

Media Council orders The Star to apologise to Uhuru

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The Star Newspaper has been ordered to retract and apologise over an article it published about President Uhuru Kenyatta in February last year. The order was issued by the Media Council of Kenya's (MCK) arbitration panel, the Complaints Commission which was chaired by Grace Katasi with Peter Mwaura and Murej Mak'Ochieng being the other members of the Commission.

Additionally the newspaper has been directed to pull down the same article from its online edition. The council directed that the apology should be published on the Star website with immediate effect for seven days after the ruling.

Parties from the Star and representatives of the president will however meet to agree on the terms of the apology to be published in the print section within 14 days of the ruling.

The commission has also ordered a reprimand to be published by the MCK in two other dailies with wide circulation. The complaints commission has however declined to grant a ruling on damages which President Uhuru Kenyatta had applied to be paid.

Katasi said the commission has no jurisdiction or mandate to order for payment of damages. In the case in question, President Uhuru Muigai Kenyatta lodged a complaint with the Media Council of Kenya on 7 February 2012 against The Star Publications Ltd and Jerry Okungu in respect of an article published in The Star newspaper on 6 February 2012 titled "What if Uhuru Ruto win?" and written by Jerry Okungu.

President Kenyatta complained that the article was offensive and biased in breach of section 35 (1) of the Media Act Cap 411B and article 1 (a) on Accuracy and Fairness of the Code of Conduct for the Practice of Journalism.

President Kenyatta further complained that the newspaper and the writer failed to maintain the Code of Conduct in breach of Section 35(2) of the Act. Following the reading of the ruling, the Star Newspaper has 14 days within which to appeal.

Source: allAfrica.com