

# TODAY'S MEDIA TRENDS

## TELECONGO

JULY 9, 2026

THE GDELT PROJECT

### STATE-LED MODERNIZATION AND PUBLIC HEALTH SOVEREIGNTY AMIDST REGIONAL FRAGILITY: THE REPUBLIC OF CONGO'S 2026 NARRATIVE

DAY-AT-A-GLANCE: JULY 9, 2026 – FOCAL POINT FOR DEVELOPMENT & SELF-RELIANCE



**INFRASTRUCTURE MILESTONE:**  
ELECTRIFICATION OF LOUMOU DISTRICT.  
REALIZING PRESIDENTIAL VISION FOR  
EXPANSION & STABILITY.

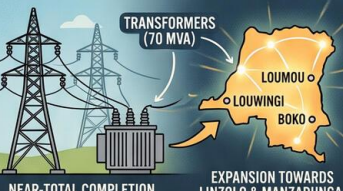




**PUBLIC HEALTH SOVEREIGNTY:**  
EBOLA PREVENTION CAMPAIGNS, MALARIA  
VACCINES (RTSS/R21), & SCIENTIFIC  
LEADERSHIP (PROF. NTUUMI).

#### MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS & THEMATIC PILLARS

**CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE & ELECTRIFICATION**



TRANSFORMERS (70 MVA)

LOUMOU  
LOUWINGI  
BOKO

EXPANSION TOWARDS  
LINZOLO & MANZADUNGA.  
POWERING DEVELOPMENT.

NEAR-TOTAL COMPLETION  
(90%) OF LOUMOU PROJECT

**ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION:  
THE "ZAP" STRATEGY & EXPORTS**



PROTECTED  
AGRICULTURAL ZONES (ZAP)  
FOR FOOD AUTONOMY

SHIFT TO HIGH-VALUE  
EXPORTS (PAPAYA, COCOA).  
REDUCING OIL GUARDIANSHIP.

AGOA

**PUBLIC HEALTH & BIOSECURITY MANEUVERS**



THERMAL

PUBLIC AWARENESS  
EBOLA

NATIONWIDE EBOLA AWARENESS, AIRPORT THERMAL  
SCREENING, & SCIENTIFIC POLICY GAP REDUCTION.

**GOVERNANCE, INTERNAL DYNAMICS  
& INSTABILITY**



LEGAL WARFARE ON ARMED ROBBERIES & INCIVIL ACTS.  
INSTITUTIONAL DECAY, DOMESTIC TRAGEDIES (SIBITI ACCIDENT),  
& ADMINISTRATIVE "ZERO TOLERANCE" DISCIPLINE.

PROTEST

#### DEEP DIVE: TRENDS, GEOPOLITICS, & STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

**GEOPOLITICAL FRAMING & POSTURE**



EU ITALY, INFRASTRUCTURE

RUSSIA CULTURAL ALLY, BLACK SEA CHOIR

DRC REGIONAL INSTABILITY, MEDIATION

CHINA INVESTMENT, MINING CONFLICT

POSITIONING AS REGIONAL ANCHOR & MEDIATOR.  
BALANCING WESTERN FINANCE, EASTERN  
ALLIANCES, & REGIONAL CHALLENGES.

**TRENDS & THEMES**

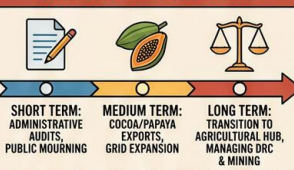


TECHNOCRATIC PIVOT

SCIENTIFIC SOVEREIGNTY  
VS. FINANCIAL REALITIES

RESOURCE NATIONALISM &  
ENVIRONMENTAL CONFLICT

**STRATEGIC FORESIGHT & RISKS**

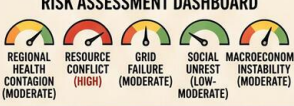


SHORT TERM:  
ADMINISTRATIVE  
AUDITS,  
PUBLIC MOURNING

MEDIUM TERM:  
COCOA/PAPAYA  
EXPORTS,  
GRID EXPANSION

LONG TERM:  
TRANSITION TO  
AGRICULTURAL HUB,  
MANAGING DRC  
& MINING

**RISK ASSESSMENT DASHBOARD**



REGIONAL HEALTH  
CONTAGION  
(MODERATE)

