

Zim vendor arrested for listening to 'wrong' station

A street vendor has been arrested and faces a jail term of as much as six months for listening to a critical radio program. In addition, his newspaper copies were seized.

Zimbabwean police have charged a street vendor for listening to a news program on the Zimbabwe broadcast of the Voice of America, reports Zimonline news agency.

Noel Tichawana was arrested in early June 2008 and will appear in court on 15 July to answer to charges of "committing criminal nuisance" after he was caught listening to the program Studio 7, which broadcasts political, economic and general news on Zimbabwe. Studio 7 is a daily news program of the Voice of America.

Tichawana, who is probably the first person to be charged for listening to Studio 7, a program considered hostile by President Mugabe's government, faces up to six months in jail if found guilty.

According to court papers, a Zimbabwean army soldier arrested Tichawana after having overheard, on several occasions, the vendor listening to Studio 7 on the radio he keeps at his vending site.

"On several occasions, the accused person would play his radio set at high volume, attracting a crowd as he would switch it to America's Studio . . ." The informant then arrested the accused and brought him to St. Mary's police station," reads the charge sheet submitted to court.

There are no independent broadcasters in Zimbabwe. The state-owned Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) runs the country's only television and radio stations, all tightly controlled by Mugabe's government, which has the final say on senior editorial and managerial appointments.

In a separate development, Wilf Mbanga, the publisher of *The Zimbabwean*, says the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority (ZIMRA) has refused to release a consignment of 60,000 copies of the weekly independent newspaper.

Mbanga said a commercial carrier had flown copies of the 19 June edition of the newspapers into Harare for distribution. ZIMRA told the local distributor that the order to impound the newspapers had come from the ruling Zanu PF party. This comes hard on the heels of the burning of 60,000 copies as well as a distribution truck of the *The Zimbabwean on Sunday* newspaper on 25 May. These incidents took place as Zimbabwe was preparing for an election run-off, from which the opposition party, Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), has pulled out of because of violence and intimidation.

"Election observers have been notified but no action has been taken so far," said Mbanga of the newspaper seizure.

For further information on the *Zimbabwean on Sunday* case, see:

<http://www.ifex.org/en/content/view/full/94043>

This article courtesy of [MISA](#)

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>