

Afri Radio to sue regulatory body

Afri Radio, a privately-owned radio station has resolved to take legal action against the statutory media regulatory body, the Independent Media Commission (IMC) after its broadcast license was withdrawn on 12 April 2013, following a meeting between the IMC and other senior government officials.

The withdrawal of the radio station's license followed an alleged order by president Ernest Bai Koroma, after the IMC reportedly refused to act on a similar directive from Alhaji Alpha Kanu, the minister of Information and Communications.

A source at the radio station told the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) that the radio station has decided to go to court because the IMC withdrew its license without any reason although the station has fulfilled all the legal requirements needed for registration.

"No reason has been given for the withdrawal of our license, but we suspect that the decision to withdraw our license is politically-motivated," the source said.

The leadership of the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ) has condemned the action of the IMC while some members have called for the resignation of the IMC chairman, Rod Mac-Johnson. According to the SLAJ, the IMC as an independent Commission should act as such and deliver on its mandate rather than allowing politicians to control its activities.

"The IMC Act establishes the Commission as the only body to sanction the media, so if the president wants to ban a media organisation he should make the order publicly," noted a member of SLAJ.

Meanwhile, Dr. Sylvia Blyden, special executive assistant to president Koroma and an ardent critic of the IMC, has denied allegations that the president ordered the withdrawal of Afri Radio's license.

Dr. Blyden, who is also the publisher of Awareness Times newspaper, insists the president never ordered or forced the suspension.

The MFWA calls on the IMC to disclose the reason(s) for the withdrawal of the license while urging the authorities to uphold the mandate of the IMC as established by the IMC Act of 2000.

Source: [allAfrica](#)