

Concern over Botswana plan to register mobile phone subscribers

The Botswana Telecommunications Authority (BTA) has announced that prepaid subscribers of mobile phones will be registered as of 15 September to curb, among other things, mobile phone crimes. The move has alarmed media watchdogs, however.

BTA Chief Executive Thari Pheko vehemently denied suspicion that the move could be related to the newly established Directorate of Intelligence and Security (DIS) and noted that the authority is merely following international trends.

The registration process is expected to be completed by 31 December 2009 and those not registered by that time will be disconnected.

Media watchdog, MISA-Botswana, has expressed their concerns over the new regulation and in a statement said that it hopes the measure will not be abused by the DIS, which could use it to intimidate media sources.

According to the body, freedom of expression could be compromised if the spy agency were able to access the facility on issues not related to crime, and it goes on to say that this concern is reinforced by the looming media practitioners' bill, which media regard as anathema to media freedom and which the body describes as "draconian".

Find further information on the media practitioners' bill, [here](#)

Article courtesy of [MISA](#)