

Congo provincial minister suspends radio host

PARIS: Reporters Without Borders and Journalist in Danger (JED), its partner organisation in the Democratic Republic of Congo, addressed a letter to Naason Kubuya Ndoole, the provincial minister responsible for information and media in the eastern province of Nord-Kivu to express their complete rejection of his decision to suspend Mishapi Voice TV radio host Jacques "Djasadjasa" Nyamugenda until further notice.

"It does not fall to you to take this kind of measure and your action constitutes outright abuse of authority," the letter to provincial minister said. "The power to suspend a journalist lies with the media regulatory authority. Currently, this is the High Media Authority (HAM), which is due to be replaced by the High Council for Broadcasting and Communication.

"There is no concrete basis for your decision, which is shocking because of its draconian and utterly unacceptable nature. We are therefore urging the CEO of Mishapi Voice TV to ignore your instructions and we ask you to rescind your decision at once."

In a letter dated 30 July 2011 to Mishapi Voice TV's CEO, Ndoole accused Nyamugenda of "defamatory and insulting comments about the local authorities." In particular, the minister claimed that, during broadcast on the evening of 29 July, Nyamugenda uttered "insults" about a provincial minister "whose conduct is irreproachable." But at no time did Ndoole give the details of the offending comments or name the minister he believed to have been defamed.

Abuse of authority

It would seem that the minister's media adviser, Edgard Mahungu, intends to bring defamation charges against Nyamugenda under article 74 of the criminal code, which would expose him to the risk of a prison sentence and a heavy fine.

In the same letter, the minister asked Mishapi Voice TV's CEO to "initiate disciplinary action against this programme host as soon as you receive this letter" and added that Nyamugenda "is not permitted to work for any other broadcaster in this province until further notice."

Source: [Reporters without Borders](#)