

Deadline for SIM card registration extended in Uganda

The Uganda Communications Commission (UCC) has extended the SIM card registration deadline for 90 days, after the Human Rights Network for Journalists-Uganda (HRNJ-Uganda) and the Legal Brains Trust (LBT) dragged it to court, seeking an injunction not to switch off unregistered subscribers on 1 March, 2013.

The matter had come up for final disposal before the deputy chief registrar of the High Court Civil Division, His Worship John Eudes Keitirima on 1 March. HRNJ-Uganda and LBT agreed with the UCC and the attorney general of Uganda to withdraw the application for a court injunction on the switch-off deadline, which was before His Worship John Eudes Keitirima of the High Court.

UCC's head of communications, Fred Otunnu, told the court (through his lawyer) that they had extended the SIM card registration deadline by 90 days to 29 May 2013. He explained that the extension would not affect the hearing of the main suit due on 20 May 2013. During that hearing, HRNJ-Uganda and LBT will claim that the registration process is marred with irregularities, illegalities and anomalies which must be rectified.

Through their lawyers (Denis Sembuya, Isaac Kimaze Ssemakadde and Mugabi Siras Kahima), HRNJ-Uganda and LBT have also filed another application for a temporary injunction stopping the UCC from setting any other arbitrary deadline until the anomalies are resolved. The application will be heard on Monday, 11 March 2013. Otunu told court that the extension of the deadline will not also affect the application for a temporary injunction.

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