RESOURCE  
CONFLICT  
(HIGH)

GRID  
FAILURE  
(MODERATE)

SOCIAL  
UNREST  
(LOW-  
MODERATE)

MACROECONOMIC  
INSTABILITY  
(MODERATE)

KEY LEGISLATIVE & ECONOMIC ACTIVITY: ADMINISTRATIVE DISCIPLINE CODE,  
SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH STATUTE, HYDROCARBON PRICE COMMITTEE, LOUMOU INSPECTION

# TODAY'S MEDIA TRENDS

## TELECONGO

JULY 9, 2026

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### STATE-LED MODERNIZATION AND PUBLIC HEALTH SOVEREIGNTY AMIDST REGIONAL FRAGILITY

#### DAY-AT-A-GLANCE

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July 9, 2026, serves as a focal point for the Republic of Congo's aggressive narrative of state-led modernization and scientific self-reliance. The day's broadcasts center on the successful [electrification of the Loumou district](#), a development framed as the realization of President Denis Sassou Nguesso's long-term vision. This infrastructure milestone is synchronized with a broader push for economic diversification, specifically targeting protected agricultural zones (ZAP) to reduce the nation's "oil guardianship" and tap into international markets like the United States via [export mechanisms like AGOA](#).

Simultaneously, the government is navigating a complex public health landscape, blending modern biosecurity measures with traditional social concerns. High-level awareness campaigns regarding [Ebola prevention](#) and the deployment of malaria vaccines (RTSS and R21) underscore a desire for health sovereignty, further bolstered by the

prominent feature of Professor Francine Ntoumi's election to the [African Academy of Sciences](#). However, this veneer of progress is challenged by domestic tragedies, such as a [fatal road accident](#) in Sibiti involving students, and reports of institutional decay, including the profanation of graves and violent armed robberies targeting state companies.

Externally, the Congo projects a posture of regional leadership and international solidarity. The state media highlights participation in the [Francophone Parliamentary Assembly](#) in Yaoundé and expresses deep solidarity with Venezuela following a catastrophic earthquake. This diplomatic maneuverability is coupled with a cautious eye on the [instability in the neighboring DRC](#), where the government is leveraging religious leaders like Cardinal Ambongo to mediate a crisis that threatens to spill over into Congolese territory.

#### MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

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##### Critical Infrastructure and Electrification

- The government announced the near-total completion of the electrification project for the Loumou district, including Louwingi and Boko, marking a [90% execution rate](#) of planned works.
- Presidential vision was credited for the expansion of the high-tension network, with plans to extend power to [Linzolo and Manzadunga](#) following the installation of 70 MVA transformers at the Bono substation.

## Public Health and Biosecurity Maneuvers

- A nationwide Ebola awareness campaign is being aggressively promoted in partnership with the WHO and the National Petroleum Company, emphasizing [strict hygiene and surveillance](#).
- The Ministry of Health has implemented [thermal screening](#) at Maya-Maya International Airport and key border crossings to monitor for hemorrhagic fevers amidst regional outbreaks.
- Scientific leadership was highlighted through Professor Francine Ntoumi, who argued that while vaccines are vital, Africa must [bridge the gap](#) between laboratory research and government policy implementation.

## Economic Diversification and the "ZAP" Strategy

- The government is promoting Protected Agricultural Zones (ZAP) as a means of achieving [food autonomy](#), reporting high maize yields in the Yaya and Ngoko districts.
- Strategic interest is shifting toward high-value exports, with a focus on [papaya and cocoa](#) production, aiming to leverage the U.S. market and move away from hydrocarbon dependency.

## Domestic Order and Legal Warfare

- State prosecutors are pursuing heavy penalties, including potential [death sentences](#), for suspects involved in armed robberies at the headquarters of state utilities Hydroco and SNDE.

- Authorities in Pointe-Noire have interpellated citizens for the [desecration of graves](#) in family cemeteries, a move aimed at curbing "incivic acts" and illegal burials.

