

# Social Media Impact on Activism and Journalism in Rwanda

By

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## key words definition

- **Social media:** websites ,on-line platforms and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking.
- **Activism :**the policy or action of using vigorous campaigning to bring about political or social change
- **Journalism:** the activity or profession of writing for newspapers or magazines or of broadcasting news on radio or television.

## Geo loc. Country: Rwanda



## Geo,Social/History

- Rwanda is in the African Great Lakes region and is highly elevated; its geography dominated by mountains in the west and savanna to the east, with numerous lakes throughout the country. The climate is temperate to subtropical, with two rainy seasons and two dry seasons each year. Rwanda population is around 12 million today.
- The population is young and predominantly rural, with a density among the highest in Africa. Rwandans are drawn from just one cultural and linguistic group, the Banyarwanda, although within this group there are three subgroups: the Hutu, Tutsi and Twa.
- The media in Rwanda is almost under control in Rwanda by the state, social media are used mostly by educated people since the internet is expensive to afford countrywide. The term "activism" is not known in Rwanda, since all government oppressed the people to give their own views on social and political participation.

## key Rwanda timeline .

When people talks about Rwanda, they don't miss THESE things:

- 1994 Genocide: Hutu ethnicity killing their fellow tutsi , more than 800.000 people killed
- Dictatorship regime where everything is controled by the state , even social media
- The cleanness /development of Kigali city around africa
- Hotel Rwanda film
- Developing country/poor

## situation of activism in the region

- The central African states'where Rwanda is located , political opposition is fragmented, their civil society weak, and their news media fragile. Central African journalism struggles for funds and works under tough or even draconian press laws. Journalists are too often arrested, killed, or expelled when they investigate those in power or report on corruption on place . This make tough the free speech and media freedom in Rwanda. Netherless, social media is the best one which is shaping Rwanda's thinking about their own future , even if the government controle everything in the country but social media is beyond the control since the diaspora ,opposition and individuals can use it to spread information beyond goverment control.
- It is true that in Rwanda to be an activist, you have to hide your real name when you are inside the country and use a "psydo " name. TO REDUCE RISKS.

The most used social media channels in Rwanda are : Whatsapp, Facebook and Twitter . Other channels are available but not used or known by many people

- Positive impact of social media on Rwanda's activism :
  - Expose on daily basis the human rights violation by political figures and system
  - Educate about democracy principles and the need of freedom of speech and opinion : the government use to exploit this when the citizens are less informed about their rights.
  - Changes people mindset and different perceptive of viewing social life. today we have Rwandan people who are changers in different domain due to this social media
  - It helps Rwanda's business industry to market their products : artistic or industrial. In development activism, this has increased the need mindset of Made in Rwanda "product" to increase export and reduce import to make a nation payment balance stable and quit Development aid .

### Positive impact of social media on Rwanda's activism :

- Has shaped intrepruship skills and open minded people to shape their own destiny by not allowing the oppressor to keep using them due to the poverty situation
- Expose Governance frauds : electoral and make citizens aware of the change need, which all dictatorship regimes fear.
- Helps in Exchange information freely between activists, journalists, diplomat's and opposition figures about the reality of current political situation.
- Expose governance brutality which could not be reported by internal media houses.
- Supports activists reduce their risks in daily work.
- Government in Rwanda has changed some policies due to the pressure of social media activists. For example : last year after 3 days i criticized the culture and sport minister on my facebook , he has been fired for his unaccountability , checks and balance....many others did the same in different social life and something from in and out has changed.

### Negative impact of social media on Rwanda's activism :

- People are less determined : someone can make an online activism without a vision , plan or strategies of tomorrow .
- Government secret services use it in their propaganda activism to portray the good image of the country , where the reality doesn't matter

### Impact of social media on Rwanda Journalism

- Source of informations and contacts between politicians and journalists
- Platforms for editorial meeting.
- Reduce censorship in the media houses , because when your supervisor dont want to air or publish your story , you can simply use social media to reach the audience.
- Social media has shaped rwanda's journalists skills and connection in their daily operations .
- Since in Rwanda , the freedom after speech is not guaranteed by the system , social media has less impact on Rwanda journalism

## Conclusion

- The current situation is that social media is shaping our daily thinking and living conditions as Anna said earlier.
- Social media can be productive or unproductive due to the user Target .it is our concern to evaluate ourselves if we are losing or gaining by using this social media.
- Thank you for your kindly attention