

SABC, MWASA showdown over collective agreement



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The SABC's decision to terminate its collective agreement with the Media Workers' Association of South Africa (MWASA) is nothing but a publicity stunt and a bunch of lies meant to mislead the nation, MWASA general secretary Tuvani Gumani said last night, Thursday, 4 August 2011. "We have a signed agreement that says that each union should have 500 members as a threshold to get recognition at the SABC, and they know it," a fuming Gumani told Bizcommunity.com.



"And if we are wrong we will abide by this decision, but if we are correct we will demand that those who took this decision must be fired for bringing the public broadcaster into disrepute," he said.

Failed to comply with clause 6

The SABC issued a statement yesterday afternoon, stating that it has decided to terminate its 2002 collective agreement with MWASA because the union failed to comply with clause 6.

"Clause 6 of the agreement states that the said union needs to have 20% or more of the employees employed by the SABC in the bargaining unit to enjoy organisational right. The union was given sufficient notice period, to improve their membership numbers, which they did not achieve," spokesperson Kaizer Kganyago said in the statement.

However, Gumani said the SABC's ill-advised decision is meant to turn the attention from the real issues of the day, including the ill-fated turnaround strategy. "But this decision will come back to haunt them."

Registered trade union

He said it does not matter whether his union has one or two members at the SABC; MWASA - as a registered trade union - will continue talking about the public broadcaster, and consulting with the parliamentary portfolio committee on communications (PCC) without Auckland Park's permission.

It is believed that unions will meet with the PCC next week Thursday to discuss issues pertaining to the turnaround strategy.

Gumani claims the turnaround strategy, which was put together by a company called Cat Gemini on behalf of the SABC, is a piece of thorn in his union's relationship with the public broadcaster. "They told Parliament that they had consulted with MWASA on the turnaround strategy but, honestly speaking, they've never done so."

Clearly angry

The clearly angry Gumani accused the public broadcaster of nepotism, bullying and abuse of corporate power.

"Why retrench 800 employees if you continue hiring your girlfriends, friends and family members?" he asked, adding that some SABC employees do not have offices, and sit at the reception or walk around the headquarters' corridors with laptops containing SABC programmes, but still get thousands of rands every month.

"They continue to create positions at the organisation to fit their people, and there are managers who manage other managers," he claimed.

"An organisation of principles"

Asked why MWASA seems to have some sort of a troubled relationship with the SABC out of the three unions, Gumani replied: "Because we are an organisation of principles and stand by those principles, which people managing the SABC don't have.

"At the SABC the more you are wrong, the more you are seen as a great person," he concluded, slamming the board as weak and lacking authority.

For more:

- Bizcommunity: [SABC, MWASA agreement terminated](#)
- Google News Search: [SABC MWASA](#)

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Issa Sikiti da Silva is a winner of the 2010 SADC Media Awards (print category). He freelances for various media outlets, local and foreign, and has travelled extensively across Africa. His work has been published both in French and English. He used to contribute to Bizcommunity.com as a senior news writer.

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