



# Malawi slashes funding for broadcasters

The opposition-dominated Parliament of Malawi has cut funding to public broadcasters over claims that the government uses them as propaganda tools. The move is likely to mean more competition for private broadcasters for a slice of radio advertising revenues in Malawi.

Blantyre - On 11 September 2007, Parliament passed its K173 billion (approximately US\$670 million) annual national budget with an allocation of only K1 (about US 1 cent) each for the Malawi Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) and Television Malawi (TVM), for their 2007/2008 financial year.

The K1 allocation is nominal, to satisfy the law that make it illegal to provide no allocation at all without holding a vote.

The development comes barely a week after MISA Regional Governing Council chairperson Thabo Thakalekoala sent a strong statement to government demanding sufficient resources to the two institutions.

The 193-seat Parliament, with the opposition in the majority, recently claimed that the two state broadcasters were being used as propaganda tools by the current government to castigate the opposition.

Minister of Information Patricia Kaliati said in an interview with MISA Malawi that the two broadcasters would survive, as they did the previous time they were allocated only 50% of their projected budget. Kaliati indicated that her ministry is currently considering ways to solve the problem.

Chairperson of the Parliamentary Media and Communications Committee Berson Lijenda, who is also a member of the opposition United Democratic Front (UDF) party, condemned the development, saying the public does not have to suffer because of a few personalities working at the two institutions.

Lijenda queried why his fellow opposition members did not take advantage of their numerical strength to push for the amendment of the Communications Act, which gives government power to control the public broadcasters.

Meanwhile, MISA Malawi has challenged Kaliati, saying that the decision by the House will force the two broadcasters to abandon their roles of public broadcasters.

"MBC and TVM will be forced to scramble for advertisements in competition with private broadcasters. This will be unlawful as well as counterproductive to the mandate of MBC and TVM," said MISA Malawi National Director Innocent Chitosi.

Source: [MISA](#)

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