
**ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF POLITICS ON THE PERFORMANCE OF THE MEDIA SECTOR IN
UGANDA. A CASE STUDY OF KAMPALA DISTRICT**

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ABSTRACT

Assessing the impact of politics on the performance of the media sector in Uganda has been an issue of discussion all over the world. Although media influence has increased tremendously in the last decade, researchers are yet to agree on the impact of politics on the performance of media. The context of analysis of politics on the performance of media in Kampala District that revealed media can act as a double-edged sword. The study reviewed various literature on hate speeches & messages, political participation & violence, social protest movements and challenges facing media reporting. From the review the study adopted a conceptual framework developed from the libertarian theory and social responsibility theory of media reporting based on Aday Andersen (1974) & Buor (2004) with the propagation of social unrest as the dependent variable which relies on the media political incitement as the independent variable. The study used a cross sectional survey design, applied qualitative and quantitative approaches and collected data using interviews and questionnaires. Stratified random sampling technique was applied to the study population of 209,500 people from the Kampala district from which the samples of 84 participants were selected. The study found that politics on the performance of media in Kampala district was escalated by vernacular (local) FM stations. In particular, 76.7% of the media in Kampala, publish content with hate speeches and 60.4% broadcast messages of hatred and intolerance through media platforms like Twitter, Facebook (69.4%) on a monthly basis. Most of the incitement makes most people uneasy (76.7%), resulting in social unrest (53.5%) aimed at influencing Government decisions. This was associated with the wave of murders, kidnapping as the residents (50%) were expressed dissatisfaction with the leadership (53.5%). Government should address the political concerns of its people. More importantly, there needs to be stringent regulations including legal action and control of vernacular (local) FM stations which are prone to manipulation by political elite. This should be coupled with training of journalists on conflict reporting and development of a standard conflict reporting procedure.

Key words: politics, performance and media sector

Background to the study

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At some point of history, facts are a key factor in beginning of conflicts around the arena. The media plays an important role of a watchdog in the society; exposing to the general public what's vital but hidden, but it could additionally be used to mobilize for violence and or hatred (Shamim et al., 2023). there's the mainstream media also called traditional media and social media (Kazaara, Charles, et al., 2023). Currently, social media can act as a device for widening the democratic space; however, it is able to additionally lead to destabilization of peace and spring of violence. Messages and information are instant; newsrooms, as places for modifying information are being overtaken; uncooked records are sent by means of absolutely everyone to all people unedited. Journalism has been stolen! records, whether in all likelihood to generate hate or carry peace is going out uncensored! (Kazaara, Kazaara, et al., 2023).

In Africa, the newspaper Kangura, posted in Rwanda inside the early 1990s for instance issue no 22, 23 of October 1991, difficulty no 27,28 of December 1991, issue 42 of my additionally 1993 and trouble no forty-three of June 1993, overtly endorsed genocide of Tutsi people and in 1994, a predicted 800,000 Tutsi were killed via Hutus on the urging of Kangura and Radio Rwanda (Shakilah & Kazaara, 2023). Kangura's editor, Hassan Ngeze, together with broadcast colleagues, become convicted of crimes towards humanity through the global criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and sentenced to life imprisonment, re-maintaining the worldwide prison precept that leaders of the mass media companies may be held answerable for inciting genocide (Turyatemba, 2023). In Uganda, the authorities have because the 2000's used the legal guidelines in partisan methods to create a minefield for media owners and journalists who speak or write

approximately issues that the government deems politically sensitive or arguable. as an example, on the tenth September 2009, Uganda skilled two days of rioting whilst government troops replied to rioters throwing stones, blocking roads and lighting fireplace with immoderate lethal pressure, ensuing inside the deaths of at least 40 people. The riots passed off when the NRM government instructed state organizations to block the go to of a cultural chief of Baganda, to Kayunga (an area that become historically a part of Buganda country) and Luganda-speaking radio stations voiced aid for the Buganda cultural leader and endorsed listeners to expose that aid by means of travelling to the area in the course of the deliberate visit (Flavia et al., 2023).

Statement of the problem

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Despite the fact that media is anticipated to contribute to development, reconciliation and peace by way of widening the democratic area, latest global activities have proven that social media, much like conventional media, can act as a double-edged sword (Davids et al., 2023). On the one hand, the media can act as a tool for widening democratic area, but on the alternative, it could cause destabilization (Varghese 2011, 10). Authorities unfolded the political space to Multi birthday party in 2005. The media has been used to unfold politics on the overall performance of media main to violence (Davids et al., 2023).

