Witchcraft in the Press

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A sampling of headlines:

- Angry Villagers Kill Suspected Witch
- Witchcraft Blamed for Deaths & Stagnation
- Driver Killed by Witch’s Curse
- Witchcraft Alleged in Court
- Witchcraft Fears Hit School
- Witchcraft is a National Problem
- Killer Witchdoctor Stoned to Death
- Schoolgirl Had Witch’s Charms
- Witchcraft Lashed as “Colonial Relic”

Learning from the African Press

Research on the role of the press in covering witchcraft topics led to the analysis of 594 newspaper reports that appeared in East African newspapers between 1960-2010. The broad content of the collection fell into six categories:

**Violence and Law** (32%). Subjects included assault, wounding, murder of suspected witches, ritual murder, court cases, laws, legal issue

**Economy** (21%) Extortion reports, selling of witchcraft items, market-place violations, negative stories on how witchcraft negatively impacts economic development

**Government/Politics** (18%) Election rigging stories about witchcraft threats between political leaders, political intimidation, enforced oathings, rebellions using witch-hunting promises to recruit followers, state-sponsored terror

**Witch-Finding** (12%) Witch-hunting movements, mob killings of witches, arrest of witch-finders for naming people witches

**Healing and Witchcraft** (9%) Traditional medicine, local practitioners dealing with witchcraft, herbalism

**Witchcraft and Society** (8%) Issues of witchcraft in churches, missionary scholarship, school issues, education about witchcraft, witchcraft in sports, music, TV

Content of articles: Violence; Political issues and witchcraft Economics, exploitation about witchcraft; Traditional Healing and Witchcraft; Social Issues: Schools, Sports, etc.