

Uganda's *Sun* resurrects amid stiff competition



By [Walter Wafula](#)

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The Kampala Sun, a new publication by Vision Group, is the latest addition to Uganda's newsstands. The tabloid has been revived seven years after the New Vision Printing and Publishing Company Limited (Vision Group), published and launched its first copy, although it didn't live to celebrate its first birthday.

The publication which will attempt to duplicate what the UK's *The Sun* does best, was unveiled last Friday, 9 December 2011, confirming rumours of its birth.

The gossip

The first issue of the 31-page paper led with a story about popular musician Douglas Seguya, better known as Weasel, who has allegedly fathered 25 children with 16 women. Weasel, who sings under the Goodlyfe music brand, is only 26 years old.

The tabloid also published a story about Latifah Nalukenge, the jailed Kampala socialite popularly known as Bad Black. One out of every two pages of the *Sun* had a pictorial capturing Kampala's social events including; the Pearl of Africa Music (PAM) Awards and Olive Awards which took place last month. In total, the newspaper dedicated 16 pages to pictorials with less text to read to this disappointment of a few.

Editor, Raphael Okello notes in the editorial that the tabloid will style up its readers' weeks with "heaps, reams and tones of good stuff." "Everything you need to know about the lifestyles of the gorgeous and glamorous people in this city is right here within these pages; *The Kampala Sun* is your all-access VIP backstage ticket to the secrets of the rich and famous, the crazy and the notorious, the wild and restless in this capital of ours."

The competition

In offering such content, the newspaper will play on the same turf as the *Red Pepper and Onion*, a publication of the Pepper Publications that has been around for more than a decade but remains the most competitive source of gossip about celebrities and Uganda's corporate community. Vision Group is seen as making an attempt to break the Red Pepper (RP) 'monopoly' in the industry, according to observers.

Mixed feelings

Moses Odokonyero, a Ugandan journalist, welcomed the resurrection of the tabloid, saying it's good for readers. "There was/is a need for competition in that area. The 'mighty' RP has been the unchallenged dancer on the floor for way too long thus denying readers a proper alternative...", commenting on a Facebook group for journalists working in Uganda.

Gilbert Mwijuke, another journalist on the forum, argued that that whoever thinks Ugandans need another tabloid has "a bad idea." His rational was informed by Vision's first attempt in the English tabloid business. The 'dead' *Sun* was introduced during the reign of William Pike, Vision Group's former managing director and editor-in-chief.

Language translation, a mistake?

Denis Jjuuko said, with *The Kampala Sun*, Vision has addressed its first main mistake in the trade - translating *Bukedde*, a vernacular newspaper, into English to win over non-Luganda speaking readers in Uganda.

"Pike's thinking was that since *Bukedde* sells outside Buganda, there is a group of people who may miss it because of their inability to speak Luganda. *The Kampala Sun* has potential to survive because it totally looks at a different market," he said.

Another tabloid, *The Razor* didn't last more than six month after hitting newsstands.

The deputy news editor of *The Kampala Sun*, Alex Balimwikungu assured its critics that it will survive and thrive. "This paper isn't here to challenge anyone's threshold. It targets s section of people who I believe you are very aware of. Those with a polite UGX1 000 to spend," he said.

The refreshed tabloid costs half the price of *Red Pepper* and UGX500 less than the cost of the mainstream dailies; *New Vision* and *Daily Monitor*. The newspapers compete for less than 100 000 daily buyers although the readers are estimated to be 20 times higher due to multiple sharing of copies.

ABOUT WALTER WAFULA

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