

Lesotho government takes two radio stations off air

Four days ahead of the commemoration of the World Radio Day on 13 February 2017, the government of Lesotho cut the broadcasting signals of two local radio stations, Ts'enolo FM (104.6MHz) and People's Choice FM (95.6 MHz).



Image by 123RF

According to the principal secretary of the Minister of Communications, Science and Technology, Ts'eliso Khomari, the radio stations were cut off for allegedly airing defamatory content about the country's Prime Minister Bethuel Mosisili and Deputy Prime Minister Mothejoa Metsing.

Station managers of the two radio stations, Khauta Mpeqa and Mshengu Tshabalala respectively, in separate interviews, have confirmed the broadcasting of a press conference and an interview with two brothers, Refiloe Litjobo and Thuso Litjobo. Up till a month ago, Refiloe Litjobo and Thuso Litjobo were members of the Mosisili-led Democratic Congress (DC). Thuso Litjobo was the president of DC Youth League, while Refiloe Litjobo was the deputy secretary General of the DC Executive Committee. Both brothers have since joined a newly formed Alliance for Democrats (AD) led by Monyane Moleleki who deputised Mosisili in the DC.

The closure of the radio stations came shortly after the Minister of Communications, Science and Technology, Serialong Qoo dismissed the Litjobo's statement as a campaign to discredit the prime minister and his deputy.

In a discussion with MISA Lesotho, the PS promised to advise his minister to reverse the decision to close the two radio

stations. It is therefore MISA Lesotho's expectation that the two radio stations will be back on air.

MISA Lesotho has learnt that the Principal Secretary has met with the People's Choice FM radio manager and agreed on re-connection of the radio station to the Lesotho National Broadcaster Service (LNBS). The PS told MISA Lesotho that he will have further discussions with the management of the radio stations to address the government's concerns.

The minister's decision to close the two radio stations was implemented just two weeks after Thaaha Khube FM's (97.4 MHZ) broadcast of the programme that attracted dissatisfaction from many listeners as being a campaign to discredit King Letsie III for addressing the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) Oversight Committee during its recent visit to Lesotho. Despite listeners' discontent about the content of the programme, Thaaha Khube FM remained on air with no intervention from the government. MISA Lesotho therefore strongly advises that further discussions regarding content of radio stations should include Thaaha Khube FM.

It is MISA Lesotho's firm belief that the government of Lesotho will speedily re-connect the two radio stations to the LNBS antennas.

Source: [*Media Institute of Southern Africa*](#).

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