Because the preceding political campaigns in 2005, at the least 40 criminal costs were levied towards the media (journalists and communicate display panelists). Fears were raised about increased presence of politically inciting data in the Ugandan Media area. at the 10th and eleventh September 2009, Uganda experience days of rioting whilst authorities' troops responded to rioters throwing stones, blocking roads and lights hearth with excessive lethal pressure, resulting in the deaths of as a minimum forty human beings (Shakilah & Kazaara, 2023). Police and soldiers threatened reporters trying to photo and reporting at the unfolding occasions and the Broadcasting Council suspended unique newshounds deemed to have incited violence and 4 local FM stations CBS, Suubi FM, Radio Sapienta and Akaboozi have been closed. As contrasted to mainstream media which

involves self-regulation and strict adherence to journalistic codes, the inability to adjust politically inciting content material on social media has made it a fertile ground for the spread of hate content material (Malik, 2012) and this has resulted into mass protests, riots, and rebel inside Kampala district (Mercy et al., 2023).

Within the past, the government has used threats of judicial action to scare Ugandans to now not publish flammable messages on line, however there's persevered politics on the performance of media in Kampala district. there may be a mission of drawing the road between freedom of expression, hate speech and the right now not to be discriminated against. there's want to observe the impact of politics at the performance of media in Kampala district (Kazaara & Kazaara, 2023).

Research Objectives

- To examine the nature of media political incitement in Kampala district.

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- To document the different types of social unrest that have been caused by politics on the performance of media in Kampala district.
- To establish the challenges facing media in reporting on political issues in Kampala district.

Research Questions

- What is the nature /forms of media political incitement in Kampala district?
- What are the different types of social unrest that have been caused by politics on the performance of media in Kampala district?
- What are the challenges facing media in reporting on political issues in Kampala district?

Methodology**Research Design**

The study employed a cross sectional survey design. This design was chosen because it enables detailed investigation into the characteristics of a population as expressed at a particular point in time. It involves collection of data on attitudes, belief, opinions, practices and perceptions related to the issue of interest (Leedy, 1985) as cited in Odiya (2009). This design is also found to be suitable for providing numeric descriptions of some of the selected participants. It also describes events as they are, as they were or as they will be (Oso & Onen, 2009).

Research Orientation

This study used both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The quantitative aspect dealt with the different statistical data obtained in the study. The qualitative aspects were used to handle data expressed in words related to feelings, opinions, attitudes, perceptions and views of the key informants like the politics on the performance of the media sector in Kampala district.

Target Population

The target population consisted of the entire population (209,500 according to the 2014 census) in Kampala district. The target population was from Kawempe, Lubaga, central, Nakawa where media houses, NGOs and CSOs were targeted totaling to 8442 from which 1% (84) of the population was considered for the study. The target population was chosen because of the inability of the researcher to reach the whole population besides the constraint of time and resources available for the study.

Study Sample

The study took a sample of 84 participants determined using Krejcie Morgan (1970) table of sample size determination (see appendix).

Sampling Techniques

This study employed stratified random sampling techniques. Since Kampala district is already divided into smaller units, the divisions were considered as a non-overlapping group of homogenous characteristics called strata. Simple

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random sampling may result in the population being considerably below or over represented (Collis & Hussey, 2003). The advantage of stratified random sampling over simple random sampling is that “stratified random sampling overcomes the problems of under or over representation of sample as each identifiable strata of the population is taken in to account” (Collis & Hussey, 2003). According to Kovacs (1985), “stratification ensures that all the important aspects of the characteristics to be studied are represented in the sample” and this also improve the generalizability of the findings.

Simple random sampling was used to select respondents that were included in the study. Specific attention was paid to inclusion of both male and female respondents in the study sample. This technique ensured that each member of the target population had an equal and independent chance of being included in the sample.

Data collection instruments

The instruments that were used for data collection are questionnaires and interview guides. *Questionnaires* were used because the study was concerned with variables that could not be directly observed such as views, opinions, perceptions and feelings of the respondents. Such information is best collected through questionnaires (Oso & Onen, 2009).

