

Al Jazeera to start Kiswahili channel in East Africa

 By [Walter Wafula](#)

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The Al Jazeera Media Network in Qatar is set to establish a regional news and current affairs media network in East Africa, the company said on 8 August 2011.

The new network has been named the Al Jazeera Kiswahili and will be aired in the five East African Community Partner states including; Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi. Kiswahili is the most widely spoken language in East and Central Africa and is the national language of Tanzania and Kenya.

Al Jazeera Kiswahili to launch in 2012

"Al Jazeera Kiswahili Channel is expected to launch in 2012 and is currently recruiting," said the company in an advertisement published in the East African newspaper on Monday.

The international news company is recruiting for key positions including; managing director, project manager, director of new and programmes, director of finance and administration, director of technology and operations, online manager, and human resource manager.

The establishment of the Kiswahili channel is expected to last between 8-12 months and will be overseen by the project manager. The managing director will be charged with ensuring the launch of the channel in the region and ensuring that its appealing to the global Kiswahili-speaking audience, the firm said.

Regional office in Kenya

Al Jazeera is expected to set up its regional corporate office as well as studios, news rooms and broadcaster in Kenya. The establishment of Al Jazeera Kiswahili will increase the number of the Qatar state-owned broadcaster's networks to three including; Al Jazeera English, and Arabic.

The recruitment drive by Al Jazeera comes a month after China Central Television (CCTV), the Chinese national broadcaster announced several vacancies for East African electronic media journalists and staff. The move set the stage for increased competition for the limited talent-base by both local and international news channels operating in the region.

CCTV recruited a team of local television anchors, reporters, cameramen, studio technicians, editors, and commentators to support its international broadcasting services.

The recruitment drive was part of CCTV's strategy to become a global media network with increased international influence. The broadcast house currently operates six international channels in six different languages, including; Chinese, English, French, Spanish, Russian and Arabic.

Growing audience in East africa

The new broadcasters are positioning themselves to take advantage of the growing television audience in East Africa. The effort is also aimed at ensuring competitive coverage of the region's issues offering an alternative to other international broadcasters such as CNN in the United States, BBC in the United Kingdom, Reuters and Deutsche Welle television in Germany. Most of these are free to air televisions working in partnership with other local broadcasters through the regional offices in Nairobi, Kenya.

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