

# *citation*

## *Award for Distance Learning Experience in Difficult Circumstances*

*Mr. David Benthu Nthengwe is a Mass Information Officer with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). He is originally from Malawi, and worked for UNHCR in Namibia for several years before being posted to the DRC. David holds a Masters Degree in Mass Communications. He is a journalist by profession and a staunch advocate of media freedom and freedom of expression. He was enrolled in COL's "Writing Effectively for UNHCR" course from February to August 2007.*

*When violence between warring factions broke out in Kinshasa in March 2007, David and his colleagues were immediately relocated to safe havens. For several weeks, they were confined to hotels, while the city came under heavy bombing. Sadly, some UNHCR staff members were stranded in the office unable to reach safety. As David puts it, "the fighting paralysed everything". After the violence*

*abated to some degree, staff were given Rescue & Rehabilitation and trauma counseling to recuperate. Although the city remained under high security risk, stringent restrictions on UN staff movement were still in place. Then, as if David had not experienced enough hardship, on May 5, one of his colleagues died in a plane crash in Cameroon. Needless to say, it was a period of much anguish and sorrow in his life.*

*With the violence and chaos in Kinshasa seething around him, David maintained his commitment to the course. His whole life was interrupted, but he was determined to continue his studies, and eventually went on to successfully complete the course.*

*For his dedication, his perseverance and, most of all, his resilience, I now ask you, Mr. President, to present Mr. David Benthu Nthengwe with the Award of Excellence for an eLearning Experience in Difficult Circumstances.*