

Eavesdropping at the SABC

NEWSWATCH: According to a *Mail & Guardian* report, SABC staff have been informed that their phones are being monitored by the NIA (National Intelligence Agency).

For more:

- *Mail & Guardian*: [Big Brother is watching the SABC...](#) According to the report, as the corporation's headquarters is a national key point in terms of the National Key Point Act (originally created by apartheid-era secuocrats), phones are being monitored.

According to the *M&G* report, "the SABC's newsrooms are in the grip of paranoia" ahead of the general election with fears of eavesdropping and phone interceptions. This comes after editorial staff members were "reminded" by the corporation's chairperson, Ellen Zandile Tshabalala, that they should stop leaks because they were working in a national key point.

"Tshabalala and SABC spokesperson Kaizer Kganyago, who did not deny the mentioning of the words national key point, argued that her comments were taken out of context."



Fear of reprisals

President of the Broadcasting, Electronics, Media and Allied Workers' Union (Bemawu), Hannes du Buisson, is quoted as saying that the union had had a complaint from one of its members to the effect Tshabalala told editorial staff in a January meeting that they "should be careful who they talk to because their phones may be listened in to by the NIA." Du Buisson claims that such actions are illegal.

According to *M&G*, the claims have been confirmed by five editorial staff, all of whom "refused to be named for fear of reprisals" and another editorial staffer claimed that Tshabalala had told them, in effect, to "toe the line... and that we must respect the ruling party. She said your phones are being listened to..."

M&G reports that the staff appear to be spooked... One staffer is reported to have refused to speak over the phone because "the NIA is listening to us", and a manager is reported as saying that the staff are "shocked and angry. They fear speaking on the phones because of Tshabalala's comments."