## KEY GOVERNANCE TOPICS

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**Armed Conflict & Militarization:** The state celebrated the [20th anniversary of the National People's Army](#), emphasizing military modernization and its role in protecting the "ecological shield" of the Congo Basin. Military cooperation with "friendly countries" was highlighted as a pillar of national security.

**Diplomacy & Statecraft:** High-level engagement at the [Francophone Parliamentary Assembly \(APF\)](#) in Yaoundé underscored Congo's commitment to democratic norms and regional cooperation. The broadcast also featured symbolic [solidarity with Venezuela](#) after a major earthquake, framing it as a "double tragedy" requiring global resilience.

**Energy & Critical Minerals:** The Ministry of Hydrocarbons convened a [price committee meeting](#) to determine the market value of liquid hydrocarbons for the second quarter of 2026. Simultaneously, the government is addressing the [environmental degradation](#) caused by artisanal and illegal gold mining in the Sangha department, particularly by foreign actors.

**Global Health & Biosecurity:** The introduction of the [RTSS and R21 malaria vaccines](#) was discussed, with experts noting their 31-50% efficacy. The state narrative emphasizes that while vaccines are useful, they do not replace basic preventative measures like bed nets.

**Leadership Dynamics & Governance:** Minister Noël Léonard Essongo has initiated a

[crackdown on corruption](#) and inefficiency within the state administration, mandating strict punctuality and a "zero tolerance" policy for professional misconduct. This is presented as an essential step toward digitalizing public services.

## DEEP DIVE: TRENDS AND THEMES

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**The Technocratic Pivot:** There is a discernible trend toward framing governance as a series of technical solutions rather than political choices. From the [automated data collection](#) by Afrique Paysage Congo for road maintenance to the digitalization of the state administration, the government is attempting to project an image of modern efficiency to mask institutional vulnerabilities.

**Scientific Sovereignty vs. Financial Realities:** Professor Ntoumi's interview highlights a growing tension: the Congo possesses elite scientific talent but lacks the [institutional "ecosystem"](#) to support it. Her assertion that African scientists represent only 0.5% of the world's researchers serves as a call for structural reform in funding and public-private partnerships.

**Resource Nationalism and Environmental Conflict:** The reports on [illegal mining in Sangha](#), involving both locals and Chinese companies, suggest a rising conflict over land rights and environmental protection. The prefect of Sangha's admission of the difficulty in managing these disputes indicates a potential breakdown in state control at the periphery.

## INTERNAL DYNAMICS & DOMESTIC INSTABILITY

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Institutional decay is visible in the [70th anniversary](#) of the CNSS, where the "old lady" of social security is praised for longevity while the broadcast simultaneously covers violent robberies at other state institutions. The [tragedy in Sibiti](#), where students died in a road accident, has sparked a outpouring of national grief that the government is carefully managing through ministerial visits and condolences to prevent it from becoming a flashpoint for frustration over road safety.

The state is also grappling with a crisis of public morality and order, as evidenced by the [profanation of graves](#) in Pointe-Noire. This issue, combined with the "zero tolerance" campaign against administrative laziness, suggests a leadership deeply concerned about a loss of social discipline and government mandate.

## EXTERNAL DYNAMICS & GLOBAL POSTURE

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Congo is positioning itself as a stable anchor in a "troubled world." By highlighting its [military modernization](#) and role in the Francophone world, the state seeks to attract foreign investment, particularly from Italy and the EU for infrastructure. The portrayal of the [DRC crisis](#) as a neighborly concern that requires the intervention of Cardinal Ambongo frames Congo as a mediator rather than a victim of regional instability. The alliance with Russia is maintained through cultural outreach, such as the [Black Sea Fleet choir](#) concert in Brazzaville, signaling a multipolar diplomatic strategy that balances Western aid with Eastern cultural and security ties.

## THE ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

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The economic outlook is dominated by the government's efforts to diversify away from oil, though hydrocarbons remain the primary fiscal engine. The [Protected Agricultural Zones \(ZAP\)](#) are the centerpiece of this strategy, with reports of significant maize and cocoa production intended for both domestic use and export.