Interview guides were used for interviewing the key informants as detailed above. This enabled the researcher to gather first-hand information from the respondents over their perceptions about the study variables. The two instruments were able to collect very essential and consistent data

Data analysis

This involved analysis of quantitative and qualitative data by use of both descriptive and inferential statistical analyses. Descriptive statistical analysis employed frequency and percentage distributions and bars charts. Inferential Statistics included Chi square (Chi square is more effective for determining Levels (Onen & Oso, 2009) and relationships were analyzed by use of Pearson’s Correlation Coefficient (r) since it is one of the most appropriate coefficient of determination of relationship in research (Onen & Oso, 2009). This was achieved using the SPSS software version 16.0 (Nelson et al., 2022).

RESULTS

To examine the nature of media political incitement in Kampala.

Table 1: Showing responses on whether the media in Kampala publishes content that comprises hate speeches.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	
Disagree	0	0	0	0

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Not Sure Agree	3	5.4	5.4	5.4
strongly agree	10	17.9	17.9	
Total	43	76.7	76.7	94.6
	56	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field data, 2021

As to whether the media in Kampala publishes content that comprises hate speeches, 76.7% of the respondents strongly agreed, while only 17.9% agreed and 5.4% were not sure. These statistics confirm that the media in Kampala publishes content that comprises hate speeches.

This shows that the media was a source of incitement because it published content that comprises hate speeches. This meant that the authorities had to understand what type of hate speeches that the media propagated in order to curb the resultant actions that might result in social unrest

Table 2: Showing responses on whether the media publishes/broadcasts messages of hatred and intolerance

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly	0	0	0	
Disagree	2	3.6	3.6	3.6
Disagree	4	7.2	7.2	7.2
Not Sure Agree	16	28.8	28.8	39.6
Strongly agree	34	60.4	60.4	100
Total	56	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field data, 2021

Table 2 shows the responses on whether the media publishes/broadcasts messages of hatred and intolerance, 60.4% of the respondents strongly agreed while 28.8% agreed. However, 7.2% were not sure and 3.6% disagreed. This confirmed that the media publishes/broadcasts messages of hatred and intolerance. For those that were not sure or disagreed, they may not have had knowledge on what hate messages or intolerance meant.

Table 3: Showing responses on whether Media platforms such as Twitter, and Facebook propagate issues of hate in Kampala

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	
	Disagree	0	0	0	0
	Not Sure	7	12.6	12.6	12.6

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	Agree	10		18	30.6
	Strongly agree	39	69.4	69.4	100.0
	Total	56	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field data, 2021

Table 3 indicates the responses as to whether Media platforms such as Twitter, and facebook propagate issues of hate in Kampala, 69.4% of the respondents strongly agreed while 18% agreed. The finding simply indicated that in Kampala, Media platforms such as Twitter, and Facebook propagate issues of hate in Kampala and therefore knowledge of the contributions of Media platforms such as Twitter, and Facebook to political incitement was important.

Table 4: Showing responses on whether Social Networking Sites (SNS) communicate hate messages that are spread via different media are in different forms.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	
	Disagree	0	0	0	0
	Not Sure Agree	6	10.8	10.8 35.7 53.5	10.8
	strongly agree	20	35.7	100.0	46.5
	Total	30	53.5		100.0
		56	100.0		

Source: Field data, 2021

As to whether Social Networking sites (SNS) communicate hate messages that are spread via different media and in different forms, 53.5% of the respondents strongly agreed while 35.7% agreed. However, 10.8% were not sure. It was concluded that Social Networking sites (SNS) communicate hate messages that are spread via different media and in different forms.

This was strengthened by some respondents who noted that the social networking sites were very much accessible to most people literate and illiterate alike and therefore tagging, forwarding, creation and posting of hate messages therefore not easy to censor because some of the illiterate could not be stopped from posting hate messages.

Table 5: Showing responses on whether in the last one month, you shared, tagged someone, forwarded, or reposted any hate content on social media.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	0	0	0
	Disagree	0	0	0

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	Not Sure	7	12.6 18	2.6 18
	Agree	10		
	Strongly agree	39	69.4	69.4
	Total	56	100.0	100.0

Source: Field data, 2021

Table 5 indicates the responses as to whether in the last one month; you shared, tagged someone, forwarded, or reposted any hate content on social media, 69.4% of the respondents strongly agreed while 18% agreed. However, 12.6% were not sure.

The findings pointed out that hate messages are always shared on social media.

Table 6: Showing responses on whether in the last one month you received hate content messages on social media.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	0	0	0
	Disagree	0	0	0
	Not Sure	0	0	0
	Agree	25	44.6	44.6
	Strongly agree	31	55.4	55.4
	Total	56	100.0	100.0

Source: Field data, 2021

Table 6 indicates that 55.4% of the respondents strongly agreed that in the last one month they received hate content messages on social media, while 44.6% agreed. This implied that in the last one-month people on social media received hate content messages.

