

Malawian journo pulled from China media tour

The Chinese Embassy in Malawi has removed Wisdom Chingwede, Zodiak Broadcasting Station (ZBS) editor, from the list of journalists travelling to China on a media tour it sponsored after receiving instructions from Malawi's Ministry of Information and Civic Education. The visit was slated to begin on 21 June 2008. The ministry had earlier on accused the journalist of writing negatively about the government.

An embassy official, David Zhang, confirmed having received instructions from the Ministry of Information and Civic Education to remove Chingwede's name from the list.

"The reporters were nominated by the Ministry of Information. We are sponsoring the trip, but we are working hand in hand with the Ministry of Information. The list is repeatedly revised," said Zhang.

There was no immediate comment from Information and Civic Education Minister Patricia Kaliati and her deputy John Bande as their mobile phones were switched off.

According to Chingwede, embassy officials called him on the evening of 18 June to inform him of the development. Chingwede said he was surprised because earlier in the day the officials had asked for his passport to insert a visa.

Chingwede, who is also a MISA Malawi chapter board member, explained that the officials apologised to him, saying they tried to lobby on his behalf, but the Ministry of Information put its foot down.

Background

At a 17 June 2008 press briefing, Kaliati accused Chingwede of circulating a document allegedly issued by the opposition United Democratic Front (UDF) aimed at denting the government's image.

Reports indicated that Chingwede forwarded the alleged document from Nyasanet, a Malawian online discussion list on the MISA Malawi chapter's interactive forum.

Malawi early this year terminated its 40-year-old bilateral relationship with Taiwan in favour of China. China pledged to take over the projects that were being financed by Taiwan.

The media trip to China is one of a series of visits the embassy is organising for different stakeholders in the country to strengthen the new ties between China and Malawi.

Article published courtesy of [MISA](#)