- **Agriculture:** One hectare of papaya is projected to yield [22 million francs CFA](#) in the first year, representing a massive potential revenue stream compared to traditional crops.
- **Energy Prices:** The price committee is finalizing consensus on [hydrocarbon export prices](#) amidst maritime logistics disruptions.
- **Infrastructure Finance:** The government is seeking further funding from the [African Development Bank \(BAD\)](#) and the Central African States Development Bank (BDAC) for large-scale energy projects.
- **Currency & Markets:** Commercial banks are being urged to [tighten credit standards](#) by requiring certified financial statements from registered accounting experts to reduce the risk of non-payment.

## LEADERSHIP CHANGES

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Administrative shifts indicate a tightening of control over the state apparatus.

- **Noël Léonard Essongo:** As Minister of State Control, he is the primary [enforcer of a new disciplinary regime](#), targeting administrative "anti-values." Winners: Technocrats and loyalists; Losers: Entrenched bureaucrats and non-compliant officials.

- **Professor Francine Ntoumi:** Her election as [Secretary General of the African Academy of Sciences](#) elevates her status as a global representative of Congolese intellectual power.
- **Rodrigo Malanda Samba:** The Minister of Employment is being positioned as a key [partner for the UN \(PNUD\)](#) in tackling youth unemployment through professional training programs.

## EDITORIAL POSTURE & STORY HIERARCHY

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The editorial hierarchy prioritized **state success stories** (electrification, agricultural yields) and **public health mobilization** (Ebola awareness). These stories were given extensive airtime and were framed with nationalistic pride. **Tragedies**, such as the Sibiti accident, were covered with an emphasis on state empathy rather than systemic failures. **Regional instability** (DRC) was presented through the lens of high-level diplomacy. Conspicuously omitted were any detailed discussions of the **cost of living crisis** or internal political dissent, which were only hinted at through mentions of "administrative anti-values."

## GEOPOLITICAL FRAMING

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The world is framed as a complex arena of competition where Congo must secure its interests through science, infrastructure, and strategic alliances. Western powers are viewed as sources of finance, while Russia and China are framed as cultural and economic

partners, albeit with some friction regarding Chinese mining activities.

- **Italy and the EU:** Portrayed as critical [partners in infrastructure](#), providing the technology and funding for hydraulic and energy systems.
- **DR Congo:** Characterized as a [fragile neighbor](#) in a state of "war" and "communion crisis," whose stability is vital but precarious.
- **Russia:** Framed as a [cultural ally](#), using high-profile artistic exchanges like the Black Sea Fleet choir to maintain a soft-power presence.
- **China:** Implicitly portrayed as an [ambiguous actor](#), providing investment but also associated with illegal mining and environmental damage that the state is struggling to control.

## INFORMATION WARFARE ENVIRONMENT

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The government is actively seeding a meta-narrative of "Emergence by 2030." This involves weaponizing news of infrastructure completion to overshadow reports of violent crime and public health threats. There is a clear effort to [combat disinformation](#) through projects like "Lisango," which trains journalists to verify facts and fight rumors. However, the broadcast itself serves as state propaganda, carefully selecting stories that validate the Presidency while minimizing systemic risks.

## HYPOTHESES AND FUTURE OUTLOOK

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- **Infrastructure-led Growth:** The successful electrification of Loumou will likely lead to increased political support for the PCT (Congolese Party of Labour) in the south, but failure to deliver maintenance will cause a rapid backlash.
- **Agricultural Shift:** If the ZAP initiative fails to secure export markets, the government will face a surplus of domestic crops and a significant [financial loss](#) on investments, potentially leading to further social unrest.
- **Health Crisis:** The airport screening and Ebola campaigns suggest the government expects a major regional outbreak; any failure in these protocols would be [catastrophic for international trade](#).

## STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

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**Short Term (1-4 Weeks):** Expect a ramp-up in [administrative audits](#) led by Minister Essongo, potentially resulting in high-profile dismissals for "anti-values." Public mourning for the Sibiti victims will continue to be a focus of state messaging.

**Medium Term (1-6 Months):** The first batches of cocoa and papaya under the new ZAP guidelines will hit local markets, providing a critical [test of the diversification strategy](#). Continued power grid expansion toward Linzolo will be a major fiscal commitment.

