

Malawi: Government hails Zodiak Online launch



By Gregory Gondwe

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Zodiak Broadcasting Station (ZBS) late last week officially launched its online service which government has said is an innovative diversifying of services which will help market the country to the world.



"This is a milestone for ZBS and healthy for competition in the industry," said deputy minister of information Tarsizo Gowelo. "Zodiak Online was a move in the right direction as Malawi couldn't afford to lag behind in ICT."

The Zodiak Online is a subsidiary of ZBS radio service, and it also runs its own film unit. The radio is also the first and only station in Malawi to stream live on the internet.

Government failing to issue tv licences

ZBS which started in 2005 as a radio service is currently struggling to obtain a television licence as government is not willing to issue any to applicants who are currently in the queue. Commentators have observed that government is not ready for dissenting views that can be aired without its control if it gives out television operating licences.

This was also something that ZBS MD Gospel Kazako hinted on when he spoke during the launch. "The online will offer the public a voice when its voice is being muffled," said Kazako, who observed that there is abject hunger for information out there.

Kazako, who was fired from MBC as a senior producer in the early 1990s, promised that his station will continue being Malawi's reliable and trusted private broadcaster. "We will use the currency of truth at Zodiak and will do our journalism without fear," he said.

Suspicious of media agenda

Government did not fail to display its suspicion over the media during the launch as the deputy minister warned ZBS to

desist any attempts aimed at tarnishing the image of the country because it has the capacity to reach multitudes across the globe.

"You have been responsible in reporting the news. We hope you will not change," he advised.

He said ZBS is government's strategic partner in information dissemination in the country and urged the station to continue serving the nation with dignity.

ZBS sprung from nowhere with five staff members on a shoe-string budget to take up a leading position in the broadcasting business now boasting 117 employees.

View the online service at www.zodiakmalawi.com.

ABOUT GREGORY GONDWE

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