Table 7: Showing responses on whether a big percentage of your friends on social media post hate content.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
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Valid	Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	
	Disagree	2	3.6	3.6	3.6
	Not Sure	4	7.2	7.2	7.2
	Agree	16	28.8	28.8	39.6
	Strongly agree	34	60.4	60.4	100
	Total	56	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field data, 2021

Table 7 shows the responses on whether a big percentage of friends on social media posted hate content, 60.4% of the respondents strongly agreed while 28.8% agreed. However, 7.2% were not sure and 3.6 disagreed. This confirms that hate messages were always posted on social media. This was further justified by a respondent who noted that “...when you have data and someone sends you a message, you sometimes take it as a joke and find yourself forwarding it to your friends or the public sometimes without comprehending the consequences of one’s actions” Social media was thus considered as a gateway to political incitement which if not curbed would rise into social unrest.

Table 8: Showing responses on whether the media prints/ publishes content that makes people might feel uneasy and intimidated

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	0	0	0
	Disagree	0	0	0
	Not Sure	3	5.4	5.4
	Agree	10	17.9	17.9
	strongly agree	43	76.7	76.7
	Total	56	100.0	100.0

Source: Field data, 2021

As to whether the media prints/ publishes content that makes people might feel uneasy and intimidated 76.7% of the respondents strongly agreed, while only 17.9% agreed and 5.4% were not sure. These findings confirm earlier findings that the media in Kampala publishes content that made people feel uneasy as well as intimidated. This shows that the media was a source of intimidation because it published content that made people circulate hate speeches. This meant that the authorities had to understand what type of hate speeches that the media propagated in order to curb the resultant actions that might result in social unrest.

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The different types of social unrest that have been caused by media political incitement in Kampala.

The respondents were asked questions regarding the types of social unrest in Kampala caused by media political incitement. The findings were presented in the tables below:

Table 9: Showing responses on whether there has been demonstrations and political violence in Kampala as a result of media incitement

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	
	Disagree	0	0	0	0
	Not Sure	22	39.3	39.3	39.3
	Agree	4	7.2	7.2	
	Strongly agree	30	53.5	53.5	60.7
	Total	56	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field data, 2021

Table 9 indicates that 53.5% of the respondents strongly agreed that there has been demonstrations and political violence as a result of media incitement in Kampala, while 7.2% agreed with the statement. The findings indicated that media political incitement was one of the causes of social unrest and political violence in Kampala.

Table 10: Showing responses on whether demonstrations and political violence in Kampala have been aimed at influencing collective decisions by government

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly	0	0	0	
	Disagree	0	0	0	0
	Disagree	0	0	0	0
	Not Sure	17	30.4	30.4	
	Agree	39	69.6	69.6	100.0
	Strongly agree	56	100.0	100.0	

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	Total				

Source: Field data, 2021

The findings in table 10 shows responses to whether the demonstrations and political violence in Kampala have been aimed at influencing collective decisions by government, 69.6% of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement while 30.4% agreed. It was concluded that demonstrations and political violence in Kampala have been aimed at influencing collective decisions by government.

Table 11: Showing responses on whether demonstrations activities have involved signing petitions, boycotts, traffic blockades and wild strikes

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	
	Disagree	0	0	0	0
	Not Sure	0	0	0	0
	Agree	22	39.3	39.3	
	Strongly agree	34	60.7	60.7	100.0
	Total	56	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field data, 2018

Table 11 indicates that 60.7% of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement that demonstration activities in Kampala have involved signing of petitions, boycotts, traffic blockades and wild strikes, while 39.3% agreed. It was concluded that demonstration activities in Kampala have involved signing of petitions, boycotts, traffic blockades and wild strikes.

Table 12: Showing responses on whether there have been incidents of kidnapping of political leaders and demanding for ransom in Kampala

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly	0	0	0	
	Disagree	0	0	0	0
	Disagree	1	1.8	1.8	1.8
	Not Sure	18	32.1	32.1	

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	Agree	37	66.1	66.1	98.2
	Strongly agree	56	100.0	100.0	
	Total				

Source: Field data, 2021

Table 12 indicates that there have been incidences of kidnapping of political leaders and demanding for ransom in Kampala. This was represented by 66.1% of the respondents who strongly agreed while 32.1% agreed. Only 1.8% of the respondents were not sure. This showed the level of concern people have over the security of their leaders, while the leaders themselves lived in fear.