**Long Term (1-5 Years):** The Congo will attempt to transition from an oil-dependent rentier state to a regional agricultural hub, heavily reliant on [mechanization](#) and U.S./EU trade agreements. Success depends on the

stability of the DRC and the management of foreign mining interests.

## RISK ASSESSMENT

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- **Regional Health Contagion:** The risk of Ebola or other hemorrhagic fevers crossing from neighbors. **Triggers:** Porous border crossings or failure of airport screening. **Likelihood:** Moderate. **Impact:** High (total economic shutdown). **Mitigations:** Strengthening of thermal screening and hygiene campaigns.
- **Resource Conflict:** Rising tension over [illegal gold mining](#) in Sangha. **Triggers:** Violent clashes between local populations and foreign mining entities. **Likelihood:** High. **Impact:** Regional instability and environmental destruction. **Mitigations:** Deployment of state security and legalization of artisanal miners.
- **Grid Failure:** The newly electrified regions could face immediate brownouts due to lack of maintenance. **Triggers:** Overloading of the new 70 MVA transformers. **Likelihood:** Moderate. **Impact:** Public anger and loss of government mandate. **Mitigations:** Training of local technicians and backup generator placement.
- **Social Unrest from Tragedies:** Escalation of grief over the Sibiti road accident into protests against infrastructure decay. **Triggers:** Perceived lack of accountability for road safety. **Likelihood:** Low to Moderate. **Impact:** Localized unrest. **Mitigations:** Financial support for families and high-profile ministerial visits.

- **Macroeconomic Instability:** Failure of the agricultural diversification to offset oil price volatility. **Triggers:** Global oil price crash before agricultural exports reach scale. **Likelihood:** Moderate. **Impact:** Sovereign debt crisis. **Mitigations:** Securing low-interest loans from BDAC/BAD.

## GAPS & BLIND SPOTS

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- The broadcast fails to address the **actual debt levels** associated with the electrification and ZAP projects, raising questions about long-term fiscal sustainability.
- There is a total lack of **independent verification** of the administrative "zero tolerance" campaign's effectiveness; it may simply be a tool for political purging.
- The health reports do not discuss **vaccine hesitancy** in rural areas, which could undermine the malaria vaccination effort.
- Missing context on the **security situation along the DRC border**, beyond diplomatic visits, leaves the true risk of spillover conflict unknown.

## CONTRARIAN NARRATIVE SCENARIOS

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**The "Potemkin" Infrastructure:** The electrification of Loumou may be a facade—a temporary show of power designed for media consumption, while the actual energy production capacity remains insufficient to sustain the region long-term. A "Black Swan" event would be a massive transformer failure during a state celebration, exposing the fragility of the grid.

**Diversification as Distraction:** The focus on agriculture might be a stalling tactic to allow

elite factions to further consolidate control over remaining oil revenues while projecting a "green" image to international donors. A catastrophic crop failure due to climate-driven pests would reveal the lack of genuine expertise behind the ZAP strategy.

## RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLICATIONS

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### For Statecraft/Public Sector:

- Prioritize [border screening biosecurity](#) to prevent a major regional health event that would de-legitimize modernization efforts.
- Formalize the [legal status of artisanal miners](#) to reduce conflict with foreign entities and secure state revenue.
- Ensure that the [digitalization of the administration](#) is transparent to avoid accusations of political surveillance.

### For Private Sector/Investors:

- Monitor the [papaya and cocoa export markets](#) for entry opportunities as the Congo seeks to diversify its AGOA portfolio.
- Exercise caution in mining investments in the Sangha department due to [rising land-use conflicts](#) and environmental regulatory risk.
- Infrastructure firms should target [secondary electrification projects](#) as the state expands beyond the Loumou district.

## LEGISLATIVE ROUNDUP

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Legislative activity centered on administrative reform and international trade protocols, with

significant attention paid to the status of research and health workers.

### • **BILLS DISCUSSED/DEBATED:**

- **Administrative Discipline Code:** A new set of regulations mandated by Minister Essongo to enforce punctuality and combat "anti-values" in the civil service.
- **Scientific Research Statute:** Proposed legislation discussed by Professor Ntoumi to provide a [formal professional status](#) for researchers, separate from teachers.

