

Parliament to summon Shamu over media reforms

A parliamentary committee on the media has resolved to summon the minister of Media, Information and Publicity Webster Shamu, after he defied an instruction by principals in the coalition government to implement media reforms.

By [Jennifer Dube](#) 2 Apr 2012

Chairman of the parliamentary committee on media, information and communication technology, Settlement Chikwinya, who is also MP for Mbizo, last week, said they had agreed to summon Shamu to interrogate him on why he had failed to implement the reforms as directed by the principals.

"We want to interrogate the minister's position and how he reacted to the communication from the principals," said Chikwinya, adding that the information minister is expected to appear before the committee in May.

Shamu is expected to explain why the Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe (BAZ), the Zimbabwe Mass Media Trust (ZMMT) and the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Holdings (ZBH) boards were taking long to be reconstituted.

The boards were declared unconstitutional as they were appointed unilaterally and were mainly composed of people who are thought to be loyal to President Robert Mugabe.

The state media stands accused of spewing out vitriol against the MDC formations while propping up Mugabe and his party.

The three political parties in the coalition government had agreed the media be reformed before holding elections.

Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai, last week told the House of Assembly that he was surprised by Shamu's reluctance to implement the reforms which were approved by both the principals and Cabinet.

Efforts to get a comment from Shamu were fruitless on Saturday.

Article 19 of the Global Political Agreement (GPA) prescribes the need for the opening up of the airwaves and ensuring the operation of as many media houses as possible.

Several companies last month fled advertisements indicating they had applied for free-to-air commercial radio licences while three others applied for television licences.

This followed the granting of the country's first commercial private radio licences to journalist-cum-businessman, Supa Mandiwanzira-owned AB Communication's Zi Radio and Zimpapers' Talk Radio.

Some sections of the media queried the granting of the licences saying the owners were aligned to Zanu PF.

Chikwinya said while the committee was happy with the registration of some newspapers, it was concerned with the slow pace at which media reforms were taking place.

NewsDay, *The Patriot* and the now defunct *The Mail* were registered under the new dispensation while *The Daily News* was re-registered after being banned in 2003.

Parly committee to quiz Mahoso over BAZ

The committee will also call BAZ chairman, Tafataona Mahoso and chief executive, Obert Muganyura, in May to answer questions about media reforms in Zimbabwe, a process which many in the media say is taking longer than necessary.

"Their appearance will be part of our efforts to ensure that everyone who intends to broadcast in the country does so," Chikwinya said.

"Broadcasting licences applicants, both those who got the licences and those who did not, will appear before us a week before the minister and BAZ officials' appearance.

"We want to hear the concerns of those who were not granted licences so we can see how best we can help them re-align themselves with BAZ policies so they can be granted licences. We are also keen to hear why those who were granted licences have not yet started broadcasting."

Source: allAfrica.com

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