

Muslim radio station not guilty of hate speech

A Muslim radio station was not guilty of hate speech during a religious broadcast, the Broadcasting Complaints Commission said.



Listener Moegamat Baboo had complained about a religious question and answer session hosted by guest presenter Mufti AK Hoosen on Radio Cii, broadcast on MultiChoice's audio bouquet.

In response to a question about the hierarchy of Muslim prayers, Hoosen apparently said "jaahils" - ignorant people - had taken precedence over those who were well-versed in the Qur'an.

Baboo complained that the use of the term "jaahil" meant disbelief in God and religious ignorance, was derogatory, and had the potential to cause conflict.

In its response, MultiChoice noted that the term "jaahil" was often used to refer to laymen without detailed knowledge of the Qur'an, or who interpreted religious tenets according to their own understanding, rather than Islamic jurisprudence.

"The response and remark made are clear and distinctive to the question posed thereof with no intention of any derogatory remark," it said.

It said the response had been derived from the quotations of the Prophet Mohammed.

The commission's complaints tribunal found the show was a "*bona fide* religious broadcast" and so did not constitute hate speech, according to the ruling released earlier this week.

"The tribunal has taken note of religious sensibilities, but after careful deliberation we concluded that the word complained of does not constitute hate speech, and the broadcast does not, therefore, infringe the code," chairman Kobus van Rooyen said in his judgment.

Source: *Sowetan* via I-Net Bridge