

Reporters subpoenaed after story on thugs' World Cup plans

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Media analysts have questioned a police decision to have two eNews journalists subpoenaed, after a story was broadcast on criminals' plans for the Soccer World Cup.

Reporter Mpho Lakaje's story, aired last Friday, 15 January 2010, featured interviews with two criminals. One said he would rob tourists during the World Cup. Another said he would shoot his way out of a standoff with police if he felt his life was in danger.

Broadcaster e.tv confirmed yesterday that Lakaje and news editor Ben Said had been subpoenaed to appear in court next week unless they gave the identity and contact details of the interviewees, original footage, and details regarding the firearms featured in the story.

According to one analyst, anxiety over the Soccer World Cup and SA's image abroad may have led police to take this action.

William Bird, director of the Media Monitoring Project, blamed "2010 jitters" for the police action.

Melissa Moore, acting executive director of the Freedom of Expression Institute, said lack of protection of journalists' sources would harm the right to freedom of expression.

Source: Business Day

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