

## Daily News license refused

Zimbabwe's beleaguered *Daily News* has been refused its hastily prepared registration as a publisher on Saturday. This follows a court victory allowing it to resume publishing, after police twice raided its offices and confiscated equipment.

Although Ngqobile Sibanda, the *Daily News* editor, has not been officially informed of the decision, the *Herald* reported the Associated Newspapers of Zimbabwe, publishers of The Daily News, has been refused its license application.

The license refusal has been condemned by the African Editors' Forum, representing editors from more than 35 countries across Africa.

The Zimbabwe High Court on Thursday granted an order sought by the Daily News, the country's sole independent daily newspaper, barring police from seizing equipment and giving it permission to continue operating while its registration was being processed.

A week ago the Supreme Court ruled that the publishers of the Daily News and its sister Sunday paper, the Daily News On Sunday, were not properly registered and therefore operating illegally.

The Supreme Court made the ruling after refusing to hear an application by the company, challenging the constitutionality of the registration exercise being conducted by a government-appointed media and information commission.

On Friday last week, heavily armed riot police and security details from the Law and Order Section and the Central Intelligence Organisation occupied the eight-storey building housing the newspaper's offices in central Harare, as well as the newspaper's printing factory in the industrial area of the city.

More than 100 computers were seized from the newspaper's offices on Tuesday as police continued their crackdown.

Daily News advocate Adrian De Bourbon told the court on Thursday that the police raids on the newspaper's offices were unacceptable.

"It was not necessary for the police to embark on a capture and seize exercise. Police were on an ulterior, sinister and illegal exercise to destroy and suppress press freedom," he argued.

However, the first respondent, a police Chief Superintendent Madzingo, countered in papers submitted before the court that "we as the police do not stand by and watch an illegality. We act, we arrest and we seize."

Section 8 of the controversial Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act saved the day for the newspaper as it states that a media house whose registration forms are being considered by the media commission is permitted to continue operations until the matter has been determined.

The Daily News lawyers submitted registration papers to the commission on Monday this week.

A round of applause reverberated around the courtroom after Judge Yunus Omerjee made his ruling.

The chief executive officer of the newspaper, Samuel Siphepha Nkomo, said the company would sue the police for loss of revenue. "We generate a lot of money from sales and advertising, but the overzealous behaviour by police deprived us of opportunity to earn money."

Daily News staffers' jubilation at the ruling was short-lived - upon returning to their offices they discovered that their desk drawers had been ransacked and cash and other personal items were missing.

Nonetheless, the staff of the Daily News were said to be battling to produce an edition of the paper for Friday.

The closure of the paper had been met with international condemnation, as rights groups warned that media freedom was under threat.

**Source:** [UN Integrated Regional Information Networks](#)

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