

Liberian radio show suspended over comments about presidency

The Costa Show, a weekly radio program hosted by Henry Costa with guest Menipakei Dumoe, has been sanctioned by the Hot FM station management. Both Costa and Dumoe are said to have allegedly incited an Arab Spring-like protest in Liberia.

The 4 January 2013 edition of The Costa Show has been viewed as unprofessional and laced with insults directed at the presidency. The management of Hot FM says it is reviewing the content and format of the program to simmer down the tone.

In a statement issued on 6 January - in relation to the indefinite suspension of the program - Hot FM management stated: "...There is concern that this morning's Costa Show may have crossed the line. It is our intention to return the show to air as soon as the review is complete and proper controls are put in place, to ensure that Hot FM's responsibility to the public is adhered..." The statement added that the management prides itself in providing responsible, educational, informative and entertaining programs for the general public.

Both Costa and Dumoe sounded remorseless when contacted about the issue. In an opinion piece, *The Case for Madam Sirleaf's immediate resignation: Why 2017 will be too late to save Liberia from the Sirleaf onslaught*, the duo accused the president of falling short on her promises and mortgaging the country's resources. They further planned to host a press conference, whereby the call for the resignation of the president would be reechoed.

In a press statement, three civil society groups - the Movement for Justice in Liberia, the Defender of Democracy and the New Democratic Values of Liberia - accused the proscribed program host and his guest as having abused freedom of expression by making unsubstantiated claims with the potential to undermine peace.

The president of the Press Union of Liberia, Peter Quaqua, whilst supportive of the station management's action to review the program, is quoted as saying that "the indefinite suspension of the program is too far an action to take at this time...The guys have been going overboard in their use of profanity...I am not saying they cannot be critical, but they cannot go out insulting. That has been our concern. Reviewing the content is good, but I think it is a good show that has been discussing some issues which need to be discussed."

Days later, Costa issued an apologetic statement on this facebook page, regretting his comments and threats to incite protest actions using leaflets.

Source: www.ifex.org

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