Table 13: Showing responses on whether in Kampala we have spontaneous expressions of dissatisfaction, frustration of government leadership

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	
	Disagree	0	0	0	0
	Not Sure	4	7.2	7.2	7.2
	Agree	22	39.3	39.3	
	Strongly agree	30	53.5	53.5	92.8
	Total	56	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field data, 2021

Table 13 indicates that 53.5% of the respondents strongly agreed that in Kampala there have been spontaneous expressions of dissatisfaction and frustration of government leadership, while 39.3% agreed with the statement. However, 7.2% were not sure. The foundations of a good government some intimated is satisfaction among the population. When the people feel dissatisfied, they are compelled to react negatively towards the leadership of government.

Establish the challenges facing media in reporting on political issues in Kampala

Table 14: Showing responses on whether journalists face personal safety and security risks in the course of their work in Kampala

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	

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	Disagree	0	0	0	0
	Not Sure Agree	30	53.5	53.5	53.5
	strongly agree	1	1.8	1.8	55.3
	Total	25	44.7	44.7	100.0
		56	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field data, 2021

The findings on whether journalists face personal safety and security risks in the course of their work in Kampala indicate that 44.7% of the respondents strongly agreed while 1.8% agreed.

However, the majority of the respondents 53.5 % indicated they were not sure whether journalists faced a lot of risks in their work and if this affected their reporting during political periods. The findings however, indicate that to some extent journalists face a lot of safety and security risks during their work in political periods. One interviewee noted that because of these risks journalists now prefer to write stories that favor groupings considered to be more powerful and aggressive in order to avoid being attacked.

Table 15: Showing whether Police harass journalists during political periods/ times

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	
	Disagree	0	0	0	0
	Not Sure Agree strongly	6	1.8	1.8	1.8
	agree	30	53.5	53.5	55.3
	Total	20	42.8	42.8	100.0
		56	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field data, 2021

The respondents were asked to indicate whether police harass journalists in Kampala during political periods and 42.8% of the respondents strongly agreed while 53.5% agreed. In an interview with some of the respondents, they indicated that they have seen many journalists being beaten and their equipment confiscated especially those from media houses considered hostile to government. It was concluded that Police indeed harass journalists during political times in Kampala.

Table 16: Showing responses on whether the public is uncomfortable talking to journalists on political issues

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
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Valid	Strongly				
	Disagree	0	0	0	0
	Disagree	0	0	0	0
	Not Sure Agree	0	0	0	0
	strongly agree	33	58.9	58.9	58.9
	Total	23	41.1	41.1	41.1
		56	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Field data, 2021

Table 16 indicates that 41.1% of the respondents strongly agreed that the public in Kampala fear to talk to journalists on political issues. While 58.9% agreed. It was concluded that journalists were thus finding it hard to find correct and accurate stories because the public feared sharing information on political issues with them. With no sources from the public, journalists are cut off from the gist of the issue at hand and thus have to either graft some stories or do not write about a particular political issue at all as they would not have information from the public.

Table 17: Showing responses on whether the media law in Uganda is rigid

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	
	Disagree	0	0	0	0
	Not Sure Agree	1	1.8	1.8	1.8
	strongly agree	29	51.8	51.8 46.4	
	Total	26	46.4	100.0	98.2
		56	100.0		

Source: Field data, 2021

Table 17 shows that cumulatively, 98.2% of the respondents agreed with the statement that the media law in Uganda is rigid. While only 1.8% were not sure. This was a consistent factor explaining the relationship between the media and state functionaries like the police and other security agencies. The laws make it easy for the security agencies to harass the media and at times deny them coverage of certain political matters accusing them of being anti-government and enemies of the state.

Conclusions

The media in Kampala publishes content with hate messages and preach hatred and intolerance which has led on many occasions to social unrest. Social media platforms such as facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp also propagate

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issues of hate, while people continued to share these messages without even thinking about the content and the consequences of spreading such messages. The media itself is awash with hate messages thus inciting the people and promoting social unrest in Kampala.

Recommendations

The researcher recommends the media should be independent and try to give the public the correct information. However, they should avoid publishing hate messages and messages of intolerance which can lead not only to social unrest but also politically instability and genocide.

It is also recommended that the government addresses the political concerns of the people in Kampala so that the journalists cannot use those issues to incite the public into social unrest.

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