

Zim: Multichoice forced to broadcast ZTV for free

Multichoice Zimbabwe has been forced to allow free viewing of the country's state-owned broadcasting channel ZBC TV 1, as election fever grips the country after a fall-out between principals in the inclusive government.

By [Dumisani Ndlela](#) 19 Oct 2010

ZBC has been accused of playing a partisan role and not acting in the public interest as a public broadcaster, but the monopoly broadcaster has denied the allegations.

Free-to-air channel

This week, Transmedia Corporation, a unit of ZBC that has exclusive rights as a signal carrier in the country, said Multichoice Zimbabwe had to allow subscribers of DSTV to view ZTV1 as a free-to-air channel.

"All Zimbabwe registered Multichoice decoders should access ZTV1 on DSTV Channel 138 as a free-to-air channel," said Transmedia notice to the public.

"This means that DSTV Channel 138 is available on any registered Multichoice decoder whether subscriptions have been paid or not," said Transmedia.

The company said viewers with Multichoice decoders but not receiving signal for the channel when they have no DSTV subscription should contact Transmedia officials, rather than Multichoice, with the decoder serial number and the smart card number.

Low transmission levels

Transmission levels for the state broadcaster have been very low in most parts of the country, or virtually absent. Transmedia erected the first transmitter in Beitbridge in May this year after 30 years of no national signal for residents of the border town. Several other parts of the country receive no signal to date.

The senior Transmedia official said the Multichoice decoders are going to be a convenient receiver for people in areas with little or no signal, implying a subsidy on the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Holdings (ZBH) by Multichoice for services the company should make available across the country.

ZBH, the parent company for the broadcasting company and Transmedia, has a potential revenue base of over US\$200 million annually through licence fees from holders of transmission receivers, including car radios.

ABOUT DUMISANI NDLELA

Dumisani Ndlela is a Zimbabwean journalist specialising in business and financial reporting, with experience reporting on commodities, stock and financial markets, advertising, marketing and the media. He has previously reported from a number of regional countries as well as from the UK and Germany on commodities and regional integration. He can be contacted on dndlela@yahoo.co.uk.

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