

Moyo defends picture ban, threatens media

Information Minister Jonathan Moyo Friday appeared to defend the heavy handedness of the state security services who forced journalists to delete photographs of President Robert Mugabe's fall.



Addressing journalists at the Bulawayo Press Club Moyo even hinted that the state will confiscate the journalists' tools of trade if such an incident happened again.

Mugabe recently missed a step and fell while coming down a staircase at the Harare International Airport after addressing party supporters who had gathered to welcome him from the African Union Summit in Ethiopia where he assumed chairmanship of the continental body.

Responding to a question on how government intends to regulate social media platforms in light of the leakage of Mugabe's pictures Moyo said they had learnt a lesson from the incident.

"These digital devices have built in facilities for things that are deleted to remain alive for at least thirty days. So next time, we have learnt that we should not delete, we should take the devices (sic)," said Moyo.

He added that it was normal the world over for security details to delete photographs that were deemed inappropriate.

"No one really who is experienced and normal will have any problems with security officials deleting footage or images they think are not okay. The Vatican does that, the police at the Vatican if you take pictures there they will delete.

"If you go to that sacred temple in Cambodia and you take pictures of yourself nude and so forth like some French people were doing a few weeks ago, the police come, they will delete. That is an appropriate reaction, if they don't delete they deserve to be fired," said Moyo.

The minister said the experiences which followed Mugabe's fall had made them "wiser, mature, more understanding and to come to terms with the realities of modern technology."

Moyo also warned the private media that they risked being banned from state functions if they continued abusing government's benevolence of extending invitations to them.

"What is really significant about this incident is that whereas in the past these people who rushed to upload those images on the internet would not have been invited to the function at the airport. We are inviting them these days, so they must not pretend that they are cleverer than us when we are the ones who are inviting them and we want to continue inviting them.

"If they become irresponsible and unrealistic in their behaviour we will remind them that is exactly the reason why we were not inviting you before," warned Moyo.

He went on to say the local media was failing to report truthfully.

"We have a media that believes the angle is the story, not the truth of the story. The truth is we have not bothered anyone about those images, instead we have asked you to compare those images with other similar incidences involving VIPs of that stature," said Moyo.

He insisted that his boss did not fall but managed to "break the fall".

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