of being part of a "criminal gang." Lawyer Zhou Shifeng appeared on VOA's *Weishi* to talk about Wang Yu's disappearance. The next day he was detained as well. Attorney Zhang Lei participated in a Q&A on *Weishi* about the round up, and he too was summoned to the local police station for a "talk." Attorney

Chen Jianguang was scheduled to appear on *Weishi* July 13, but when the producer called him for the show, he said he was in a police station being questioned.

- The BBG Office of Strategy and Development in collaboration with VOA's Africa Division conducted an eight-day workshop on entrepreneurial journalism in partnership with Bayero University in Kano, Nigeria. The workshop focused on multimedia storytelling, video, social media, and digital publishing. Using 10 iPhones and two Mac computers, the participants learned how to record, edit, and share audio and video on multimedia platforms. They were also exposed to core business development concepts, financing, sales and marketing strategies. Six of the participants developed a business model for a media communications and advertising company and raised more than \$5,000 to launch Waves Advertising Limited.
- VOA English announced the names of 10 English students from Central and East European countries who will come to Washington in September for a two-week VOA fellowship. The announcement by live video conference was made during the graduation ceremony for "English for Journalists," a ten-week course developed by the U.S. State Department and VOA English. Journalists and journalism students in Belarus, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Hungary, Kosovo, Latvia, Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Ukraine enhanced their journalism and English language skills through this innovative course that blends internet learning and classroom teaching with online discussions with VOA journalists. The top students from each country that participated in the pilot course will come to VOA in the fall.
- VOA's English Division launched new business segments for its *Africa 54* and *International Edition* programs and its affiliate *Channels TV* in Nigeria. Anchored by former CBS News and Bloomberg Correspondent Alexis Christoforous, these fast-paced radio and TV reports examine the day's leading economic stories, with a focus on African business news. According to the head of *Channels TV*'s business team, "We appreciate the report you sent to us and would like this relationship to continue."
- In collaboration with the Newseum, VOA hosted a forum June 18 to examine the role of cameras in the relationship between police and citizens. "In the Public Eye, Police, Cameras & Constitution" included active and former law enforcement officers, academics and free speech advocates. The [Washington Examiner](#) referenced the event in an article discussing police use of body cameras. Chicago's PBS television station, WYCC, streamed the event live on its website.





Voice of America®

August 20, 2015

MEMORANDUM FOR: Broadcasting Board of Governors  
FROM: Kelu Chao, VOA Acting Director  
SUBJECT: VOA's Monthly Report for August

### **KEY ISSUES / CHALLENGES**

- VOA Portuguese-to-Africa Stringer, Coque Mukata, was detained by police in Angola on August 8, prior to a demonstration by a group of mothers of activists calling for their sons to be released. Mukata was released 30-minutes after being detained (or as police say, “retained”) only to be arrested again by police. He was held for three hours and was released, unharmed, after police repressed the demonstration. His camera was confiscated.
- VOA was the world’s news source of choice for coverage of the terrorist attack in Bangkok on August 17. Correspondent Steve Herman arrived at the scene minutes after the blast at the Erawan Shrine, and immediately broadcast the aftermath live via Periscope. BBC, CTV, CNN, Mashable and USA Today were among the dozens of media outlets that used reporting from Herman, VOA editor Barry Newhouse and photojournalist Zinlat Aung. The CBS Evening News aired Steve Herman’s report, with full attribution to VOA. Herman is a must-follow for East Asia news junkies, with more than 38-thousand Twitter followers and 39-thousand tweets. Follow him [@W7VOA](https://twitter.com/W7VOA).
- VOA Persian has launched a new weekly program targeting young, educated viewers in Iran. *Tablet* is hosted by renowned Iranian investigative journalist Masih Alinejad from VOA’s New York studios. Through her hundreds of thousands of social media followers, she solicits original video on social and cultural issues. As well, Alinejad connects New Yorkers and Iranians by asking common cultural questions, revealing experiences and differences. *Tablet* is produced by Saman Arbabi, co-creator of the hit VOA program *Parazit*.
- Popular Congolese musician Fally Ipupa and participants from President Obama’s Young African Leaders Initiative helped launch VOA’s newest television program, *Vous et Nous*. Produced by VOA’s French-to-Africa Service, *Vous et Nous* is a weekly 30-minute program, featuring entrepreneurs and trendsetters who are making a difference in areas such as education, technology and pop culture. Affiliates in Gabon, Ivory Coast, Chad, Senegal and the Democratic Republic of Congo are carrying the program.
- VOA cameras and microphones blanketed the Young African Leaders Initiative Summit in Washington. The program gives 500 young leaders from Sub-Saharan Africa the opportunity to study in at U.S. universities. 100 of them are selected to come to Washington for a six-week professional development experience. Many of the YALI Fellows made time to appear as guests on programs from VOA’s English-to-Africa and native language services, and expressed their appreciation for VOA programming.