

## Bulawayo blogger arrested in media clampdown

A Bulawayo woman was set free on bail Monday, 14 April 2007, after prosecutors charged her with practising journalism without accreditation during and after the 29 March general elections.

By [Lindie Whiz](#) 16 Apr 2008

Margaret Ann Kriel, a former presenter with the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) was charged under a section of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA). She was arrested last Thursday.

Kriel, well known for her radio programme 'Morning Mirror', which aired in the 1980s, has for some time been running a popular website and email service under the same name.

The 60-year-old was not formally charged and was remanded out of custody to 22 April on ZIM\$100 million bail.

She should reside at her given address until the finalisation of her case and was ordered to surrender her travel documents to the Clerk of the Criminal Court.

The court heard that between 14 February and 10 April this year, Kriel in the company of her son Robin Lee Kriel and another unidentified individual visited various places in the city and surrounding areas carrying out interviews.

Robin is a broadcast journalist with a TV station based in Texas, United States. When 30 armed police raided the Kriel's home at 5am on Thursday, Robin, who was staying at the address with friends, could not be found.

Margaret Kriel, her husband and her sister, also on a visit from the UK, were away, but were questioned by police on their return, and Kriel was then arrested. Police were also convinced that Kriel's sister was an undercover journalist.

Robin and the second unidentified suspect are still at large, the court heard.

The State alleges that they interviewed Senator David Coltart of the opposition MDC (Mutambara) and Thokozani Khupe of MDC (Tsvangirai) when they were not accredited to practise as journalists.

They allegedly also interviewed members of the public on the outcome of the elections, "about who they voted for and how they felt about the current political situation".

The State will seek to prove that they carried out these activities pretending to be accredited journalists when they were not.

Farai Museta appeared for the State while Joseph James, of James, Moyo-Majwabu and Nyoni Legal Practitioners represented Kriel.

Dozens of foreign journalists who were denied accreditation by Zimbabwean authorities sneaked into the country disguised as tourists. One American journalist and two Britons have been arrested and charged with practising journalism without accreditation.

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