

SABC 'threat to withdraw' from BCCSA disputed

According to a Media Monitoring Africa (MMA) press release on Monday, 20 June 2011, "the reported threat made by the SABC to withdraw from the BCCSA is, in MMA's view, not only churlish but also has other consequences that threaten the credibility of the SABC as well as the BCCSA." Responding on the same day, the SABC rejected this assertion, calling it "false, mischievous and misleading".

The SABC said it had never at any stage considered withdrawing from the BCCSA. The public broadcaster said it subscribed to the BCCSA code and the important role the institution plays in regulating the Broadcasting industry.

The SABC was of the view that its decision to appeal the BCCSA ruling touched at the very core of media freedom, the very same freedom that the MMA pretended to be its guardian and protector.

MMA statement

Media Monitoring Africa (MMA) stated in its release that it is concerned by the manner in which the SABC has chosen to react to the ruling by the Broadcasting Complaints Commission of South Africa (BCCSA) in the case of the SABC and the *Mail and Guardian* (M&G).

MMA respects the right of the SABC to pursue all available legal avenues to their fullest extent. However, it urges the BCCSA not to yield to the pressure and threats of the SABC.

William Bird, director of MMA said, "There is far more at stake than whether the SABC will abide by the ruling of the BCCSA or not. If the BCCSA yields to the threats and pressure, not only will it demonstrate an absence of principle, it will also bring the entire BCCSA into a crisis of credibility. A crisis I am not sure it and the National Association of Broadcasters along with it would be able to survive."

Updated at 12.27pm on 21 June 2011.