

TCRA acts to solve 'TV Wars'

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Digital broadcasting operators have been instructed to observe licensing conditions and best practices governing the sector, as Tanzania struggles to spread the service across the country.

The instruction by the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA) comes following the current wrangle between Star Media (T) Limited, which is one of the three Multiplex Operators so far licensed to provide multiplex services and a local TV station, Star TV.

TCRA director general, Prof John Mkoma, told reporters in Dar es Salaam that already complaints have reached his office on 'foul play' allegedly committed by the two in the course of providing the services.

He said it came to public attention on Saturday that Star TV chose to release an alert to stop using Star Media services contrary to the requirements of the business licensing conditions and without the knowledge of the TCRA, which is the sector's regulator.

"Of late, we have come to realise that things are not well with the two and we have ordered them to make sure TV signals are reinstated by 4pm today [10 June 2013]], in addition to following proper procedures in addressing problem," Nkoma said.

The two companies have been instructed to report to the Authority next Monday for official tabling of their complaints to establish the root cause of their dispute. According to the TCRA chief, Monday's consultations will assist the Authority to get a clear and broader picture on the magnitude of the wrangle, which will enable possible solutions based on the laws and regulations governing digital broadcasting services.

The director general insisted that operators are supposed to notify the Authority to facilitate immediate action in all matters pertaining to conflicts in implementation of digital broadcasting in the country.

Star Media is a multiplex operator licensed to provide services, which entered partnership with five TV stations - TBC, ITV, Start TV, Channel Ten and East Africa Television.

But in a new development and even before the Monday meeting with the regulator, the Sahara Media Group Limited, owner of Star TV, released a lengthy statement vowing that it was not ready to work with Star Media until their grievances are settled.

According to the company's manager for Planning and Research, Nathan Ndyetabula, Star Media (T) Limited were operating without obtaining a Content Service Provider Licence (CSP) contrary to the requirements of the Copyright Law.

He said the company was supposed to enter into business agreements with local TV stations to use their contents through its decoder in accordance with the Electronics and Postal Communications Act (EPOCA).

"Star Media are using contents of the local TV stations, including Star TV, claiming it is doing so according to EPOCA and its regulations. But EPOCA insists that before using the contents, there must be Service Level Agreements between the two parts, which is not there in this case," he charged.

Before we went to press, the 'Daily News' observed that the signals returned to normal (Star Media was airing Star TV signal) as ordered by the regulator pending Monday's meeting.

Source: [allAfrica](#)

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