

Officials raid Kwekwe Radio Station, Zimbabwe

Officials from the Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe (BAZ) and Transmedia last week ransacked Kwekwe Community Radio station's offices, taking away documents and soft copies of programmes, it has emerged.



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According to the Zimbabwe Association of Community Radio Station (ZACRAS), five officials from BAZ and Transmedia descended on the station in Kwekwe unannounced under the guise of carrying out an "inspection" of the premises.

"The five officials arrived late afternoon with an inspector warrant and met with the board secretary of the community radio, Howard Masaninga. The objective of the inspection was to ascertain whether the community radio was broadcasting or not," said ZACRAS in a statement.

The officials also checked the community radio station's transmitters and other broadcasting equipment.

"They also took time to listen to some of the pre-recorded programmes which were in the studio and took with them some of the soft copies of the programme," ZACRAS said.

After a thorough search, the officials also accessed the station's WhatsApp platform and demanded to know how the station acquired its equipment.

"ZACRAS believes that such acts by BAZ and Transmedia seek to intimidate potential broadcasters out of the sector so as to curtail access to diverse sources of information. Sections 61 and 62 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe provide for promotion of access of information and free expression through various and legitimate means," said the organisation.

ZACRAS urged the government to embrace community broadcasting as an important sub-sector requiring support through licensing.

Kwekwe Community Radio station is involved in access to information promotion at a local level through the utilisation of legitimate alternative platforms. The station also engages in community-based lobby and advocacy work to have their stations licenced.

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