

ZBC crisis deepens

The Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) has asked journalists and other workers at the stable to go door-to-door collecting licence fees. The move is seen as a desperate measure by the state broadcaster to raise revenue.

The predicament of ZBC worsened recently after inspectors ditched it over poor remuneration. Journalists in Harare and Bulawayo confirmed receiving the directive on Wednesday [28 November 2012], although it was said they declined to act as licence inspectors.

The inspectors reportedly ditched the state broadcaster after their salaries were reduced by about 66%. They have since approached the courts to have their salaries reinstated, a journalist from ZBC said on condition of anonymity.

"They went to court after their salaries were reduced from US\$440 to US\$270 and then to US\$150," the informer said.

"We were told that it is now mandatory for every employee of the company to collect licence fees door-to-door and at roadblocks. That is the directive from Harare to Bulawayo."

Another journalist said since there was a shortage of inspectors and the company was facing cash flow problems, management decided that everyone should start collecting the levy.

However, most employees reportedly declined to collect levies as this was outside the terms of their contracts.

In response, ZBC management at Montrose Studios in Bulawayo, hurriedly drew up contracts for six licence fee collectors, who were not part of the court action.

The contracts for the six expired on 30 November this year and have now been given new contracts expiring at the end of this month.

ZBC spokesman, Sivukile Simnago, declined to comment, saying he was on a month-long leave and would only be back at work on Monday [3 December 2012].

The state broadcaster's chief executive officer, Happison Muchechetere, said he could not comment on such matters over the phone.

"I do not know about that, I am hearing it from you," he said. "I cannot comment on the phone, come and see me and I will give you a story."

Asked where he was, Muchechetere said he was at his farm outside Harare.

ZBC has been struggling with salary payments, with workers often going for weeks after their designated payday without receiving their salaries. Sources said the company was facing serious cash flow problems and had approached several banks in an effort to negotiate for favourable loans.

Workers at the state broadcaster have since written to the Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission accusing their bosses of corruption.

Workers seek ZUJ intervention

The workers have reportedly approached the Zimbabwean Union of Journalists (ZUJ) to help them so they can receive their salaries on time.

"They have not written to us, but we are aware that some of our members have not been getting their salaries on time," ZUJ secretary general, Foster Dongozi said.

"Naturally, this alarms us as a union and we are concerned with establishing what is going on."

Dongozi said some ZBC journalists complained that they were no longer able to fulfil family obligations and were failing to service loans from banks due to uncertainty as to when they would receive their salaries.

Source: [allAfrica](#)

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