### • **HEARINGS & PRESS EVENTS:**

- **Hydrocarbon Price Committee:** A closed-door session to determine [Q2 export prices](#) for Congolese crude.
- **Loumou Electrification Inspection:** A high-profile field visit by the DG of the Energy Company to validate the completion of the 30kW and 110kW lines.

## KEY STORIES

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- **Electrification of Loumou:** The final connection of Loumou and surrounding villages to the national grid, with 32.5 kV tension confirmed at the end of the line. [Inspections](#) were carried out in Kinkala and Luingi.
- **Professor Francine Ntoumi Election:** Ntoumi, a specialist in infectious diseases, was elected as Secretary General of the [African Academy of Sciences](#), calling for a scientific revolution in the Congo.
- **Ebola Prevention Campaign:** A massive public information drive using state media and billboards to educate citizens on [symptoms and transmission risks](#).

- **Sibiti Road Tragedy:** A vehicle collision killed [four BPC exam candidates](#) (Banny Dural, Mungundu Jolina, Mabilia Laura, Mulwanga Kloé), prompting a national mourning period.
- **Armed Robbery at SNDE/Hydroco:** The trial of suspects who used a [war weapon](#) to rob the state water and energy headquarters, facing potential death penalties.
- **Malaria Vaccine Debate:** Expert analysis of the [RTSS and R21 vaccines](#) and their role in the continental goal of malaria elimination.
- **Desecration of Graves in Pointe-Noire:** The arrest of individuals for [illegal burials](#) and disturbing family cemeteries in the 6th arrondissement (Ngoyo).
- **Agriculture Protected Zones (ZAP):** Success reports from Yaya and Ngoko regarding [industrial maize production](#) and the distribution of seeds to women's cooperatives.
- **70th Anniversary of CNSS:** A celebration of the Social Security Fund, marking its evolution from 1956 to the [modern CENPES institution](#).
- **Black Sea Fleet Choir Concert:** A cultural diplomacy event hosted by the [Russian House in Brazzaville](#), performing for Congolese students and officials.
- **Venezuela Earthquake Solidarity:** The PCT issued a statement of [deep compassion](#) for the 3,000 deaths and displacement in Venezuela.
- **Obéville Addiction Center:** The training of medical staff for a [new detox center](#) in Loumo, aimed at social reintegration of "at-risk" youth.

- **Papaya Export Initiative:** A push for small businesses to utilize the [AGOA framework](#) to export papayas to the United States.
- **GABAC Money Laundering Workshop:** A five-day training session in Brazzaville focused on [anti-money laundering](#) and combating terrorism financing in the SEMAC region.
- **University Marien Ngouabi Rehab:** The rehabilitation of the [ENAM amphitheater](#) and facilities, funded by the national budget.

## ABOUT THIS REPORT

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**Today's Media Trends** is a public interest experiment in applying deep thematic trend analysis to television news coverage from around the world to explore how responsibly applied advanced AI can help journalists and scholars better understand the overarching trends, themes and patterns of our global world.

**No data is used to train or tune any AI model.**

Each morning, in collaboration with the Internet Archive's TV News Archive, we apply Google's Gemini 3 to deeply examine yesterday's coverage from each television news channel to tease out the overarching themes and trends of its news coverage into a richly annotated thematic analysis. Each high-level insight is connected back to the original broadcast, allowing journalists and scholars to understand the dominate themes and trends and instantly click out to the underlying sources for details.

By helping journalists and scholars see the broader trends and patterns of global news coverage, this analysis helps them identify

relevant stories and coverage they might not otherwise have encountered and uncover connections, emphases and narrative shifts that enable more comprehensive reporting and deeper, evidence-based research.

This report is entirely machine generated using Gemini 3 and may include errors and omissions. Please verify all findings. No data is used to train or tune any AI model.

For questions or suggestions, please contact [kalev.leetaru5@gmail.com](mailto:kalev.leetaru5@gmail.com). To learn more or subscribe to our free daily newsletters, visit <https://blog.gdeltproject.org/announcing-our-new-daily-todays-trends-on-capitol-hill-todays-media-trends-newsletter-briefings/>. You can also learn more about the GDEL T Project at <https://blog.gdeltproject.org/> and the Internet Archive's TV News Archive at <https://archive.org/details/tv>.